Bahraini Public’s Dependency on Social Media as a Source of Information About COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. This study aims to identify the role of media campaigns factors to combat Corona Virus (COVID-19) in the Kingdom of Bahrain applying to a simple random sample of 250 through questionnaire tool. The results showed the campaigns focused on many ways to prevent the disease, namely: washing hands frequently with soap and water, using disinfectants to clean the house, using tissues when coughing or sneezing, ventilating the house constantly the campaigns showed also many indicators of Corona Virus infection such as high temperature in all body parts, and severe coughing.

Keywords: Dependency · Social media · Coronavirus pandemic

1 Introduction

In recent few years, there have witnessed a remarkable increase of interest in media campaigns, especially with the growth and complexity of societies and the intertwining of their elements, which resulted many social problems requiring speedy treatment in an organized scientific method, and these campaigns play their role to push forward the progress movement within these societies to change the knowledge and attitudes of the target audiences to make an impact on human behavior.

The importance of media campaigns is it addresses different and diverse audiences and make a change in social behaviors that have been established over many years, in addition to that it aims to influence the knowledge, attitudes and behavior of individuals, which requires a great effort continuously, as individuals refuse to change their behaviors easily as it is social patterns that gained their strength from the values and customs of society (Alshaer et al. 2020; Awwad and Zidan, 2021; Alqooti 2020).

Media campaigns face many difficulties during their preparation and implementation, including that the ideas promoted in these campaigns are often viewed as an interference
on their personal life, especially when aim to change attitudes or modifying behaviors., and then this study aims to identify the factors affecting the effectiveness of media campaigns in the Kingdom of Bahrain applying to the health campaigns for Coronavirus COVID-19 (Alshetti and Al Mubarak 2019).

2 Literature Review

Jane Shukry’s study 2020, concluded that one of the most important reasons for university youth to be exposed to the media campaigns of the National Transformation Program 2020 is to follow the Kingdom’s achievements in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Raed Bin Ali Abdul Rahman Al-Amroud’s study 2019, concluded that among the reasons for the respondents to follow up the media campaigns provided by the Ministry of Interior in the field of drug control is the information provided about these campaigns, and the search for benefit or information related to drug control.

Guston Ares, Leanardo machin, Leticia Vidal and Others, 2019, concluded that media campaigns should include an effective public awareness aimed at encouraging the use of dietary warnings in decision-making: warnings about improving dietary habits, and provide access to information about the food product.

Study by Abdulsamad Sahly, Chun Shau, k. Hazel Kwon 2019, found that for both Trump and Clinton Twitter followers, conflict and ethics frames consistently attracted retweet behaviors and emotional frames. However, Facebook sharing did not show a consistent pattern among the candidates’ followers.

Osama Al-Ghoul’s study 2019, concluded that the importance of following the procedure’s guidelines in strategic planning of media campaigns in the field of Islamic advocacy, and classifying the target segments into smaller groups to facilitate the process of communicating with them through the appropriate mechanisms.

Karamullah Hussein study 2018 which concluded that most of the public relations practitioners who prepare, design and implement media campaigns are not specialized, and this weakens their role, activities, and limits their effectiveness.

Karima Derbal study 2018, which concluded that one of the reasons and motives for women’s exposure to mass media is to follow-up the health and social issues, and that health content is one of the most prominent media messages that the respondents follow.

Alaa Hashem study 2017, which concluded that the percentage of respondents who know the Child Protection Committees or any information about them was only 18%, and that there is a clear deficiency in the Child Protection Committees’ for appropriate methods and methods to inform the public about their efforts.

Ilham Ibrahim Karrar study 2016, which found that malaria is the most endemic disease in Kassala State (43.1%), followed by tuberculosis (19.2%), which should focus on media awareness campaigns.

Atef Choucair study, 2015, which concluded that respondents’ attitudes were not significantly affected by the media campaigns carried out by journalists via Facebook, due to the presence of thought and culture in these campaigns, which constitutes their cultural immunity.
Grace Awad Basir study 2015, which concluded that awareness campaigns are positive and important due to their impact on the creation of women’s health awareness through media and community means that the usage of campaigns to raise women’s health awareness and encourage them to apply for early checkup.

Rosanna Quattrin et al 2015, which found that out of 10,571 publications, 50 studies related to the use of mass media in health prevention campaigns were included in the campaigns, and social media was used in the majority of programs (58%), and television was the most used (26%).

From these studies, the researcher concluded that:

A- Some previous studies indicated that the respondents stated that they are affected by media campaigns whose content is correct and realistic, and that they themselves make sure that these campaigns are correct.

B- Previous studies emphasized the positiveness and importance of awareness campaigns due to their impact on creating awareness through media and community means that are used in awareness campaigns, such as women’s awareness campaigns to raise health awareness for them.

C- Previous studies emphasized the necessity for media campaigns to have many ingredients in order to succeed in influencing individuals, including the media message excitement, focusing on rational grooming methods more than emotional methods of grooming, and to rely on many media means.

D- Previous studies confirmed the effectiveness of media campaigns in changing individuals’ attitudes, and that media campaigns through the media had a major role in improving the knowledge level of the respondents, such as media campaigns that addressed many problems such as smoking addiction, drug and alcohol abuse, and led to a positive change in the public.

E- Previous studies have shown that most of the public relations workers, who are the ones who prepare, design and implement media campaigns, are not specialists in them, and this weakens their role and kills their activity, and limits their effectiveness.

F- Previous studies indicated the need to create societal policies that support opportunities for positive change, and which constitute persuasive influences to accept positive behaviors (Hamdan 2018).

Problem Statement:
Social media has become an effective means of social communication between people as it allows the connection between colleagues and friends and not only that, but also helps in identifying and communicating between different people and communities each other, and from this standpoint social networks sought to provide an appropriate amount of sites that support communication, the most prominent of which was Absolutely Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Through personal interaction with social media, the researcher noticed the presence of some media campaigns related to media campaigns for the Coronavirus (COVID-19), and the pursuit of communication to exchange views, experiences and knowledge in pursuit of the growth and development of this field on the one hand, and the Ministry
of Health with the public in social networks on the other hand, Seeking to channel the energies, capabilities and skills of the members of these groups in serving health work, and spreading its culture in society.

Thus, the problem remains if social media has a role in enriching social interactions, then how can media campaigns through these means play a role in supporting the health sector by applying to Corona COVID-19 campaigns?

**Study Significance:**
This study derives its importance according to the following factors:

**Theoretical importance:**

– The theoretical importance of this study stems from the fact that it is an attempt to assess the importance of media campaigns in social media. It also represents an attempt to apply and test the theoretical foundations of the persuasive influence process model in media campaigns on the reality imposed by communication technology on human societies and the alternatives that it placed before it, which helped to create a new form of human communication.

**Scientific importance:**

– Given the lack of Arab studies concerned with studying media campaigns through social media and their role in supporting the health work sector, this study comes to add scientific knowledge about this phenomenon, analyze its dimensions, and provides an assessment of the importance of media campaigns in social media, and contributes to highlighting the importance of media campaigns in support of the health work sector.

**Objectives of the Study:**
The main objective of the study is:

Determine the relative importance of each of the factors in influencing the effectiveness of the application of the Corona COVID-19 virus campaigns, and under this main goal a group of sub-objectives falls as follows:

Objectives of the study:

– Knowing the extent of the respondents’ knowledge of ways to prevent infection with Corona disease (COVID-19).
– Knowing the extent of the respondents’ knowledge of the methods by which it is possible to determine infection with Corona disease (COVID-19).
– Knowing the extent of the respondents’ knowledge of how the patient deals with Corona disease (COVID-19).
– To know how well the respondents remembered the campaign to combat the spread of Corona disease (COVID-19).
– Monitoring the benefits of campaign messages that used to combat the spread of Corona disease (COVID-19).
Study Questions:

- To what extent do the respondents know the methods of preventing infection with Corona disease (COVID-19)?
- To what extent do the respondents know the methods of infection with Corona disease (COVID-19) can be determined?
- How the respondents deal with Corona disease (COVID-19)?
- How the respondents remember the campaign to combat the spread of Corona disease (COVID-19)?
- What is the respondents’ evaluation to the success of the campaign to combat the spread of Coronavirus disease and the reasons leading to that (COVID-19)?

Study Method:
The study uses the Survey methodology for collecting data and information about the phenomenon under study (Muhammad Abdel-Hamid 2000, p158) and it is also a method used to collect information to describe, compare and explain the knowledge, trends and behavior of the study respondents (Joann Keyton 2006, p162), noting that the researcher was keen to choose the Bahraini public who is exposed to the campaigns related to Coronavirus (COVID-19) On a regular basis and not accidentally, so that the nature of the results that the study concludes can be trusted.

Sample:
The field study was applied on a simple random sample of 250 respondents from the four governorates of the Kingdom of Bahrain, whose ages range between 18–35 years. The sample items were distributed electronically to these governorates randomly to represent the different economic and social levels.

3 Results

Level of Knowledge Gained from Campaigns:
It was found that the majority of respondents were distinguished by a high level of knowledge presented in the campaign advertisements, which partly included information about the disease, its symptoms and how to prevent it, while another aspect of the campaign advertisements dealt with information about the Coronavirus (covid19) drug used in the treatment of the disease, and the answers were as follows:

First: Knowledge of the Respondents About the Disease:

1- knowledge about the methods of preventing disease (Table 1):
Table 1. Knowledge about methods of preventing disease

| Items                                                                 | Yes | No  | Total |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|
|                                                                      | F   | %   | F     | %    | F   | %   |
| Wash hands frequently with soap and water                            | 234 | 93.6| 16    | 6.4  | 250 | 100 |
| Use disinfectants to clean household surfaces                        | 224 | 89.6| 26    | 10.4 | 250 | 100 |
| Confine to take vitamins to prevent disease                          | 71  | 28.4| 179   | 71.6 | 250 | 100 |
| Use tissues when coughing or sneezing                               | 228 | 91.2| 22    | 8.8  | 250 | 100 |
| Pay attention to cooking meat at a high temperature                  | 123 | 49.2| 177   | 50.8 | 250 | 100 |
| Always ventilate the house                                          | 232 | 92.8| 18    | 7.2  | 250 | 100 |
| Do not touch the eyes, mouth, or nose with the hands unless you are sure that they are clean | 226 | 90.4| 24    | 9.6  | 250 | 100 |
| Keep drinking fluids                                                 | 212 | 84.8| 38    | 15.2 | 250 | 100 |
| Reducing visits to family, relatives and acquaintances               | 168 | 67.2| 82    | 32.8 | 250 | 100 |
| Adequate distance from patients                                      | 201 | 80.4| 49    | 19.6 | 250 | 100 |
| Sitting in constantly air-conditioned places                         | 82  | 32.8| 168   | 67.2 | 250 | 100 |
| Reporting the whereabouts of pigs                                    | 99  | 39.6| 151   | 60.4 | 250 | 100 |
| Regular or seasonal influenza virus vaccinations are sufficient as the only means of prevention | 41  | 16.4| 209   | 83.6 | 250 | 100 |
| Wear masks when leaving the house                                    | 70  | 28  | 180   | 72   | 250 | 100 |

The previous table showed an increase in the study sample’s knowledge of the correct information on how to prevent diseases as follow: washing hands frequently with soap and water by 93.6%, the use of disinfectants to clean the house by 89.6%, use tissues when coughing or sneezing by 91.2%, ventilate the house constantly by 92.8%, do not touch the eyes, mouth or nose with the hands unless after making sure that they are clean by 90.4%, persistence on drinking liquids and that is 84.8%, dimension Adequate distance from patients by 80.4%, reducing visits to relatives, relatives and acquaintances by 76.2%.

The phrase wearing masks when leaving the house comes with a small percentage of the study sample supported their knowledge of them at a rate of 28%, and the phrase reporting on the whereabouts of pigs as a source of mutation of the virus, but most of the respondents rejected it with a rate of 60.4%, and this may be attributed to this. From the researcher’s point of view, the advertising messages focus on ways to protect the individual from contracting disease as a result of infection from other people, especially since this rapidly spreading virus is transmitted from person to person by droplet (Table 2).

The previous table showed an increase in the study sample’s knowledge of the correct information on how to determine infection with the disease according to what was stated in the campaign advertisements as follow: in the case of a tremor and a high temperature, by 80% - in the case of tired in the body parts, by 66.4%, in the case of severe coughing by 76%, in the case of continuous sneezing by 58%, the incidence of symptoms of a
Table 2. Knowing about the methods by which the disease can be determined

| Items                                      | Yes | No  | Total |
|--------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|
|                                            | F   | %   | F     | %   |
| Body chills and a high temperature         | 200 | 80  | 50    | 20  |
|                                            | 250 | 100 |       |     |
| Swelling of the feet                       | 34  | 13.6| 216   | 86.4|
|                                            | 250 | 100 |       |     |
| In the case of tired in body parts         | 166 | 66.4| 84    | 33.6|
|                                            | 250 | 100 |       |     |
| In the case of severe coughing             | 190 | 76  | 60    | 24  |
|                                            | 250 | 100 |       |     |
| Yellowing of the face and eyes             | 108 | 43.2| 142   | 56.8|
|                                            | 250 | 100 |       |     |
| In the case of continuous sneezing         | 145 | 58  | 105   | 42  |
|                                            | 250 | 100 |       |     |
| Having symptoms of a common cold           | 215 | 86  | 35    | 14  |
|                                            | 250 | 100 |       |     |
| Feeling migraine or kidney headache        | 199 | 79.6| 51    | 20.4|
|                                            | 250 | 100 |       |     |
| A decrease in the individual’s body weight | 57  | 22.8| 193   | 77.2|
|                                            | 250 | 100 |       |     |
| Vomiting and diarrhea                      | 79  | 31.6| 171   | 68.4|
|                                            | 250 | 100 |       |     |
| High sugar content                         | 61  | 24.4| 189   | 75.6|
|                                            | 250 | 100 |       |     |
| In the case of feeling short of breath     | 85  | 34  | 165   | 66  |
|                                            | 250 | 100 |       |     |

common cold by 86%, the feeling of migraine or kidney headache by 79.6%, and the researcher believes that the high percentage of the study sample members knowing these symptoms. This is attributed to the focus of advertising messages within the framework of the study campaign on these symptoms mainly.

The study sample members’ knowledge of the two expressions feeling short of breath and the term vomiting and diarrhea was poor despite their validity by 34%.

While the statements that contain wrong information about how to determine the incidence of the disease, most of the study sample rejected them, and these expressions: swelling of the feet and that by 86.4%, yellowing of the face and eyes by 56.8%, a decrease in the individual’s body weight by 77.2%, a high percentage Sugar, at 75.6% (Table 3).

It was found from the previous table that the majority of the study sample were following the instructions of the Ministry of Health, which was published in all media outlets about the disease and how to act in the event of infection, as the respondents’ responses rose from the correct statements mentioned by the Ministry of Health, which are: I go to the doctor immediately and that by 95.2%, call the hotline of the Ministry of Health by 82%, follow-up on the Ministry of Health website about what it publishes about the virus by 77.2%, follow the health announcement instructions on television by 85.2%, I go to the nearest health unit or hospital of the Ministry of Health by 75.2%.

While the majority of the respondents rejected the wrong phrases that were not mentioned in the campaign advertisements, which are: I go to the nearest pharmacy by 80.4%, I treat myself from the home pharmacy by 92.8%, I authorize my command to God, who is the healer of every disease, by 85.2% (Table 4).
| Items                                                                 | Yes | No  | Total |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|
|                                                                      | F   | %   | F     |
| Go to the doctor immediately                                         | 238 | 95.2| 12    | 4.8  | 250 | 100 |
| Call the hotline of the Ministry of Health                            | 205 | 82  | 45    | 18   | 250 | 100 |
| Follow up on the Ministry of Health website for what it publishes     | 193 | 77.2| 57    | 22.8 | 250 | 100 |
| Follow the health advertisement guidelines on television              | 213 | 85.2| 37    | 14.8 | 250 | 100 |
| Go to the nearest health unit or hospital of the Ministry of Health   | 188 | 75.2| 62    | 24.8 | 250 | 100 |
| I go to the nearest pharmacy                                         | 49  | 19.6| 201   | 80.4 | 250 | 100 |
| I treat myself from the home pharmacy                                 | 18  | 7.2 | 232   | 92.8 | 250 | 100 |
| I authorize my command to God, and he is the cure for every disease   | 37  | 14.8| 213   | 85.2 | 250 | 100 |

**Table 4.** Knowledge of the study sample members about the information on medicines for Coronavirus (COVID-19)

| Items                                                                 | Yes  | No  | Total |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|-------|
|                                                                      | F    | %   | F     | %    |
| Medicines for the virus are used to prevent infection                | 53   | 22.6| 181   | 77.4 | 250 | 100 |
| Medicines for the virus are used to treat infection                  | 234  | 100 | –     | –    | 250 | 100 |
| Medicines for COVID-19 are only available in pharmacies              | 38   | 16.2| 196   | 83.8 | 250 | 100 |
| Medicines for COVID-19 are available in government hospitals         | 173  | 73.9| 61    | 26.1 | 250 | 100 |
| There is a small stock of COVID-19 drugs in the Ministry of Health   | 78   | 33.3| 156   | 66.7 | 250 | 100 |
| There is an adequate stock of COVID-19 medicines at the Ministry of Health | 162  | 69.2| 72    | 30.8 | 250 | 100 |

The previous table showed that the majority of the study sample agreed that medicines for the virus are used to treat infection with the disease, which prompted the majority of the study sample to refuse to use these medicines in preventing disease, while a small percentage confused the idea of prevention and treatment of infection with the disease. And considered that the drugs for the virus are used for both cases.

The majority of the study sample had information that the Ministry of Health had an adequate stock of COVID-19 drugs at a rate of 69.2% (Table 5).

The previous table showed that the study sample members benefited from the campaign messages varied. For example, 92% of the study sample saw that the campaign
messages helped them to avoid infection with the virus, and 80% saw that the campaign messages helped them acquire a number of good health practices. While 60% of the study sample saw that the advertising messages related to how to deal with cases infected with the virus gained the confidence and not fear of dealing with these infected cases (Table 6).

**Table 5.** How the study sample individuals benefit from the campaign messages

| Items                                                        | Yes | No | Total |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-------|
| Avoid contracting the virus                                  | 230 | 20 | 250   |
| Gaining sound healthy habits, especially in dealing with disease | 200 | 50 | 250   |
| Contribute to taking care of some cases infected with the disease | 150 | 100| 250   |

It was found from the previous table that the reason for the exaggeration in depicting the severity of the disease was at the forefront of the reasons for the failure of the campaign, followed by the reason for the inappropriateness of the personalities used in the advertisements to the campaign theme by 94.6%, the lack of widespread health services for treating the disease in all governorates by 24.3%, the unavailability of free health services by 10.8%, and therefore it is logical that this reason is one of the least reasons for the failure of the campaign because the Ministry was able to overcome this problem then.

**Table 6.** Knowledge about methods of preventing disease

| Items                                                        | Total |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Exaggeration in portraying the severity of the disease       | 37    |
| Inappropriateness of the personalities used in advertisements to the theme of the campaign | 35    |
| Display campaign messages in a limited number of ways        | 30    |
| The campaign slogan does not fit its purpose                 | 20    |
| Not to mention personal experiences of characters who contracted the disease and were able to recover | 19    |
| Failure to address all audiences                             | 14    |
| The health information received in the campaign is superficial | 13    |
| The inability of the messages to persuade                    | 10    |
| The lack of widespread health services for treating the disease in all governorates | 9     |
| The lack of free health services                             | 4     |
The most frequently mentioned proposals by the study sample to develop a campaign to combat the spread of Coronavirus disease were as follow:

1- The necessity to seek the help of influential and well-known personalities in the campaign advertisements.
2- The necessity for the campaign sponsors to use social networks to communicate with the target audience by 33%, which indicates the importance of employing social media such as (Twitter and Facebook) in health media campaigns.
3- The importance of following sound health practices that help prevent the influenza virus in general, as this virus is continuous, renewed, and mutated from period to period by 22%.

4 Discussion

– The results showed that the study sample’s increased their knowledge to prevent the disease through: washing hands frequently with soap and water, using disinfectants to clean the house, using tissues when coughing or sneezing, ventilating the house constantly, not touching the eyes, mouth or nose with the hands until after ensure that they are clean, continue to drink fluids, keep a sufficient distance from patients, reduce visits to relatives, relatives and acquaintances, wearing masks when leaving the house was correct, but a small percentage of the study sample confirmed their knowledge of them, and so was the phrase reporting the whereabouts of pigs As the source of the virus mutation is correct, however, most of the respondents rejected it, and this may be attributed from the researcher’s point of view to the focus of advertising messages on ways to prevent an individual from contracting the disease as a result of infection from other people, especially rapidly spreading virus is transmitted from person to person through droplets.

– The results showed that the study sample’s increased their knowledge to determine infection with the disease according to what was stated in the campaign advertisements, and these correct statements were: in the case of a tremor and a high temperature in all body parts, in the case of severe coughing. In the case of persistent sneezing, the incidence of symptoms of common cold, the feeling of migraine or kidney headache, and the researcher believes that the high percentage of the study sample members’ knowledge of these symptoms is due to the focus of advertising messages within the framework of the study campaign on these symptoms mainly.

– The results revealed that the study sample’s increased their knowledge to deal with the disease, according to what was stated in the campaign advertisements, and these correct statements were: complete rest, non-contact with others, consulting a doctor in the event of any cold symptoms, ensure that your hands are clean and wash them regularly, take into account the use of tissues when sneezing or coughing to prevent the spread of the virus, and adhere to the doctor’s instructions, especially medicines.

– The results revealed the majority used many ways to treat with infection disease, such as: refusing to use the drugs in preventing the disease, while a small percentage confused the idea of prevention and treatment of disease infection and considered that the drugs for the virus are used for both all patients.
Study Recommendations:

– Paying attention to information campaigns on other diseases related to the Corona virus.
– The necessity of using influential and well-known personalities in the campaign advertisements, the necessity for the campaign sponsors to use social networks to communicate with the target audience.
– The need for the Ministry of Health to cooperate with other relevant authorities in combating Corona virus.

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