Jadara Journal of Research & Studies, (8) (2022)
Jadara Journal of Research & Studies
Website: http://journal.jadara.edu.jo/index.php/JRS
Research paper, Short communication, Review, Technical paper

The role of social media in spreading misinformation about covid-19 in the levant region

دور مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي في نشر معلومات مضللة حول جائحة كوفيد 19- في منطقة بلاد الشام

Mohammad. N. Shatnawi[1]*& Ahmet، Ayhan[2]

Communication Faculty, Akdeniz University, Turkey[1,2]

*corresponding authar email: med.shatnawi@gmail.com

Abstract

Since the outbreak of the Covid19 virus, the number of information sent over social media platforms has increased, making it increasingly difficult to distinguish between trustworthy and misleading content. We studied whether social media platforms are informing or misinforming people in the Levant area on the Covid-19 by analyzing responses to an online survey. According to the report, 55% of users rely on social media as their major source of information, while 52% rely on local media. Furthermore, more than 77.4 percent say social networking sites occasionally give genuine information, while 20% believe they just provide a wide picture. Furthermore, according to the poll, 81.6 percent of respondents had read Covid-19-related material that turned out to be untrue.The findings found that misinformation regarding COVID-19 spread on social media contributed to an increase in panic and concern about the virus.

Keywords: social media, misinformation, Covid-19, Levant region.

ملخص

انطلق هذا البحث من إشكالية انتشار المعلومات المضللة أثناء الأزمات عبر مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي وتحديدا خلال الأزمة الصحية العالمية التي تسبب فيها فيروس كورونا المستجد Covid 19 ، حيث هدفت الدراسة إلى معرفة نسب انتشارها بين جمهور المستخدمين في منطقة بلاد الشام، وعليه تم جمع بيانات المبحوثين بالاعتماد على الاستبانة الإلكترونية التي تم توزيعها وفق أسلوب العينة العشوائية، ومن ثم تحليل نتائجها عن طريق المنهج الوصفي التحليلي باستخدام برنامج spss . كشفت الدراسة أن 55٪ من المستخدمين يستخدمون مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي كمصدر رئيس للمعلومات، وأن 52٪ من المبحوثين يستخدمون الوسائط المحلية لنفس الغرض. علاوة على ذلك، يعتقد أكثر من 77.4٪ أن منصات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تنقل معلومات موثوقة أحيانًا، ويعتقد 20٪ أنها مجرد صورة عامة. أظهرت الدراسة أيضًا أن 81.6٪ قد قرأوا معلومات حول Covid-19 ثم تبين أنها معلومات مضللة. وأكدت الردود أن المعلومات المضللة عن فيروس كورونا المستجد التي انتشرت على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ساهمت في زيادة الذعر والخوف من الفيروس.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، معلومات مضللة، كوفيد19- ، منطقة بلاد الشام.

1. Introduction

Provide an overview Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreaks have long been considered an outlier in epidemiological history, owing to high rates of illness and death, ambiguity about treatment and the virus vaccine, and the extent to which they have sparked widespread fears (Kolifarhood, et al, 2020).

Traditional media has been utilized as the corpus for most research concerned in the depictions of social groupings during epidemics (Abeysinghe, 2016; Monson, 2017). However, research over the previous decade reveal that conventional media has become the key source of public information and is more reliable during epidemics and the development of infectious illnesses. Paek et al., 2008; Brug et al., 2004). Traditional media is becoming more accessible via online and social media channels, while current technology, such as mobile devices, is increasing the frequency of access (Hogan and Strasburger, 2018). There's also an increasing trend of using social media to discuss activities with others. As a result, it's critical to broaden the theoretical emphasis and employ social media as a corpus in epidemic research.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) has a significant influence on the majority of people's usage of social media throughout the globe. They started to utilize social networking sites to disseminate material that pleased them and diverted their attention away from the outbreak by employing satirical Internet media (Goyal and Gupta, 2020). During the epidemic, social media use increased significantly, owing to social distancing restrictions enacted by most countries. Because most individuals were compelled to remain at home, they took advantage of the situation and resorted to social media to maintain their ties while reducing their free time (Rogers, 2020).

Due to people's inability to connect physically with friends and family as a result of the social distancing measures, many social media platforms saw a huge growth in their usage, leading them to utilize social media as their primary communication link to preserve their ties. By the end of March 2020, Facebook, for example, had recorded a 50% rise in the usage of messages (Schultz, 2020). Since the beginning of the crisis, WhatsApp has seen a 40% spike in use (Perez, 2020).

News organizations and news organizations have used social media channels to disseminate accurate and false information about the disease. In collaboration with social media firms, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, medical publications, and health-care groups have also contributed to updating and sharing information across numerous platforms. Most health professionals and ministers, on the other hand, utilized their own social media profiles to actively connect with the public and share updates regarding the covid-19 pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020).

In times of crisis, news spreads faster, with accurate information being mixed in with false information, particularly given the quick movement of information between users and its widespread distribution. When government discourse fails to match the rising requirements of the public during crises, news travels very rapidly among social network users via sharing and republishing, which offers a huge door for forgeries and disinformation (Yasead, 2020).

During the covid-19 pandemic, residents in the Levant area, like the rest of the globe, utilised social media sites. Information concerning the virus was disseminated, some of which was true and some of which was incorrect. As a result, there is a lot of conflicting information concerning the condition. The use of social media to disseminate information or disinformation may have severe implications and can impact the attitudes of people who consume it, either favorably or adversely (Moreno and Whitehill, 2014). Thus, the researcher's goal in this paper is to contribute to the current literature in the field by conducting a distributed online survey to determine whether social media platforms are informing or misinforming users about the Covid-19 pandemic, and to learn about people's personal experiences with misinformation about Covid-19 on social media.

This study delivers an executive diagnosis about social media and misinformation during the pandemic, which may provide a basic reference with proper information that will further help researchers, decision-makers, even international organizations how we can ban the misinformation, in addition, to provide the information to the audience in a fast and good way.

1.1. Literature Review

Yased's (2020) study looked at the dissemination of fake news on social media during crises from the perspective of consumers, focusing on the worldwide health catastrophe caused by the developing Coronavirus Covid 19. The goal of the study was to determine the prevalence rates among the target audience of users in Algeria, so data from respondents was collected using an

electronic questionnaire that was distributed using the snowball method and a random sample, and then the results were analyzed using a descriptive-analytical approach, allowing access to key findings such as 78% of respondents believe that the news they are exposed to on social media and the content they browse about the Coronavirus, particularly on Facebook, is fake, and more than half of the respondents believe that the news they are exposed to on social media and the content they browse about the Coronavirus is fake.

The study by Pérez-Escoda (2021) intends to provide substantial data about Spain's youngest generation (Generation Z) in terms of media and information using, online social use, and their relationship with fake news, all in relation to a sense of reliability and trust. A descriptive exploratory study is given, focusing on a sample size of 408 young Spanish students from Generation Z, ages 18 to 22. A customized questionnaire was used to collect data. The findings suggest that young Spaniards rely on networks for knowledge, yet they have a shocking lack of faith in social media as their primary source of information. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, they have consumed the most content relating to politics, entertainment, humor, and music. On the other side, there is widespread skepticism about politicians, the media, and journalists. The conclusion is that media literacy is still more important than ever, but with the added difficulty of mistrust, it may be time to reconsider.

Talwar's (2020) research uses a mixed-methods technique to investigate how people share bogus news. To begin, researchers collected qualitative data from 58 open-ended essays to identify six behavioral expressions linked to spreading fake news. The honeycomb framework and the third-person effect hypothesis were then used to construct a study model hypothesizing the relationship between these behaviors. The control variables were age and gender. The suggested model was tested using two data sets obtained from cross-sectional surveys of 471 and 374 social media users. Due to a lack of time, the study's findings imply that quick news sharing for the purpose of raising awareness had a beneficial effect on the spread of fake news. however, validating content before sharing had no influence on people distributing bogus news. Due to a shortage of time, the study's findings show that social media users who take active corrective action are less likely to distribute fake news. Theoretically and practically, these findings are noteworthy.

Rocha's study (2021) attempted to assess the impact of social media on the spread of infodemic knowledge and its effects on health using a systematic review. the procedures From January 1, 2020, to May 11, 2021, a systematic search was conducted in the MedLine, Virtual Health Library (VHL), and Scielo databases. There were studies that looked at the influence of fake news on patients and healthcare workers all around the world. The Loney and Newcastle–Ottawa Scales were used to methodologically assess the quality of the selected studies. the Last Word It was feasible to detect that infodemic knowledge might create psychological problems such as panic, dread, depression, and exhaustion by analyzing the phenomenon of fake news in health.

1.2. Role of social media during the pandemics

People used to get preventive advice and warnings about epidemics and chronic diseases from official television channels before the widespread use of social media. For example, all of the

television channels that broadcast news of "SARS" in 2003, AIDS in 2004, and swine flu in 2009, the methods of raising awareness from them were local in proposing prevention steps and treatment methods (Tam et al, 2018). In terms of the number of cases and fatalities, as well as monitoring symptoms and disseminating updates to the public on what was happening, the news of the epidemics was not openly and instantly communicated. Then, with the widespread use of social media, it became easier for the audience to get the latest news and developments in the world, but the audience's rapid and unorganized transition to social media platforms in all life activities created a kind of confusion that hit the humanitarian side in cases of diseases and epidemics (Newman et al, 2012). Although social media, especially interactive groups and pages, are useful sources of information, their usage by people who aren't always devoted to the norms for distributing information has made these platforms a place where tampering and spreading rumors and conjecture are common (Vosoughi et al, 2018).

Social media is a key component of the "epidemiological intelligence" system, which connects all tools used to track the spread of diseases and any related information around the world, as well as collect official and unofficial data (from local organizations) for analysis and dissemination to the public (Government of the United Kingdom, 2018). In contrast to the rest of epidemiological intelligence, social media activity increases during an epidemic wave or pandemic, making the issue of content restriction extremely difficult, given the widespread distribution of a large number of posts, photos, videos, and recorded audio clips about the symptoms and causes of the epidemic, as well as the desire to cover all aspects of the disease (Al-Rifai, 2020). As a consequence, social media is an essential instrument for information distribution and awareness. During the 2014 Ebola epidemic, Twitter and Facebook, for example, were news media platforms and the first to disseminate all data, information, and statistics linked to the illness. International health authorities are supporting these platforms as a supplemental communication station for regular broadcasting channels covering "Ebola" news (Roy et al, 2019).

During crises and epidemics, online communication is an ongoing process involving the exchange of information and opinions about them, as well as their transmission through social media platforms by individuals or groups working to collect data within specific content; however, social media content varies depending on the nature of cultures. As a result, this material is often subjected to disinformation or fabrication, which either exaggerates or minimizes the situation's repercussions while making fun of it.

1.3. The concept of misinformation

"Wrong information, or the fact that individuals are uninformed," according to the Cambridge Dictionary (dictionary. cambridge, 2020). According to the Oxford Dictionary, disinformation is defined as "the act of providing false information about something; the false information that is provided" (Oxford Dictionary, 2021). Misinformation is defined by Collins dictionary as "wrong information delivered to someone, generally in a deliberate effort to persuade someone to think something that is not true" (Collins, 2020).

In the context of this study, misinformation refers to all fake news and information that promotes false stories on various topics in order to gain high levels of participation on social media

platforms, and this information is created to influence the masses, their opinions, attitudes, and behaviors in favor of a specific political party.

The term "misinformation" was formerly used to describe misleading news that seemed to be true, but it has now become overused and unproductive. The truth is that the techniques, purposes, and effects of various types of disinformation vary significantly (Lewandowsky et al, 2012).

According to Shawnee State University, there are six forms of disinformation categorised according to the degree of the sender's or contact person's purpose in deceit, including: (Shawnee State University, 2020).

● Fabricated content is entirely bogus information.

● Manipulated content: a distorted version of real information or graphics, such as a sensationalist headline, popularized by 'clickbait';

● Imposter content: imitation of legitimate sources, such as utilizing the branding of a well-known news organization;

● Deceptive content: using information in a misleading way, such as presenting an opinion as fact;

● Misleading context of connection: factually valid material supplied with false contextual information, such as when an article's title does not accurately represent the content;

● Funny but untrue shops are presented as if they are genuine in satire and parody. Although this isn't normally classified as false news, it may deceive readers accidentally.

1.4. Social Media and Misinformation

Following the 2016 US elections and the winning US President Donald Trump's speech, where he stated that the media published a lot of false news or misinformation during the election campaign, which contributed to misleading the American people, there has been an increase in discussion about misinformation. This has led to numerous opinion polls and research, including the "Meredith Foundation American Media Survey 2017," which concluded that 27% of the media published false news or misinformation during the election campaign, which contributed to misleading the American people (Yasead, 2020).

The spread of rumors and false news on social media is due to the speed with which they spread among users, especially in light of the financial rewards associated with viewing rates, which are also related to the number of clicks on those contents, as demonstrated by the findings of a study conducted by Columbia University in 2015, which confirmed that a large number of social media outlets contributed to misleading the audience in order to gain more visits and views of a video (Funke, 2018).

The challenge now facing social media users is not only to avoid being affected by misinformation, but also to avoid spreading it among friends and family, because the user must ensure that the news is as accurate as possible before publishing it. However, studies show that the major-

ity of people who share information via social media do not read it all the way through before publishing it; instead, many of them read only the title (Miller, 2019).

1.5. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

Everyone is talking about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19), and information on the virus and how to protect yourself can be found everywhere. Knowing the facts is critical to being adequately prepared to defend yourself and your family. Unfortunately, most of the information is false. During health crises, misinformation spreads, leaving individuals defenseless and exposed to illness, as well as spreading fear and stigmatization (Unicef, 2020).

Coronavirus Illness 2019 (COVID-19) was the term given to the disease caused by a novel coronavirus that first occurred in Wuhan, China, and is derived as follows: The letters "CO" and "VI" make up the first two letters of the word corona. They are the first two letters of the word virus (virus), and the first letter of disease is "D." This illness was formerly known as "2019 novel coronavirus" or "2019-nCoV." The "Covid-19" virus is a novel virus that is linked to the virus that causes "severe acute respiratory syndrome" (SARS) and some varieties of the common cold (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

Direct contact with respiratory droplets emitted by an infected individual (produced by coughing or sneezing) and contact with virus-infected surfaces are the two ways the virus is spread. The "Covid" virus may live for many hours on surfaces, but it can be removed by washing them off with ordinary disinfectants (World Health Organization a, 2020).

Fever, cough, and shortness of breath are all possible symptoms. The condition may cause pneumonia or trouble breathing in extreme instances, and it can potentially lead to death in rare situations. Because these symptoms are similar to those of influenza or a common cold, and because they are much more prevalent than Covid-19 illness, tests are necessary to determine if the individual has "Covid-19" disease. It's crucial to remember that the major preventative actions are the same: hand washing and respiratory hygiene (controlling coughs or sneezes by bending the elbow to cover the mouth or by covering the mouth with a tissue and tossing the tissue into a closed bin) (Mayo clinic, 2020).

The coronavirus has spread to over 60 nations globally, and Jordan's Ministry of Health reported the first case of Covid-19 on March 2, 2020. (The Jordanian ministry of health, 2020). On February 21, 2020, Lebanon announced the first incidence of a Lebanese lady returning from Iran (MOPH, 2020). The first cases in Palestine were verified on March 5, 2020. (Anadolu Agency, 2020). The instances were originally found at a hotel in Bethlehem, when a group of Greek guests visited the hotel and two of them were subsequently proven to have had the virus, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health. The Syrian Ministry of Health verified the first illness with the developing coronavirus "COVID-19" on March 22, 2020. The individual afflicted with the virus is from outside the nation, according to the ministry, and required precautions have been made to deal with the illness (Reliefweb, 2020).

This study focuses on social media users in the Levant (Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria) of various ages, educational and social backgrounds, and the social media platforms they use.

The study's goal is to determine the role of social media platforms in disseminating disinformation regarding Covid-19 among Levantine residents.

2. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The lack of official sources and the slow dissemination of information imposed by the process of data collection and verification of its validity and credibility before publication, according to research, increases dramatically in times of crisis, in which the true and false are mixed, especially considering the rapid exchange of information between users and its dissemination on large scales, and the lack of official sources and the slow dissemination of information imposed by the process of data collection and verification of its validity and credibility before publication. The study's major goal is to see if and how social media might accept and propagate misinformation regarding Covid-19 in the Levant. As a result, the research question is as follows:

R.Q.: How is social media platforms promoting and facilitating misinformation about Covid-19?

To answer the research questions of this study, an online survey was designed, distributed, and analyzed. The research questions that guided the study were:

1.What are the personal experiences of the people in the Levante region regarding the online misinformation about Covid-19?

2.What is the extent of exposure to misinformation about Covid-19 among people in the Levante region?

H1: Social media platforms is spreading fake news during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Methodology

This research relied on the descriptive-analytical approach, which is defined as: "the approach that depends" on the study of reality or the phenomenon and is concerned with as an accurate description and analysis through a qualitative expression that describes the phenomenon and explains its characteristics, or a quantitative expression that gives a numerical description that shows the amount and size of the phenomenon (Khalil et al, 2011).

To address the study's research objectives, an online survey was sent out to the study area nations (Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria) to learn about people's personal encounters with disinformation about Covid-19 on social media.

We picked a Convenient Sample targeting social media users because of the various audience characteristics, and the sample was acquired using the snowball method. Quantitative research was used to collect data for this study. Although 7553 responses were submitted, only 6910 were chosen for the study. Between June and December 2020, respondents were contacted via WhatsApp and placed on social media sites via smartsurvey.co.uk. The data was coded and shown in Microsoft Excel before being processed and presented with frequency distribution tables in IBM SPSS Statistics 20.

The current study investigated at how Levantine social media users reacted to misinformation

about Covid-19. Field specialists and key stakeholders provided feedback on the survey's nature. Before the final version was published, a pre-study was conducted on a small sample of the target population to check that the questions were clear and understood by the respondents.

To ensure that the content analysis tool was stable, we had some graduate students from Akdeniz University's Faculty of Communication analyze a sample of the study, and after receiving their results, the percentage of agreement between the researcher and each of the analyst colleagues was calculated using the (Azuroff & Mayer equation), and it was found that there is an agreement rate of (89 %) in the study.

There were nine items on the survey questionnaire. The first four questions were used to assess the respondents' country of origin, age, gender, and level of education, while the fifth question was used to determine the respondents' source of knowledge on Covid-19.

The last four questions focused on the reasons for utilizing social media as a source of knowledge about Covid-19, their thoughts on whether social media platforms are reliable sources of information, and their personal experiences with information regarding Coronavirus (Figure 1).

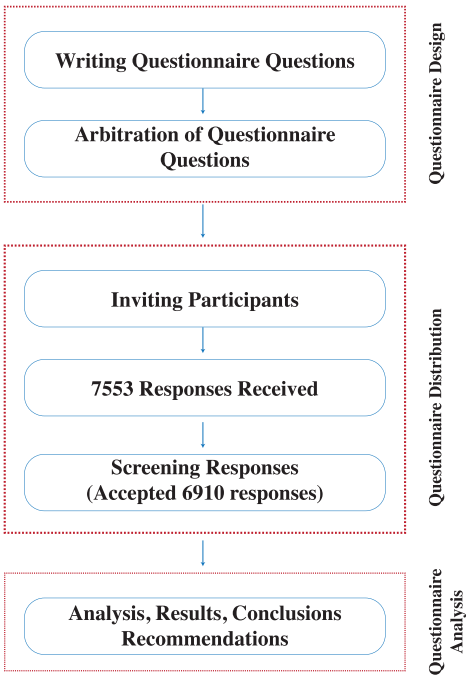

Figure 1. Flow chart of the used Methodology

4. Results and discussions

The questionnaire was created and disseminated to individuals in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria of various levels and ages in order to collect data through an online survey. Although a total of 7553 replies were received, only 6910 were included in the study. The surveys that were removed were incomplete and had no logical replies. Figure 2 shows the survey participants' replies by nation. Jordan contributed 30.3 percent, Lebanon 27.2 percent, Palestine 23.4 percent, and Syria 19.1 percent.

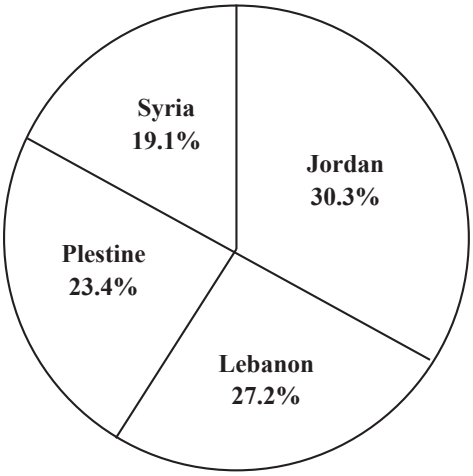

Figure2. country classification of participants in the Survey.

Figure 3 depicts survey participants' replies by gender categorization. Females make up 58.5 percent of the population, while men make up 41.5 percent.

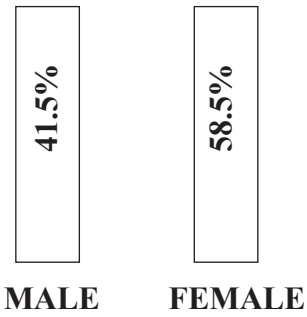

Figure 3. Gender Classification of participants in the Survey.

The age group of 18-25 years garnered the most replies, accounting for 33.1 percent of the total number of responses. Those between the ages of 26 and 33 came in third, with a proportion of 29.2 percent. Table 1 shows that the age group 34–41 years has 19.1 percent of the total.

Table 1 shows the response distribution by age group.

	Age	Response Percent
1	Less than 18	2.8%
2	18- 25 years	33.1%
3	26 – 33 years	29.2%
4	34 – 41 years	19.1%
5	42 – 49 years	8.8%
6	Over 49 years' old	7%

Bachelor's degree holders got the majority of replies (58.3%), followed by Post Graduate degree students (22%). With a proportion of 11.7 percent, those with a high school diploma or less came in third. (See Table 2)

Table 2 shows the distribution of replies by greatest degree of education.

Level of Education	No. of responses	Percentage
High School or less	810	11.7%
(Diploma (Community College	550	8%
Bachelor Degree	4030	58.3%
Post Graduates	1520	22%

As shown in Figure 4. Survey participants were asked about their source of information about Covid-19. While a large majority 55% answered they are using social media to know more about Covid-19, 52% from Local media, 45% from World Health Organization, and 35% from International media. And 1% from doctors and health websites. From this, it can be concluded that the most users of social media during the crisis are young people who have obtained a bachelor's university level.

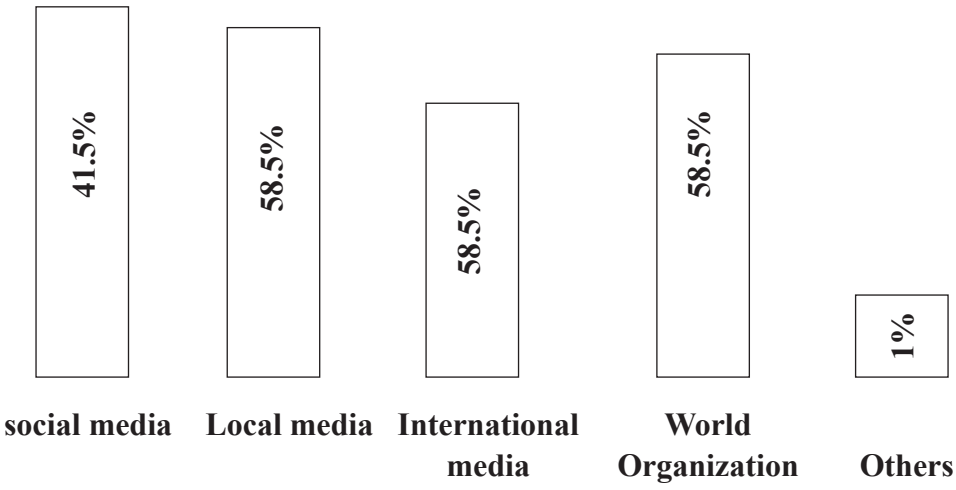

Figure 4. Source of information about Covid-19.

The online study also collected information on why individuals use social media to learn about Covid-19 in general. It was discovered that 61 percent believe social media platforms provide comprehensive and fresh news about the virus because they can access information at any time, 53 percent believe social media provides updated information in a short time, and 32 percent believe social media platforms provide comprehensive and fresh news about the virus. and 23% due to the variety of information regarding the infection. Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3 explains why Covid-19 used social media as a source of knowledge.

Percentage	No. of responses	Level of Education
53%	3660	Gives updated information in a short time
32%	2220	Provides comprehensive and fresh news about the virus
23%	1600	Because of diversity of the content about the virus
61%	4200	Access to information all the time

To find out if the people trust the information on social media platforms, the participants were asked if they were social media platforms are reporting trustfully information. Most of the responses 77.4% answered sometimes only, 20% never but gives you the general picture, and just 2.6% all the time as shown in Figure 5.

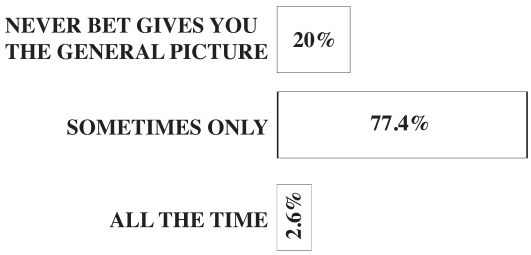

Figure 5: Trust the information on social media.

To measuring personal experiences about misinformation, the researcher asked participants to indicate whether they have read information about Covid-19 and then it turns out that it is misinformation. While over a half of respondents (81.6%) indicated having encountered this sort of information. 43.6% saw a few times (2-4), 22% Many times (5 or more), and 16% just Once a time. But 18.4% indicated not having encountered this sort of content. as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Misinformation about Covid-19 on social media.

Level of Education	No. of responses	Percentage
Never	1270	18.4%
Once	1110	16%
A few times (2-4)	3010	43.6%
Many times (5 or more)	1520	22%

The last question aimed to measure the psychological effects of misinformation about the Corona virus on social media platforms. It is clear that more than 73% they answered Increased panic and fear from the virus, 37% Increased safety precautions, and 28% absolutely indifferent to the virus and its news. As shown in Figure 6.

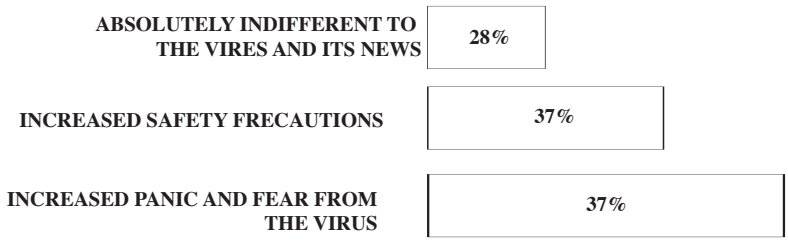

Figure 6: Psychological effects of misinformation about the Covid-19.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

During the epidemic, the media became interested in learning more about the Covid-19. Many posts, however, were misinformation masquerading as reliable disease preventive and control techniques, resulting in a misinformation overload. There was interference with people's behavior and health because of this process, resulting in social unrest marked by violence, distrust, and social upheavals.

This survey, distributed to people in the targeted areas (Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria) using social media platforms, reached some findings of the role of social media in spreading misinformation about Covid-19 in the Levant region.

The outcomes reflected the new trend in this region of the world, where people are relying more and more on social media, especially after the Arab Spring, also called "The revolutions of Facebook" which was largely used by youth in late 2010, early 2011 and onwards. Social media platforms are since used as the main source of information for those living in the targeted area. The spread of technology and smartphones is also another factor, as most smartphones are nowadays affordable for the population suffering from very harsh living conditions. So, smartphones are a way of escaping their realities, which are stamped by mainly marginalization and

unemployment for a large category of youth and women. In this study,58.5% of the respondents to the questionnaire were females, while 41.5% were males, which coincided with the application of home quarantine, which provided more opportunities for both genders to find time for answering the questions. Which also another proof of the wide use of technologies by women.

The age group of 18-25 years garnered the most replies, accounting for 33.1 percent of the total number of responses. Those between the ages of 26 and 33 came in second, with a proportion of 29.2 percent. The age group of 34 to 41 years old came in second with 19.1 percent. This segmentation clearly demonstrates that youth are the most socially connected and respond to surveys to express themselves.

Bachelor's degree holders got the majority of replies (58.3%), followed by Post Graduate degree students (22%). With a proportion of 11.7 percent, those with a high school diploma or less came in third. As a result, it can be stated that the most users of social media to follow information regarding Covid-19 are university-aged young people. The greatest proportion indicates that this group of people is the most impacted by living circumstances. Graduated people are the most affected by unemployment in the research area, either due to a lack of policies in this area or due to some misleading concepts, such as the culture of shame, which states that graduates should be (in their opinion) immediately hired by the public sector with very advanced salaries and positions.

A large percentage of users, estimated at 55%, use social media as a source for information to know more about Covid-19. Compared to 52% who use Local media as a source for information. This can be attributed to the fact that people in general, especially during the locked-down, spend a great deal of time on social media platforms, which makes it easier for them to search for information about the virus by using social media. because people are more interested in news of their countries during crises, a large percentage of them used the local media to know the developments and instructions about Covid-19. It can also be considered as a shift in the perceptions of people about the usuing of news and information.

The main three reasons for using social media platforms as a source about Covid-19 are because it enables them to access information all the time gives updated information in a short time and because social media platforms provide comprehensive and fresh news about the virus.

A significant finding is that more than 77.4% of the respondents believe that social media platforms are reporting trustful information sometimes only, and 20% Never but gives you the general picture. At the same time over half of the respondents (81.6%) have read information about Coronavirus and then it turns out that it is misinformation. This means that social media platforms help spread misinformation in general and about Covid-19 in particular.

In this study 81.6% read information about Coronavirus that turned out to be misinformation. This is consistent with Yased's (2020) study, which found that 78 percent of respondents believe the news they are exposed to on social media and the content they browse about the Coronavirus, particularly on Facebook, is fake, and more than half of the respondents believe the news they are exposed to on social media and the content they browse about the Coronavirus is fake.

The results of this study also agree with Rocha's study (2021), whereby fake news during an epidemic creates psychological problems such as panic, dread, depression, and exhaustion for the people.

Conclusion

Social media channels assisted the spread of misinformation during the recent coronavirus outbreak. When contemplating the possible effects of misinformation, panic, and virus-related dread, heightened safety precautions, and the danger of infection, psychological discomfort, and emotional overload are all factors to consider. The inclination to propagate disinformation or rumors has been connected to the onset of anxiety among persons of all ages during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the above findings, and without discounting the importance of the Ministry of Health's official websites, it is recommended that governments representing the health sector inform the public of reliable information and news in a transparent manner, as well as provide them with a continuous update on the health situation in a timely manner, which helps to reduce misinformation. It is also strongly suggested that governments use their official social media profiles to disseminate information during crises. This will restore the public's faith in official institutions, which has been eroded in recent years.