



COVID-19, MISINFORMATION, FAKE NEWS, CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND ISLAMOPHOBIA ON TWITTER



The ability for spontaneous and global communication for users with multiple others has presented a global issue where the phenomena described as 'digital wildfires' is seeing harmful and misleading content being circulated online, becoming viral and in effect leading to the damage of the wellbeing of and marginalising individuals and communities (Edwards et al, 2020).



Misinformation, conspiracies and fake news are perpetuating the levels of extremism that is present online, particularly in response to trigger events. In the wake of the current covid-19 pandemic an insurgence of misinformation and fake news rapidly circulated the globe. The World Health Organisation in response warned of an on-going 'infodemic', where in particular, misinformation was being propagated (World Health Organization, 2020b; Zarocostas, 2020).

25%

Of the highest viewed covid-19 YouTube videos contained misleading information. Videos which reached over **62 million** views worldwide (Li, Bailey, Huynh, and Chan, 2020)

46%

of the united kingdoms populations and **48%** of the united states population have reported being exposed to misinformation and fakes news around covid-19 (Ofcom, 2020; Mitchell, & Oliphant, 2020).

COVID-19 MISINFORMATION AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

Muslims have faced accusations, many right-wing members have claimed they are spreading the virus, describing them as super spreaders and that their Islamic rituals are violating covid-19 restrictions

(Bakry, Syatar, Haq, Mundzir, Arif & Amiruddin, 2020; Nagar & Gill, 2020).



India media outlets such as The Hindu has propagated and encouraged hate towards Islam as a result of printing caricatures depicting a covid-19 shaped virus wearing Muslim clothing (Bakry, Syatar, Haq, Mundzir, Arif & Amiruddin, 2020)

An influx of fake news has also contributed to Islamophobia, claims that state that Muslims are spreading covid-19 by spitting on policemen as well as fruit, food and utensils (Nagar & Gill, 2020).



CORPUS LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF COVID-19 RELATED ISLAMOPHOBIA ON TWITTER

THE CURRENT RESEARCH SORT TO INVESTIGATE THE AETIOLOGY OF COVID-19 RELATED ISLAMOPHOBIA THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF CORPUS LINGUISTICS

100,545
Tweets were analysed from 100 Twitter accounts

Participants were rated on anonymity, membership length and postage frequency

AntConc software was used to produce a word list and keyness results for the corpora

28 key terms were generated i.e. islamspreadcovid, hateislam, islamiccoronajihad, jihadagent, crushtablighispitters, islamicvirus. The frequency of these terms were compared across low, moderate and high level of the three variables

FINDINGS

ANONYMITY

The 28 keywords appeared statistically more frequently in the tweets of low anonymity users than they did in either moderate or high anonymity users, clearly suggesting that low levels of anonymity may be predictive of increased Islamophobic language use.

MEMBERSHIP LENGTH

The 28 keywords appeared statistically more frequently in the tweets of moderate membership length users than they did in either low or high membership length users. Suggesting that moderate levels of membership length may be predictive of increased Islamophobic language use.

POSTAGE FREQUENCY

The 28 keywords appeared statistically more frequently in the tweets of low postage frequency users than they did in either moderate or high postage frequency users. Suggesting that low levels of postage frequency may be predictive of increased Islamophobic language use.