



Rumor in the Digital Media Age: Concepts and Functions

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Abstract ;(

Rumor is a social phenomenon deeply rooted in history, pervading human existence across various epochs. It intertwines with societal dynamics, manifesting amidst conflicts, disagreements, and societal transitions, influencing political, economic, social, and military landscapes on local, regional, and global scales.

Rumors are characterized by their ability to circulate fabricated news, appealing to the public through methods like exaggeration, sensationalism, distortion, or manipulation of facts, aiming to sway political, economic, social, or military outcomes. These tactics subtly shape public consciousness, a process increasingly expedited by both traditional and contemporary media platforms.

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First Axis: Conceptual and Historical Framing of Rumor

Rumors proliferate in all socio-spatial realms where humans interact, marked by a ubiquitous presence across diverse social settings. As one of the oldest communication forms, rumors predate written language, thriving within the oral traditions of ancient societies. In these contexts, rumors were integral, serving as vehicles for news dissemination, symbolic aggression, reputation damage, discord fomentation, and destabilization of adversaries during wars and conflicts.

The pioneering empirical studies on rumors originated in America, spurred by the extensive use of rumors during World War II and their adverse effects on the psychological well-being of civilians and military personnel. Researchers Allport and Postman¹ described rumors as presumptions about ongoing events, meant to gain widespread belief and propagated person-to-person without validation. Knapp² characterized rumors as assertions or reports, created for public belief, related to current matters, and spread without verification.

Researcher Mohammed Khalil offered various definitions, portraying rumors as information or ideas shared by individuals without a reliable source to

confirm their truthfulness, or as the dissemination of unfounded news, sometimes containing a fragment of truth. He further delineated rumors as topics or statements spread orally, perceived as trustworthy, and extensively shared without adherence to veracity standards, representing a fundamental belief accepted at face value, beyond debate or examination.³

Researcher Mukhtar Al-Tahami defined rumors as the circulation of news without a basis in reality, or as intentional overstatement, sensationalism, or distortion in storytelling, with a minute element of truth, or the addition of false or distorted data to an otherwise true narrative, or the misinterpretation of a factual story, with the intention of psychologically impacting local, regional, or global public opinion to fulfill political and economic objectives on various scales⁴. Rumors are also seen as specific, anonymous views propagated for others to accept, transmitted from one individual to another through oral or other communication means.⁵

Dr. Ibrahim Imam conceptualizes rumor as deriving from the selective extraction and processing of news or information. This process may involve exaggeration, emphasis, omission, or diminution, followed by highlighting

¹ Allport, G.W., and Postman, L. (1945). *The Basic Psychology of Rumor*. Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences, Series II, Vol. 8, p. 68.

² R. Knapp. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Volume 8, Issue 1, Spring 1944, pp. 22–37.

³ Al-Badayna, Ziyad. *Security and Information Warfare*, 1st edition, Dar Al-Shorouk, Amman, 2002, p. 41.

⁴ Touhami, Mokhtar. *Public Opinion and Psychological Warfare*, 3rd edition, Dar Al-Maaref, Egypt, 1974, p. 103.

⁵ Sobhi, Suleiman. *Iraqi Police Magazine*, Issues 17, April 1970, p. 133.

specific aspects in an emotionally charged manner. Such crafting yields formulations that are easily understood, embraced, and internalized by the public, especially when these narratives resonate with current events and align with prevailing customs, traditions, and values.¹

Rumors have also been depicted as the dialogues, declarations, news, and tales disseminated by individuals without verifying their truthfulness, often embellished with added details. Proponents of these narratives may defend them passionately, creating a perception that discourages skepticism about their authenticity.²

Furthermore, rumors can be presented as narratives believed to contain factual elements, yet lacking definitive standards for verifying their accuracy.³

Historically, the evolution of rumors has paralleled advancements in communication technologies. French researcher Régis Debray⁴ delineates three media paradigms that have shaped the history of communication and media:

– **Logosphere:** Characterized by oral communication and writing as primary means of recording and disseminating knowledge.

– **Graphosphere:** Initiated by the advent of the printing press and associated media like books and newspapers, leading to the rise of formal educational and knowledge institutions.

– **Videosphere:** Dominated by image-based communication and associated media, such as television.

The transition between these media paradigms was gradual and integrative, not abrupt or discontinuous. Each new media era did not obliterate its predecessor but rather assimilated it into a broader communicative landscape.

Accordingly, the transmission of rumors has evolved from direct oral exchanges to print media, then to the combined use of visual and auditory media, and finally to multimedia platforms. With the advent and widespread adoption of the internet, electronic rumors (E-Rumors) or cyber-rumors have proliferated.

Despite the significant social and communicative relevance of rumors, comprehensive and precise knowledge about this phenomenon remains elusive. Rumors are often perceived as enigmatic and elusive, retaining a sense of mystery and magic. The field remains ambiguous, with its structure fluid and elusive, challenging our ability to fully understand its mechanisms, origins, and endpoints.

Structural Framework of Rumor:

Rumor's structure and function depend on a dynamic interaction among various actors (Agents) – the entities that construct, structure, initiate, spread, and distribute the rumor. These agents can be individuals, groups, institutions, or organizations. Rumor dissemination occurs

¹ Imam, Ibrahim. *Media and Mass Communication*, Dar Al-Ilm, Beirut, Lebanon, 1975, p. 241.

² Zahran Hamed Abdel Salam. *Social Psychology*, Al-Kutub Publishing House, Cairo, 6th edition, 2003, p. 498.

³ Awaida, Kamel Mohammed. *Psychology of Rumors*, Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, Beirut, 1st edition, 1995, p. 101.

⁴ Debray, R. *Introduction to Mediologie*. Paris: PUF, 2000.

via two principal pathways: the spontaneous, unplanned method (Unscheduled), where rumors percolate through close social networks, expanding and becoming challenging to trace to their origins; and the intentional, deliberate method (Aforethought), utilized in psychological warfare and disinformation campaigns during conflicts.

Additionally, the receiver, who acquires the rumor, then propagates and disseminates it, often incorporating socio-cultural nuances. The spread and circulation of rumors are influenced by cognitive ambiguity, a lack of reliable information sources, and the potential for direct or indirect benefits from the rumor's dissemination.¹

Researcher Moreno (1934) mapped the sociological landscape of groups, elucidating the psychological channels through which rumors propagate. He introduced the term Social Measurement (Sociometry) to describe this methodological approach, focusing on identifying individuals in proximity to the studied subject, including companions, preferred collaborators, or leisure partners.

This approach delineates the social network within which individuals are embedded, facilitating the prediction of communication pathways, including those for rumors. Earlier, Stern (1902) demonstrated the fluid nature of text transmission through the Stern Protocol experiment, showcasing how a narrative evolves as it is passed along.

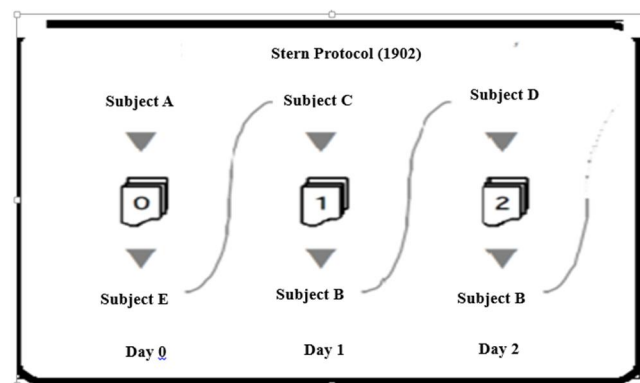


Figure 1: Stern Protocol (1902) (Stern)

Rumors are assorted into various categories, with one notable classification by Robert Knapp (1944) identifying:

- Rumors that express dreams or unverifiable claims, mirroring the intense desires of individuals.
- Fearful rumors, centered on elements that incite psychological fear and anxiety within society.
- Hostility rumors, aimed at spreading divisive sentiments and fostering fragmentation within communities.

Furthermore, from a psychological perspective, rumors can be categorized into:

- **Projection Rumor:** Here, projection-a mechanism where individuals ascribe their desires, motives, and repressed stances onto others- is commonly employed to disseminate rumors.
- **Justification Rumor:** This type involves individuals resorting to justification when lacking logical or rational

¹ Crescimbeni, Massimo, Federica La Longa, and Tiziana Lanza (2012). *The Science of Rumors*. Annals of Geophysics, 55(3), pp. 421-425.

explanations for certain behaviors or stances, often driving the initiation, transmission, and spread of rumors.

Expectation Rumor: This type thrives in environments where large segments of the population are primed and receptive to specific pieces of information or suggestions, fostering the spread of rumors.

Rumors can also be differentiated based on their dissemination dynamics into Slow Creeping Rumor, Swift Flying Rumor, and Offensive Rumor. The spread and popularity of rumors hinge on two primary factors: the topic's significance and its ambiguity.

Furthermore, the dissemination and circulation of rumors involve a dynamic interplay between their formulation and composition, the social environment's readiness and receptiveness to them, and the novelty and salience of the rumor content. Rumors experience a lifecycle of circulation and dissemination, beginning with the reporting and emission stage initiated by a specific source.

This is followed by the reception stage, where individuals encounter rumors through social networks, mainstream media, or new media platforms via mediated communication methods. Subsequently, during the formulation and distortion stage, rumors are modified and altered as they circulate and transition from one individual to another. Finally, in the recycling and redistribution stage,

individuals actively engage in shaping and finalizing the rumor into its definitive form.

Rumor: A Psycho-Communicative Perspective

The psychological underpinnings of rumor manifest through three processes: Perception, Recollection, and Revelation. Perception is inherently tied to our memory of past experiences and is influenced by our selective disclosure. Recollection is a complex internal mechanism reliant on perception. E. Morin posits that changes in rumor content are less about memory distortion and more about the evolution and spread of commentary along the rumor's trajectory.

Researchers Allport and Postman¹ observed that as a rumor circulates more extensively, it becomes more concise and coherent, thereby easier to understand and transmit. In their seminal empirical study, they found that approximately 70% of a story or event's details are lost after five to six handoffs.

They conducted an experiment where an individual was shown a picture briefly, then asked to describe it to another person, who then relayed this description to a third person, and so forth. By the sixth iteration, the narrative had significantly diverged from the original picture content.

Allport and Postman² also devised a mathematical formula to describe rumor propagation, stating that the spread of a rumor is the product of the topic's importance and the ambiguity surrounding the event: **Rumor Potential = Importance of Topic × Ambiguity of Event.**

¹ Allport, Gordon, and Leopostman, *ibid*, p. 71.

² *Ibid*, p. 72.

This theory complements Shibutani's¹ view that rumors stem from a group's intellectual efforts to elucidate an event, noting that the absence of ambiguity nullifies the potential for rumor genesis. He further contends that rumors originate from individuals pooling their intellectual resources to interpret an event.

In a related study, researcher Wolfe showed drawings to participants, asking them to mentally recall the images with precision after about thirty seconds. Subsequent recall tests were conducted after one day, one week, and a period ranging from two weeks to two months.

Wolfe noted that the recollections tended to become more complete and significant over time, suggesting that past experiences, linguistic habits, cultural thought patterns, motives, and personal inclinations heavily influence the alteration of facts and events, which are then infused with personal characteristics.

In narrating rumors, individuals often project their personal experiences, treating the narrative more as a recount of their own experiences than a discussion of the actual incident. Rumors, in this light, act as a form of immersive and sensory integration within specific mental frameworks.²

Researcher Ibrahim Ahmed Arqoub developed a framework for the analysis of rumors, referred to as the Model of Rumors Analysis. This model provides a systematic approach to understanding the intricacies of rumor dynamics.

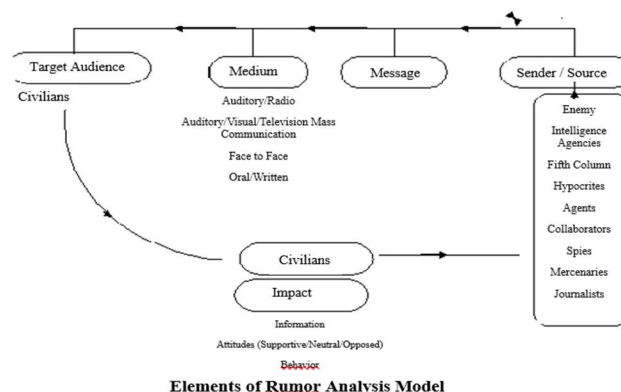


Figure 2: Ibrahim Ahmed Arqoub's Model of Rumors Analysis

Other scholars have posited that the substance of a rumor typically undergoes a series of cognitive processes. The first of these is Settlement, where many details from the rumor's original narrative are excluded, with certain facts being permanently omitted.

The second process, Accentuation, involves the selective emphasis of particular details over others, thereby magnifying their perceived importance. The third process, Rationalization, entails the creation of motives and justifications for the rumor's fabrication, often based on sensory or unconscious mechanisms.

Advocates of the Psychoanalytic School argue that rumors manifest the contents of the unconscious in a distorted and deceptive manner, utilizing psychological mechanisms such as projection, symbolism, and condensation. They suggest that a rumor gains traction and becomes more successful if it can

¹ Shibutani, T. *Improvvised News: A Sociological Study of Rumor*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966.

² Abu Arkoub, Ahmad. *Psychology of Rumors*. Wael Publications, Amman, Jordan, 1994, p. 12.

activate the deeper, often suppressed, emotional and unconscious realms.

Conversely, the Cognitive School attributes the genesis and spread of rumors to cognitive uncertainty. In this view, the more ambiguous and perplexing the environment, the more fertile it becomes for rumor propagation. Proponents of the "Needs" theory contend that rumors fulfill unmet psychological or informational needs for their originators.

Additionally, many communication psychology experts believe that the dissemination of rumors is partially influenced by Gestalt theory, which posits that human perception naturally gravitates towards simplicity, order, and completeness. Rumors, in this context, arise to clarify significant, often troubling, situations, thereby alleviating tension, confusion, and uncertainty.

From a socio-communicative perspective, the reception of rumors varies among individuals, generally falling into three categories:

- **Critical and Reflexive Reception:** Here, the recipient critically assesses the rumor, dissecting its content through a logical and argumentative process, leveraging their information, knowledge, and prior experiences. Objective factors are meticulously considered, leading to either a selective purification of the information, which is then communicated to others, or a complete refutation and denial of the rumor. This mode of reception is more common among elite groups

possessing advanced intellectual and cultural skills.

- **Emotional Reception:** In this mode, the reception of rumors lacks logical or rational scrutiny and is primarily driven by psychological and emotional factors. Individuals receiving the rumor in this manner do not engage in analytical evaluation but are influenced by their mood, emotional state, and psychological inclinations, which affect how they perceive, interpret, modify, and disseminate the rumor. Emotional reception is prevalent during personal or collective crises.

Neutral Reception or Treatment: This approach is characterized by neutrality and indifference towards the rumor and its content, which hold no significant interest or importance for the recipient. As a result, the rumor is treated superficially, with the recipient remaining detached in terms of reception, interpretation, and dissemination.

For an effective strategy against rumors, especially during crises, wars, disasters, difficulties, and periods of social transformation where conditions favor the emergence and spread of rumors, it is crucial to maintain vigilance. Ensuring the availability of accurate and objective information on various public interest topics and fostering high transparency levels is vital to prevent ambiguity and confusion.

Additionally, the psychological and pedagogical education of individuals is imperative. Promoting ethical and moral

consciousness and concentrating on developing people's abilities in enlightened rationality, critical thinking, and thorough verification before refutation or acceptance forms the cornerstone of transitioning from a state of indulging in baseless chatter to one of verification, contemplation, and constructive consciousness.

The second axis: Media as a Technological Source of Rumors

One of the central justifications for examining the dynamic relationship between media and rumor is the media's penetration into the social and cultural fabric of societies and its alignment with most human activities.

Alongside the development of media technologies and the increasing reliance of individuals on media channels in modern societies, media has become the primary source for providing knowledge, information, news, and updates in various forms and types.

It offers behavioral models that guide individuals' attitudes and reactions, facilitates social interaction, and undertakes educational and entertainment functions. Media also mediates between individuals and the external worlds beyond their direct experience and knowledge, coloring and shaping their perceptions of these worlds.

The expanding role of media, the functions it performs, the expectations placed upon it, and its effects, coupled with the successive technological leaps these channels experience, have enabled them to introduce fundamental changes and unprecedented radical shifts in the sociological and cultural lives of

individuals. Media has transitioned from merely reflecting what happens in the external world to producing, rephrasing, and shaping it, defining its essence.

Generally, the media landscape appears bleak, with media activities founded on references that are hostile to human nature, primarily centered around profit and pure economic logic, glorifying consumer culture, and establishing a culture of verbal waste and superficial reflection. Particularly in the face of the random informational eruption that has obliterated individuals' capacities for comprehension, understanding, and creativity.

Adopting a comprehensive cognitive analysis that surpasses systemic analyses suggests that contemporary media performance unveils a deeply-rooted materialistic vision and the decline of the guiding role of the ethical value system.

In the face of a rationality not led by values and rebelling against its enlightenment, media and communication actions have repercussions on the societal system, penetrating the recipient's self to media content, making it fragile and conditioned by suggestive, demagogic, and non-reflective practices.

Rumors could not have spread so rapidly and permeated the fabric of contemporary societies, normalized, and transformed into a prevalent socio-cultural state, deeply embedded in the details of social life, without the communicative power of both classic and modern media. These channels have been instrumental in manufacturing, spreading, normalizing, and globalizing rumors with remarkable efficiency.

Human societies have experienced various rumor dynamics through the ages, but not with the current momentum characterized by rapid dissemination, diversity of sources, variation in forms, intensity of significance, and individual impact. Thus, rumors have become a defining feature of media communication with individuals today, with societies never before experiencing such distortion, deception, and diversion of individuals' attention from core issues and fundamental problems.

These media channels have shifted human communication to a system fraught with misguidance and distortion, threatening the structure of the social system in its entirety. Rumor production and dissemination have evolved into an industry bolstered by media channels in various fields, with highly complex and advanced creative methods, transforming rumors, especially with their digital and post-digital applications, into a commodity increasingly sought after by broad user segments.

Undoubtedly, the production and manufacturing of rumors according to studied methodologies, especially if this output responds to a set of hidden motives and gains, positions media channels as central tools for deception, distortion of facts, and falsification of individuals' awareness and representations of their social reality. This reality and individuals' perception of it are conditioned by what the media channels present and convey of events, information, and images, especially given individuals' intense reliance on these channels in various fields.

The spread of rumors is connected with multiple tools within the media deception system and dominance over consciousness and perception, and most methods of deception practiced by media channels, through their active role in shaping individuals' symbolic worlds and mediating between them and their social reality.

They provide a specific vision of this reality, based on flexible and creative methods in presenting facts and events that are coherent in their composition and consistent in their presentation. The accumulations of media content determine our beliefs and attitudes, ultimately framing our behavior, and pushing us to believe and internalize everything presented by the media channels as an unquestionable fact without any scrutiny or discernment.

The media performance aligns with the premises of political systems and the goals and foundations of the dominant powers in society, where media channels often form part of the strategy for social control and regulation.

This is reflected in the standards included in usage policies, particularly. Furthermore, the factors of allure, spectacle, and the use of cutting-edge sound quality and image clarity are employed, along with scientifically studied methods that establish a positive image in the recipient's mind, preventing even the slightest doubt in the credibility of the information received from these channels.

These channels present viewpoints and data that recipients internalize as axioms and absolute truths, addressing the emotional and sentimental aspect through

appeals in forms that mimic sensations instead of presenting them in a manner that responds to logical and rational principles. The use of suggestive mechanisms based on reinforcement and continuous repetition paralyzes recipients' capacities, leading them to a weaker state of influence and consequently to conviction in the promotional content.

The third axis: The flow of rumors within the geographies of virtual space

In today's interconnected society, rapid information exchange and dense mediatic interactions are prevalent. Communication through the internet, via social networking sites, emails, wikis, blogs, and collaborative forums, has fostered a realm of extreme diversity, interactivity, and content multiplicity.

The virtual space, characterized by the absence of linguistic, geographic, and spatial constraints, enables a virtual presence devoid of physical coercion. The ease of access to these platforms encourages individuals to engage in networked discussions and interactions, with the anonymity offered by the internet providing a shield that allows users to escape identity pressures and accountability, thus enhancing freedom of expression.¹

The internet's relative autonomy from real-world regulatory frameworks serves as a potent resource for democratic and communicative endeavors, facilitating the exchange of information, expression of opinions and ideas, and discussion on a

plethora of topics among a vast audience. It empowers marginalized voices and minorities, transforming the internet into a stage where the unheard and ordinary citizens can amplify their presence.

The internet has emerged as a crucible for unrestricted communication, interaction, and expression, free from censorship, pressure, or biases. The advent of new communication patterns and blogging spaces, along with other digital media tools, has created a fresh arena for presenting alternatives, nurturing serious discussions, analytical thinking, and promoting accountability.

These new media engender more immersive communication patterns, drawing individuals into deeper socio-cultural interactions. Owing to its horizontal structure, openness, collective nature, and non-elitism, the virtual space offers diverse platforms for expression and opinion sharing, as well as virtual arenas for social and political influence on a broader scale.

The internet has revolutionized access to information, news, and data, simultaneously empowering users to generate their content, messages, and data through various expressive outlets such as dialogue forums, personal pages, chat rooms, blogs, social media profiles, and other content production and expression methods.

New media have introduced novel means and channels for communication and interaction, creating platforms for discussion and dialogue that facilitate

¹ Papacharissi, Zizi. *The Virtual Sphere: The Internet as a Public Sphere*. New Media & Society, 4(1), 2002, pp. 9-27.

diverse types of interactions over the internet.

This shift has transformed the communication landscape from a state of isolation and dialogue absence to one of vibrant communication and dialogue, transitioning from unidirectional media and communication to a horizontal, multidirectional communication model.¹

New media have redefined the concept of assembly, communication, and meeting, rendering the spaces afforded by new communication tools akin to an 'Agora' or a public wall for disseminating information and opinions that cannot be publicly shared through traditional means.

Instead of citizens openly exercising their rights to criticism, observation, opinion expression, and participation in public affairs, they now express and publish their views through new media spaces, characterized by rapid action and extensive dissemination capabilities, transcending the temporal and spatial constraints of physical spaces.

The internet, with its electronic platforms and interactive applications, offers numerous mechanisms for stimulating public discussions and enhancing public participation by enabling direct involvement that fosters commenting, blogging, writing, critique, and expression.

Conversely, new media cater to individual preferences, reflecting an increasing valuation of criticism, rejection, independence, and individuality. The

internet stands out as the sole communication medium imposing minimal access restrictions. Delving into the nuances of virtual communication reveals that new media spaces have enabled individuals to articulate their opinions directly, engage in online activism, rejection campaigns, protests, and interact with others online in their unique style and language, providing robust avenues resistant to homogenization and control.

Despite the internet's promise of freedom and open communication, its susceptibility to exploitation for sectional interests, and its subjection to market logic, economic influences, and political powers are pronounced concerns.

Papacharissi² contends that although the internet offers a plethora of highly interactive communication spaces and tools, it does not inherently create a utopian realm of ethical communication devoid of falsehoods, unreality, and fabrications. Amid the flurry of communication and information excess, this abundance paradoxically signifies a scarcity in attention, focus, analysis, and the appropriate processing of the information deluge.

The rampant networking, along with conflicting motivations and needs, fosters continuous conflicts and serves as a breeding ground for verbal disputes, the spread of rumors, falsehoods, and scandals.

Papacharissi³ highlights the randomness of interactions within virtual environments, noting that these

¹ Kamal, Hana. *Psychological and Social Effects of the Egyptian Public's Exposure to the Internet*, Unpublished doctoral thesis, Faculty of Media, Cairo University, p. 44.

² Papacharissi, Zizi. 2002. *The Virtual Sphere: The Internet as a Public Sphere*, p. 27.

³ Papacharissi, Zizi, *ibid*, p. 27.

engagements often yield fragmented conversations with limited impact, failing to establish a solid foundation for addressing public concerns and serious matters.

This results in networked communication potentials that culminate in fragmented and superficial discourse, devoid of substantial significance. She further argues that new media exacerbate and spotlight our differences, constraining our collective spirit and sociability, underlining a significant critique of the digital age's impact on social interaction and public discourse.

Having access to the internet does not inherently grant or generate a democratic right to communication and expression. In cyberspace, individual identities are fluid and dynamic, making the fulfillment of ethical commitments in communication challenging.

Furthermore, the internet often discourages diversity and variation in views and ideas, leading to scattered and decentralized communication processes. Personal media empower individuals to create and share new forms of expression, venting, confession, writing, and composition, serving as ideal channels for distributing their creations on a wider scale.

Yet, these communicative capabilities are frequently squandered on exchanging rumors, scandals, gossip, and sensational conversations. The internet provokes a sense of communicative urgency, pushing individuals to communicate beyond conventional boundaries and engage in extreme forms of communication, which can threaten respect

for others and lead to exclusion due to the overwhelming flood of communication.

The ability to gather, process, and disseminate information or engage in electronic communication, transcending the barriers of time and space, does not necessarily equate to improved human communication. Explorations into the virtual space's geography uncover a reality of fragmented vision and weak communication, marked by the prevalence of innovative methods aimed at damaging reputations, symbolic assaults, manipulating individuals' images, and propagating newly concocted forms of propaganda, incitement, defamation, and rumor spreading on an unprecedented scale.

This is facilitated by the virtual space's capabilities in terms of delivery and notification. The current communication landscape is marred by a deluge of fabricated news, rumors, and a torrent of videos promoting false truths, transforming the ideals of communicative democracy and freedom of expression into a democracy of obscenity and communicative chaos—a democracy rife with rumors, distortion, and fabrication.

Virtual communication platforms have become tools for dismantling the sociological and cultural fabric of societies. Electronic rumors, spawned in the incubators of cyberspace and within its interactive communication spaces, spread swiftly and almost instantaneously.

Unlike traditional rumors, the contents of electronic rumors remain pristine and unaltered during their circulation. Their credibility is often bolstered by various visual media

resources, and the internet itself contributes to the legitimization of rumors. As a result, the internet has become a catalyst for the spread, persistence, and extension of rumors' life cycles, turning them into consumable commodities for vast segments of internet users. Individuals can publish whatever they want, express their desires in their style, and reach an unlimited audience.

Among the most notorious phenomena in cyberspace are internet hoaxes or deceptions, comprising sequential messages disseminated via email in multiple, interconnected parts. These messages are notable for their provocative content, playing on emotions and the mystery surrounding their source, date, and place of release, often carrying an international dimension and employing visual tricks and manipulation techniques.

Additionally, there are buzz or viral rumors, often related to marketing strategies for new products, brands, anticipated events, or public figures. These constitute a form of viral advertising executed through innovative and interactive electronic methods, frequently maintaining the anonymity of their source.

Conclusion

The considerable impact of the rumor phenomenon in today's context underscores the need for its thorough examination and the exploration of preventative measures. Addressing this issue comprehensively requires acknowledging the limitations of technical solutions and adopting precise, multidimensional approaches that revisit previous concerns and questions.

Such strategies enable stakeholders to transform dilemmas into actionable issues, thereby adding value and contributing to the enhancement of scientific research in the domains of rumors and truth distortion. Scientific inquiry is essential for dissecting the intricacies of rumors and deception, uncovering their mechanisms, and responding to pressing questions. It also plays a pivotal role in identifying effective strategies and tools for establishing an educational and societal framework resistant to negative communication practices.

While the foundational elements for the requisite scientific research in this field are somewhat in place, there is still a considerable gap in fully establishing, rationalizing, and enriching this research domain with the latest developments in the humanities and social sciences.

This gap needs to be bridged to effectively assess community needs related to combating rumors, augment the efforts to mitigate them, and foster cultural, educational, and ethical bulwarks. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the foundational elements necessary to construct a value-based pedagogical system is crucial for developing a constructive communicative model.

The intent of this discussion is not merely to underscore the deficiencies present in scientific research concerning rumors and other deceptive practices. It is also motivated by a broader vision that recognizes the intrinsic link between scientific research, contemplation, scrutiny, and critique as fundamental to preserving the cultural and social fabric.

Therefore, the issue of rumors and their associated risks should not be treated marginally or superficially, given their deep societal, political, and cultural implications. They necessitate well-conceived strategies and rigorous research to provide an objective assessment of the challenges presented by the current proliferation of rumor dissemination, and the advancements in falsification, deception, and information manipulation mechanisms.

Achieving this requires the generation of scientific knowledge that spans theoretical and empirical dimensions, encompassing various disciplines and fields. Such an endeavor would elevate the epistemological landscape, aligning with the core issues of the communication framework and its challenges, facilitating the expansion of its problematic and conceptual domain, and fostering authentic analytical and investigative paradigms.

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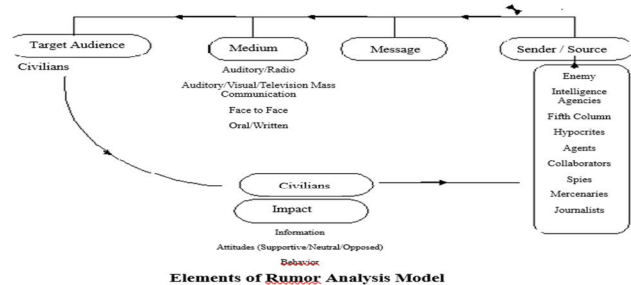
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Source: Stern Protocol (1902).

Figure 2: Model for Analyzing Rumors.



Source: Ibrahim Ahmad Arkoub

