



POSTER COMPETITIONS

Possible Correlations between Social Media, Search Engines and the Covid-19 Pandemic

*Yuan-Fang Cheng¹

¹National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan

10.52629/jamsa.vi

Address for Correspondence:

Yuan-Fang Cheng
National Cheng Kung University,
Taiwan

yuanfang.920119@gmail.com

Introduction

Since December 2019, coronavirus has been raging around the world. It can be assumed that most people rely on internet technologies to get or share information about the Covid-19 pandemic. The information spreading can strongly influence people's behavior and responses to the countermeasures deployed by governments.

Objective

The study investigates the implications of trends in the keyword search and possible factors of internet users' preferences regarding pandemic-related information sources.

Method

First, Google Trends was used to analyze the trends in searching Covid-19-related topics. The results from Taiwan, the USA, and worldwide were compared. Current events, updates on confirmed cases, and daily vaccinations were mapped onto the data of search trends. Second, an online questionnaire was distributed to explore internet users' behavior of using search engines and social media to receive Covid-related information. Based on the valid responses, factors that arguably contribute to people's choices of information sources were discussed.

Result

Social media and search engines are people's main sources of information but are used in different conditions. Whether the sources are reliable is a concern. Therefore, people prefer official websites or

accounts.

Search trends on Google indicate that the outbreak of Covid-19 raised people's awareness and that people were in need of masks to protect themselves. The data of daily confirmed cases and daily vaccinations are mostly consistent with the search trends of their related topic. Most major related events and countermeasures by governments reflect on the search trends in each topic. In the large-scale areas are too many variables influencing the search trends.

Conclusion

Search engines and social media are both used in getting Covid-related information but in different conditions based on their distinct properties. In addition, search trends of pandemic-related topics can in a way reflect people's responses to the pandemic, current events, and government policies.

Keywords

Internet technology, Social media, Search engine, Pandemic, COVID-19, Coronavirus, Possible correlation, Taiwan