

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE IN RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The global 2019 new Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic provides an opportunity to improve how people communicate and handle information. People utilise social media extensively in this digital age, making it easier for public health professionals to share information with the public and communicate with them effectively. The study's purpose was to provide a comprehensive picture of how social media affected the emerging COVID-19 pandemic. A thorough literature review was done to obtain information from reputable scientific papers published between 2015 and March 2020. The study examined several articles using the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and key terms related to the subject. The study discovered that using social media to prepare for the COVID-19 pandemic, acquire information, respond to it, and educate the public about it is a good strategy. The study also discovered that social media platforms propagate bogus news and incorrect information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic (infodemic). This undermines public trust and causes fear and terror.

Keywords: *COVID-19 pandemic, coronavirus, social media, infodemic, fake news, misinformation*

1.0 Introduction

In December 2019, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was discovered for the first time in Wuhan, which is located in the province of Hubei in China. As of the beginning of March 2020, there were over 100,000 confirmed cases of infection across the world [4]. The Director-General of the WHO made the decision to declare a pandemic on March 11, 2020, due to the rapid spread of the coronavirus to more than 114 countries and the thousands of deaths it has caused [12]. As seen by Adom in his study [1], the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to be considered the "most" lethal threat that humanity has faced throughout its entire existence. The COVID-19 pandemic drove the world health system to its knees [11]; misinformation and infodemics propagated quicker than the disease across social media platforms [11]. The terms "misinformation" and "fake news" are sometimes used interchangeably to refer to "infodemic." One example of this is the COVID-19 pandemic [13].

Users are able to create accounts on social media platforms, develop content for a variety of objectives (including content related to health), and share their masterpieces with other users [6]. On social media platforms, users in different parts of the world share information about the COVID-19 epidemic using a variety of different hashtags. Report on hashtags such as #StayHome, #StaySafe, #StayTogether, #StayHomeHomeSafe, #Coronavirus, #COVID-19, #QuarantineandChill #Quarantine, and #StayHomeHomeSafe would be used to identify those who have been quarantined due to the COVID-19 virus. The hashtags #COVID19, #LockDownNow, #Covidiot, #SocialDistancing, #LockDown, #FlattenTheCurve, #TogetherAtHome, and #NewNormal are just few of the numerous that are used while sharing information about the COVID-19 outbreak [9]. A study conducted by researches shows that the platforms are utilised in a variety of countries, including China, the United Kingdom, the United States,

and others, with the goals of raising awareness about COVID-19, obtaining up-to-date information, and mitigating the negative effects of social isolation and stress [5]. The platforms offer a quick communication channel, raise the level of involvement with the general public, and cater to the requirements of the present moment. The many platforms of social media are deployed in the role of communication mechanism and instrument [14].

The platforms that comprise social media have a considerable effect not only on the users themselves but also on the organisations they belong to and other stakeholders. From social media platforms, a significant amount of data may be extracted, which can then be used to inform decision-making at all levels of society. A great number of people, at times of emergency such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic, rely on the knowledge obtained through social media in order to make educated judgments [11]. "Social media analytics" refers to the process of deriving and analysing data via social media platforms [6]. This process contributes to the formation of decisions. The impact that social media platforms played during the health crisis was enormous; nevertheless, very little or nothing at all is known about the COVID-19 epidemic. The purpose of this research up to this point has been to analyse the impact that social media had in the COVID-19 pandemic. For the purpose of accomplishing the goal, questions pertaining to each evaluation can be found in the study's discussion section. The results of the study added to the existing body of knowledge by demonstrating that the general public relies on information obtained from social media platforms for up-to-date information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Essentially, social media platforms are providing the public with awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as a response to it. According to the findings of the study, communication and information exchange on the COVID-19 pandemic are made possible through the use of social media among health organisations, practitioners, and the general public.

2.0 Literature Review

Motivation of the Study

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the utilisation of social media analytics can be of assistance in comprehending information trends on both the local and worldwide levels. However, there are concerns over the role that social media platforms play in the accurate dissemination of healthcare information [8]. This question wants answers to determine the role that social media platforms play in the process of comprehending, disseminating, and providing information regarding the COVID-19 epidemic. During times of emergency, such as a pandemic, a crisis, or a natural disaster, platforms for social media are utilised in order to communicate with the general public, as well as to access, gather, and assess the information that is at their disposal. During the COVID-19 epidemic, a significant portion of the population relied heavily on social media platforms. As a result, these channels present a possible opportunity for healthcare organisations to utilise and spread material for the sake of public knowledge and education. Social media is being utilised on a global scale by international and domestic health organisations to spread information about the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of these organisations is to keep the general public informed about what actions to take in order to avoid, minimise, and understand the trends of the virus. A variety of hashtags, such as #Coronavirus, #COVID19, #COVID-19, #StaySafe, #StayAtHome, and many more, are being utilised in the process of disseminating information in order to assist both the general people and those working in healthcare in handling the pandemic. From an empirical standpoint, the role those social media platforms played during the health crisis was enormous; yet, very little or even nothing is known about the COVID-19 epidemic. At this point in time, the purpose of this study is to analyse the impact that social media played in the COVID-19 epidemic. Empirical research indicates that there is little that can be said regarding the usage of social media by public healthcare providers during the outbreak and the applicability in molding public opinion and response [15]. According to the findings of this study, the global public's knowledge of the COVID-19 pandemic is being boosted via social media. In the context of this study, the word "COVID-19" is interchanged with and used in place of references to coronavirus.

Role of Social Media during Covid-19 Pandemic

In the pandemic caused by COVID-19, social media is being utilised to both disseminate and manage information in order to facilitate decision-making. The platforms centralise the coordination of information and communications pertaining to healthcare [3]. According to the research that has been conducted, social media analytics tools such as Google Trends, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter Hashtags are used to generate awareness in order to assist in comprehending material that is circulating online, as well as who shared it, in order to facilitate decision-making processes [6]; [14]. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the same platforms were employed, which had both a beneficial and negative impact on people's access to health information [7]. The type of communication medium that was utilised during the COVID-19 pandemic was the determining factor in how individuals perceived the risk, how aware they were of it, how they behaved in response to it, and how their attitudes affected the decisions they made. The level of knowledge available to the public determines how well they are able to deal with and control the threat. The public can be instantly informed about the COVID-19 symptoms, prevention measures, rate of infection, recovery rate, mortality rate, current news about the virus, and other important information that assists in making people's life easier in terms of controlling and comprehending the dangers through the use of social media, which provides an instant communication medium.

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 is a threat on a worldwide scale, and the only way to manage and contain it is through international cooperation. The World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC; a government organisation), and other national and local organisations have come to recognise the significance of social media in terms of its role in the dissemination of health education, information, and services, in addition to its role in the promotion of products [10]. During the COVID-19 outbreak, social media and the channels it offers are being utilised to provide information, education, updates, and social support for both the general public and those working in the healthcare industry. A number of EID epidemics, including Ebola (2014) and HINI (2009), have resulted in the utilisation of social media platforms. The platforms are utilised to collect information regarding the public's knowledge and experiences with the COVID-19 epidemic [10]. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the use of social media by its users as a source of information and updates on various social media platforms, at the same time that those platforms are being used to collect information and analyse data using social media analytics, constitutes a global pandemic. For instance, during the quarantine operations that took place in China, social media has been used to help guide as well as provide reasons for the quarantine, strategies, and practical guidance (advice), which assisted in assisting and waving off any sort of hoax and infodemic [2]. When it comes to the COVID-19 pandemic, public healthcare institutions, providers, and workers are turning to social media in order to dispel public rumors and misleading news.

3.0 Methodology

This research analysed and selected empirical materials using the PRISMA process, which is based on the principle of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. These materials included peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, book chapters, textbooks, and other empirical sources that covered topics such as social media, EIDs, and the COVID-19 pandemic. As was mentioned, the sources that covered EIDs and social media platforms were used to determine whether or not articles (materials) chosen for the study qualified as eligible for the investigation. Additionally, the criteria for selecting the suitable literature were as follows: (1) the literature had to be original; (2) it had to include "empirical studies"; (3) it had to be peer-reviewed; and (4) it had to cover social media information, contents, and COVID-19. This research article seeks to investigate the role that social media played in the COVID-19 pandemic using the aforementioned criteria as its guidance. To be considered for inclusion, research papers or other types of publications must have been produced somewhere between 2015 and March of 2020. The purpose of including published papers between 2015 and 2019 before the COVID pandemic was to direct readers through the literature and help them understand the influence of social media platforms on previous pandemics, both positively and negatively.

A variety of research databases, including those pertaining to medicine, social media, the social sciences, psychology, and communication, were looked through. Some of these databases include Google Scholar, PubMed, ResearchGate, and ScienceDirect. The EIDs outbreak, social media, and important connectors were taken into consideration when searching for relevant keywords. EIDs epidemic keywords include "Ebola," "Coronavirus," or "COVID-19," "COVID19 pandemic," "Zika," and others. Other EIDs outbreak keywords include "Zika," "Ebola," "COVID-19," and a few other viruses fall under the umbrella term of EIDs. The researcher discussed them to help the readers grasp the literature in those areas so that they might have a better comprehension of the subject matter that was the focus of the investigation. Keywords associated with social media include phrases such as "social media," "social media platforms," and "social media applications," as well as names like "Facebook," "WhatsApp," "YouTube," and "Twitter." The words "role," "effects," "impact," "influence," "use," "affect," and "consequences" are the most important essential connectors. The search turned up a number of publications, all of which were evaluated with regard to their subject matter, abstracts, introductions, and even the literature in light of the criteria for selection that were presented earlier. The screening procedure guarantees that relevant research is incorporated into the study so as to achieve the goal of the investigation.

4.0 Findings

In this day and age, the link between COVID-19 and social media platforms has been the subject of study in a number of research publications. The result of the study was generated from Table 1, which looked at the main area of the studies that were covered in investigating the influence of social media platforms on the COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluations that were found in the study's results part were able to be shown in the discussion of the results section. The topics that were discussed throughout the study section are outlined in detail in the final column of Table 1.

TABLE 1:
Summary of Selected Studies

Author(s)	EID	Social media	Method	Findings
[14]	H1N1, Ebola virus, H7H9	Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Blog	Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses	Lack of theory when investigating EID communication styles during an outbreak.
[16]	Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)	Twitter	Desktop review	Twitter makes it easy for healthcare workers to respond quickly and act (both globally, nationally, and locally).
[11]	COVID-19	Social media	None	The best way to find and get rid of infodemic on social media is to use natural language.
[17]	COVID-19	WhatsApp	None	During COVID-19, there should be controls in place to help deal with the bad effects of social media on the spread of health information.
[2]	COVID-19	Social media	Literature review	Social media is good for fighting COVID-19 and sharing information. It is also used to put rumours and false information to rest.
[18]	COVID-19	Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Reddit	None	Infodemic is spread through the social media sites listed (awareness).
[19]	COVID-19	Weibo	None	Use of social media platforms like Weibo to share information in an unorganised way (awareness).
[20]	COVID-19	Social media	None	Information about the COVID-19 pandemic is spread through social media platforms (awareness).
[21]	COVID-19	Twitter	None	During the pandemic, social media is a source of information for many people (both global, national, and local).
[7]	COVID-19	Social media	None	How social media panic made the COVID-19 pandemic worse.

The explanation of the findings from the research is broken down into several categories, including evaluations one and two, and the obstacles that prevented social media from playing an effective role during the COVID-19 epidemic. In each of the evaluations, the findings are broken down into subheadings so that the reader can have a clearer understanding of the findings of the study.

Evaluation 1: Raising Public Awareness and Reaction

The public's awareness, reactions, and perspectives on the COVID-19 pandemic are being cultivated with the help of social media platforms. Communications in the field of health are disseminated to the general population for the purposes of disease control, prevention, and containment. The most important question to ask is, "How good is the public awareness and response that is generated through social media platforms?" The venues for social media are responsible for increased public knowledge, shifts in attitudes and behaviours, and new perspectives held by the general public.

The exchange of information

The proliferation of social media has made health information and education more accessible to people all over the world. Workers in the health care industry as well as health-related organisations have become aware of the potential benefits of utilising social media platforms to disseminate health-related communication, campaigns, and news. Information regarding the COVID-19 epidemic is shared and distributed across various social media sites. People are depending on social media sites for information and are making use of alert search as well as utilising various hashtags such as #COVID19, or #Coronavirus, or #COVID-19 and following numerous organisations on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram. On social media, users share their own personal experiences, viewpoints, jokes, markings, information that may be misleading or inaccurate, as well as news regarding the EIDs and COVID-19 pandemic. Through live chat on various social media platforms, such as Twitter and others, health organisations such as the WHO disseminate information regarding many aspects of healthcare.

Raising public awareness

The information that can be found on social media provides a high degree of awareness about EIDs for both health professionals and the general public. The public's understanding of the COVID-19 epidemic is significantly impacted as a result. This results in a flow of information that is both unorganised and unprecedented. It is difficult for members of the public to verify the material found on social media platforms because that content is not controlled. The usage of social media during a pandemic, such as the breakout of the Zika virus in 2016, increases the amount of unstructured news, which causes the general population to become alarmed and engage in debate. There is a possibility that the material shared on social media platforms will increase people's levels of dread. The public's attention is drawn to any EIDs epidemic, including the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of people talking about the outbreak, sharing information and news about it, and disseminating it through social media utilising a variety of platforms or applications causes public opinion to rise. Social media is utilised by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other national and local health agencies in order to raise public awareness and conduct campaigns regarding any outbreak. By now it should go without saying that the mood of the public can be gauged through social media, and bad material is monitored by appropriate health organisations and corrected when necessary.

The Public Perception

The public's perspective may shift depending on the accuracy of the information that is received. The public may have either a favourable or negative perspective and view about the outbreak as a result of COVID-19. This is determined by the nature of the information that is available in the public domain. The outbreak of COVID-19 is providing users of social media platforms with access to a wide variety of information as well as options for how to respond. During the outbreak of COVID-19, many forms of

media, including images (photos), videos, text, and audio notes, are exchanged on social media. Depending on the posts and comments made on social media, the general public may regard the COVID-19 as either a minor or large risk. The opinions of the general public will be taken into consideration while making decisions on the COVID-19. In addition, the personal experiences and witness accounts of others that are widely disseminated through social media may be the source of the public's perspectives on any outbreak. While also, social media platforms make it possible for authorised authorities and people to provide immediate clarification regarding any infodemics (misinformation) or damaging information and points of view.

Evaluation 2: Social Media are Used by National, Local, and Public Organisations to Spread the Word About the COVID-19 Pandemic

To efficiently direct communication, offer updates, generate awareness, manage and regulate COVID-19 news, and disseminate other EID material on social media sites, national and local organisations, as well as public health personnel, make use of these platforms. These agencies and health care workers at the national and state levels employ a variety of spoken languages in their interactions with patients. The public is given access to information that is sometimes understandable through the language, but that information can be misunderstood.

Managing the flow of communication

When it comes to effectively communicating information to the general public about COVID-19, national and local healthcare businesses are shifting to social media platforms and other news media channels for assistance. Through the use of social media platforms, people can more easily be directed in their communication. For instance, information about the Zika outbreak was communicated through Twitter, which was utilised to combat antimicrobial resistance. The public relies on social media for education and information on their health whenever there is a public health emergency, as the COVID-19 epidemic. During an epidemic such as the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional news media outlets and social media platforms can work together to better communicate with the general public.

Educating and Raising People's Awareness

The use of social media makes it possible for national and local health organisations to raise awareness of the COVID-19 (or any EIDs) outbreak and tell the general public about it. There is a lot of material and posts (photos, videos, and comments) concerning the COVID-19 outbreak being distributed on social media and developed by health organisations. These posts are intended to raise public health awareness about the pandemic.

Managing and Regulating

The COVID-19 epidemic causes a panic among the general population, manifesting itself as anxiety, phobia, and terror. The public's ability to readily absorb the message is facilitated by the availability of credible information. Both the control and management of the situation are notoriously difficult for health organisations and the general population. It is impossible to underestimate the amount of information that is being disseminated on an outbreak via social media. It is very obvious that channels provided by social media are being utilised to mobilise, control, and manage the dissemination of COVID-19 through posts that can be trusted and information obtained from health organisations. The use of social media allows for the monitoring of health crises and outbreaks.

However, social media also allows an excellent response, surveillance, readiness, and detection, which helps contain and manage the outbreak. One example of this would be the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, the use of social media contributes to the tracking of EIDs and the coverage of health media. Using social media to control and manage communications is one way to prevent panic and spread of false information (infodemic), as well as improve communication during a pandemic.

Using Social Media Platforms to Disseminate EID-Related Information

On COVID-19, social media networks serve an infinite number of general objectives. Social media users are particularly active online, acquiring information about the pandemic and informing others of their findings. Health organisations can greatly improve their communication by utilising social media platforms. Because there are no restrictions on the content that may be shared on social networking platforms, there is no check on the spread of incorrect or misleading information, sometimes known as an infodemic. The same irresponsible use of social media platforms occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Obstacles Preventing Social Media from Playing a Meaningful Role During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In this day and age of technology, the biggest problems that humans face are infodemics (short for "misinformation") and lies. The difficulty of limiting and managing inaccurate information that is available in the public domain is an issue that health organisations must tackle. The initial stages of an outbreak are marked by widespread disbelief and uncertainty regarding the pandemic. The dissemination of information and postings can be arranged in either an organised (reliable) or unstructured (misleading) fashion on social media platforms. During the COVID-19 epidemic, social media serves as a portal through which information can be accessed. The dissemination of misleading, false news, disinformation (infodemic), or information that is wrong occurs frequently on social media and other new media technologies, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter, amongst other platforms. During COVID-19, there is an overwhelming amount of information, as well as widespread dissemination of fake information across social media platforms. However, during the COVID-19 epidemic, there exist obstacles that make it difficult to properly communicate health information and educate the public. Due to language barriers, there is limited opportunity for effective communication on social media during the outbreak. The COVID-19 pandemic began in China, and millions of people there quickly began spreading the word in their own tongues, making it difficult for anyone who could not know Mandarin to understand what was going on. Because of the widespread use of social media in today's culture, whether young or old, it is unavoidable that false news, rumours, and information will be circulated during the COVID-19 outbreak. According to research, Twitter and other social media platforms are routinely used to spread incorrect, misleading, and erroneous information. The proliferation of false posts and information makes it harder to monitor and disseminate pertinent health news and information. This makes it more difficult to control.

In order to remove these obstacles, users of social media should refrain from distributing erroneous information during the EIDs pandemic, such as COVID-19; instead, they should read and verify the material from its source before disseminating it. Users must only share or distribute information or postings that originate from reputable health organisations or sources. Additionally, users should only consider the information provided by official health organisations and disregard any other sources.

The Influence of Social Media and Infodemic (Misinformation) on the COVID-19 Pandemic and Its Repercussions

The spread of terror and dread through social media platforms caused by infodemic has a harmful impact. The spread of rumours and false information is known as an infodemic and is commonplace in everyday life as well as on social media. The spread of falsehood can have fatal consequences. The spread of false information (also known as an infodemic) is a danger to society, and irresponsible use of social media can be detrimental to both society and the health care system, as well as the public's ability to

respond. During the duration of the outbreak, there has been a lot of discussion about the effect that social media has on society because of the volume of information that has been spreading online. The period of the digital revolution is known as the era of fake news or misinformation since it is an era in which items can be made and circulated on purpose or unintentionally. The COVID-19 pandemic moves more slowly than the spread of rumours on social media, infodemics, and panic. Because there was a lot of material floating around on social media during the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak, it was difficult to tell the difference between facts and rumours. As a result of the lack of clarity surrounding the evidence and the origin of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been difficult for scientific or professional knowledge to propagate. The use of social media allows for immediate and high-quality access to real-time news. On a global scale, these platforms are used to transmit infodemic, also known as misinformation, as well as fake news about healthcare concerns.

However, a significant number of individuals and health providers are misusing the platforms in order to disseminate false information, which poses a global danger to the control, administration, and security of healthcare. Disinformation, or infodemic, is disseminated with the help of three components known as "agent, message, and interpreter." These elements contribute to the creation, circulation, and re-cycling of the misinformation. The fact that many people rely on social media platforms to acquire access to news and information from across the world and their own communities is one reason for the rise in popularity of these platforms. It is generally accepted that individuals rely more on the news, information, posts, and updates that are offered on social media platforms than they do on other types of media. Because of their reliance on social media, their attention is diverted away from traditional media outlets and their interaction with one another. The frequency of false news and disinformation constitutes a threat to society on a global scale, particularly in the area of health care.

The emergency situation caused by the novel COVID-19 has led to the spread of rumours, fake information, news, and conspiracy theories all across the world regarding its origin. On social media, conspiracy theories, fake news, and several other forms of misinformation are fast spreading, a phenomenon known as an infodemic. In the case of an outbreak, users of social media are forced into complete and utter chaos. Because of the prevalence of social media, the word of the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying panic spread much more quickly than the virus itself. Fear and confusion are spreading at a faster rate, which impacts the rate of response and control as the panic and the dissemination of false information (infodemic) continues. The spread of uncontrolled and inaccurate information (also known as a "infodemic") not only endangers the lives of individuals as well as the functioning of the healthcare system, but it also undermines the efficiency of control and administration efforts. The COVID-19 information epidemic has the potential to kill more people than the virus itself and the healthcare system combined. In sum, the spread of false information and rumours (infodemics) via social media has a harmful impact on public health.

Both positive and negative effects can be caused by social media on the dissemination of outbreak information. When there is an outbreak of a disease, like as the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare organisations, practitioners, and the general public are dependent on social media to communicate information. Both the public health system and the response to the outbreak are in jeopardy as a result of the proliferation and quick distribution of incorrect information regarding the disease. The implications of this study are applicable to healthcare organisations, their employees (practitioners), and the general public.

Healthcare providers: Healthcare providers on a global, national, and even local level are increasingly turning to social media in order to disseminate information that has been verified to be accurate regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time of the outbreak, the possibility for information sharing lies within the platforms of social media. In order to combat these threats and supply the public with accurate information, however, effective and timely suppression of the spread of misinformation, sometimes known as "infodemic," is needed. The announcement of an outbreak and the posting of facts should be done through social media channels, and healthcare providers should be active in acting quickly. Make

use of social media to keep an eye out for false news and infodemics (misinformation) relating to the pandemic and move quickly to dispel any information and facts that have been proven to be false [22]. The usage of social media by healthcare providers should be ongoing for the purpose of providing support and reacting to questions and comments from the general public. They should utilise social media in order to provide explanations, guidelines, updates, management, and other steps in order to control, monitor, and combat the spread of an epidemic such as COVID-19. The usage of social media allows for the broadcasting of live discussions, as well as the giving of announcements and updates, in order to address public issues.

Healthcare practitioners: These individuals are in the forefront of managing and providing care for victims of an outbreak. They should make use of social media in their local healthcare units so as to provide help, advice, and facts to the general public regarding a variety of issues. They are able to make use of the platforms in order to demonstrate how they are monitoring and managing the treatment in addition to the other activities.

The public: The public's awareness of an outbreak such as COVID-19 is quickly growing as a direct result of the proliferation of social media. On the subject of any outbreak, the general public should place their trust in the information, facts, and explanations that are offered by authorised public healthcare providers and personnel (practitioners). Any information or news regarding an outbreak that comes from unidentified or unreliable sources should not be believed or distributed by the general public. In a nutshell, members of the public should not believe everything they see or read on social media and should be aware that these platforms are rife with infodemic (misinformation) and fake news.

5.0 Discussion & Recommendation

In the event that it is not used in the appropriate manner, social media has the capability of both managing healthcare information during epidemics and misleading the general population. The academic community is beginning to pay more attention to the impact that social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter have had on epidemics like the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a possibility that academic study of the COVID-19 pandemic will pick up speed in the near future. The next step for studies should be to investigate the influence or effects that news and information transmitted via social media had on human psychology during the time of the pandemic. In subsequent research, the impact of social media on accomplishing social distance and complying with other health organisations' and the government's orders during outbreaks should also be investigated. When it comes to preventing and managing epidemics, researchers should also investigate to understand the consequences of infodemics, also known as disinformation, that spread on social media. These studies, along with many others, will contribute to a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the role of social media and its impact on epidemics.

6.0 Conclusion

As a result of the recent COVID-19 outbreak, global health services are operating at near capacity and under extreme stress. Through the use of social media platforms and various other types of electronic media, healthcare providers and practitioners are disseminating health information to the general population in an effort to reduce the danger of the COVID-19 pandemic and better manage its impacts. The general population relies on social media platforms to acquire information and gain a better understanding of the outbreak, its symptoms, and the control, management, and containment measures that are being offered by authorised public and commercial healthcare organisations. This study was able to grasp the role that social media plays as well as its application in the process of distributing information and posts (photos, videos, and comments) regarding the COVID-19 epidemic.

In addition, the various social media channels play a significant part in helping the general public keep abreast of the latest information and developments about the COVID-19 epidemic. Information can

be shared between healthcare providers, practitioners, and the general public through the use of these platforms, which operate as an intermediate medium (healthcare receivers). In conclusion, it may be said that the prevalence of false news and infodemic (misinformation) is growing. Many people are under the false impression that the COVID-19 outbreak is under control because of social media.

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