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Exposure to the News Networks Through Social Media Sites and Their Reflections on Spreading Rumors among Students – Field Study

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Abstract: The scientific study aimed to identify rumors in the students' society in the age of social media sites and confrontation mechanisms. The research community included a sample of experts who use new media. Descriptive and statistical approaches (interviews and questionnaires) are used to analyze and understand rumors through social media sites and how to confront them. The study came up with results, the most important of them are as follows: 62% of the research community believes that students' (young people) use of news networks via social media sites affects the spread of rumors, while 63% of the research community considers that the quality of social media sites used by young people helps spread rumors, and 43% of the research community agree that technology users are predominantly young people, which helps spread the rumor. Finally, the study recommended that news sites pay attention to the method of dealing with crises, investigate accuracy and credibility, and increase the effective communication between the leaders and students' institutions.

Keywords: Rumors; Social Sites; Students; Arabic Societies; Confrontation.

1 Introduction

Modern technological developments in the mid-1990s brought about an unprecedented paradigm shift and revolution in the world of communication. The field of communication technology is one of the most rapidly evolving and even the most important and exciting of all aspects of the technological revolution. Social networks play a clear role in transmitting information, regardless of the observations related to the credibility of that information. Still, they contributed significantly to providing an essential knowledge base, shaping the recipient's perceptions about political, social, humanitarian, and economic issues, societies, and positions. Moreover, the media and social networks have also become a significant role in young people's lives, which requires communication with them to know the sources they receive and draw their information and knowledge. The mechanisms, methods of use, and similarity of social networks have contributed significantly to the formation and crystallization of the virtual public sphere. As a result, it has become global in some issues and local in others. Even though it has been monopolized until recently via traditional media.[1]

The problem was acknowledged through identifying exposure to news networks through social networking sites and their reflection on spreading rumors among public relations students because the news and media function is one of the most critical functions of all media types. So, the research addresses social networking sites, especially rumors, and their role in spreading the rumors, especially in the students' society during their studies at the university.

2 Research questions

The research team observed that the news networks on social networking sites and their users deal with topics, issues, and news. In addition, the research team was keen to study the students' points of view on social networking sites, and this is what the research sought to prove through the following questions: -

- What are the most important qualitative characteristics of the study sample members?
- What is the impact of the study sample's use of news networks through social media and the spread of rumors through them?
- Is the quality of the social networking sites that young people use to spread rumors considered?
- Is there a relationship between the frequent use of social networking sites and the spreading of rumors among public

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3 Research significance and objectives

Rumors play an influential role in events at the individual and collective levels by influencing society's attitudes and morale. Therefore, they have become a focus of attention for many researchers and specialists in the humanities. This paper is shedding light on the impact of news networks on the media students' category, especially since media students are among the most important groups that use news networking sites through these social networks.

The research seeks to identify the following: -

- The qualitative characteristics of the study sample members
- The impact of the study sample's use of news networks and the spread of rumors.
- The quality of social media used by young people.
- The relationship of social networking sites to the spread of rumors among public relations students.

4 Research approach

The approach represents the set of rules and procedures that the researchers must follow to reach the target results. The researchers followed the descriptive analytical approach as a holistic approach, which depends on collecting facts and information and then comparing, analyzing, and interpreting thereof to reach acceptable generalizations. The descriptive approach was used in the survey method, aiming to survey the practice methods for academics in the field of media and media professionals who use new media.

5 Definition of variables (concepts and terminology):

- **Exposure** means the direction of research community members to new media and their role in disseminating the rumor.
- **News networks and websites:** a set of web windows showing news updates, mainly relying on news agencies or site-specific reporters, and publishing articles on the site or quoting other sites. Some news networks and websites have pledged to conclude protocols with other websites to exchange news and other press topics.
- **Social media sites:** All practices produced by the new media operating within a changing communication environment whose formation depends on techniques of contact and communication. They are defined as follows: types of digital media that are presented in a digital and interactive form and depend on the integration of text, image, video, and audio, as well as the use of the computer as their primary mechanism in the production and display process. However, the interaction represents the main difference that distinguishes it from the other features, the consideration that it is an essential feature of social media [2].
- **Rumor(s):** anonymous news spread by some parties aims to fake facts and distort reality. Such news is characterized by significance and ambiguity. In addition, they seek to affect morale, raise anxiety, and sow the seeds of doubt in opponents or military, political, or social adversaries [3].

6 Literature review

There are several studies dealing with the rumor topic, among which the researcher selected the following studies:

- **A study by Newer and Riham (2018)** sought to identify the extent to which Egyptian university youth use social media sites, reveal why university youth use these sites, and determine the university young people's attitudes toward the security risks resulting from exposure to the websites. The study used the field survey methodology with a sample of young university men (400 individuals). The study concluded that most study sample members agree that social networks are significant and depend thereof, to the extent that 96.2% of the study sample can't do without social networks. However, concerning the study sample members' confidence in the creditability of the news posted on social networking sites, the study indicated that 51% of the study sample members have low confidence in the news and information posted on social networking sites. Moreover, the study concluded that 54% of the sample members think social sites are relatively dangerous for national security. Such risks include spreading terrorist thinking, creating chaos, and spreading rumors and psychological warfare against society. [4]
- **A study by Hashim and Rabab (2020)** was interested in examining the realization of the impact of the third person

in the environment of social networking sites. By surveying a non-probability sample of Egyptian university youth in many public and private universities (the sample was comprised of 400 respondents); to know the level of university youth's awareness of the dangers of social networking sites on the national affiliation in the self and among other people. The study concluded that Facebook is at the forefront of social networking sites used by university youth, followed by YouTube, then Instagram. The most prominent interaction activities, respectively, were as follows: making an emotion, adding a post, joining groups or pages on these sites, writing a comment, and sharing, regarding exposure to harmful content of national affiliation through social networking sites. The respondents indicated that young men, women, and adolescents are the most exposed to this content: family, friends, and self.[5]

- **A study by Osama Al- Madni(2015).** The current study aimed to identify the role of the social network Twitter in spreading rumors among Saudi university students because this study is one of the descriptive studies that depended on the survey method. The field study was conducted on a purposive sample of those exposed to social networks Twitter from Umm Al Qura - King Abdulaziz universities. The sample was comprised of (400) respondents. The study was based on a questionnaire. The study concluded that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the respondents on the scale of their attitudes toward rumors. The study also improved that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of respondents on the scale of their attitudes towards rumors according to the different motives for exposure to the Twitter network.[6]
- **A study by Bo - Suleimani and Sultani (2021)** sought to indicate the most important topics covered by political rumors through social networking sites. And to identify the most important mechanisms through which events are created and fabricated, in addition to promoting information and news that can carry malicious ideas and messages to serve specific goals. This study also aims to identify the methods "fake news DZ" page followed to encounter rumors. This study belongs to the descriptive analytical studies using the descriptive survey method. The data of the analytical study was collected using the content analysis tool. The study concluded some results, the most important of which were that rumor makers through social networking sites rely on the news template to narrate events and facts and enhance the news with fabricated images. The study also found that the popular movement was the most prominent issue covered by political rumors, especially concerning acts of violence accompanying rallies and demonstrations. And one of the most common methods of addressing rumors on the part of the page under study is its reliance on specialized programs to detect them.[7]
- **A study by Burak and Kaynar (2016)** sought to identify the role of rumors in the era of social media; via taking up social media, which according to the research results, has a significant impact on people's daily lives. However, the information posted on social sites through such events isn't always checked. So, rumors find fertile soil in social sites during events and crises. Therefore, looking far beyond claiming that rumors are easily negative is vital, especially regarding mechanisms that create and spread rumors.[8]
- **A study by Liming, Zhao, and JianliYin (2016)** sought to comprehend how to comprehensively form rumors of social communication during crises by merging the planned behavior theory and standard activation model in one theoretical framework. It was carried out using a sample of (394) users of social communication means. Results of descriptive statistical analysis indicated that two types of gaps are represented (Awareness of negative consequences arising from rumors, responsibility attributed to harmful effects, sense of obligation, and behavioral intent to combat rumors. The analysis also showed that the proposed model has an excellent predictive power of pro-social rumor to combat behavior. The results supported all proposed relationships between model constructs except for the direct effects of subjective criteria and perceived behavioral control on behavioral intention and checking of mediating roles for model constructs. The top three predictors of actual anti-rumor behavior were subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and awareness of adverse outcomes.[9]

7 The theoretical framework

7.1. Rumors about news networks

The new media has actively contributed to many political, social, and other political changes; the new media devotes new possibilities to communication and interaction worldwide and gives individuals greater freedom in producing, transmitting, and disseminating information.

These means represented one of the most important fruits of human development in communication. They created a massive coup in people's relations with the world and the concepts of space and time, such as the emergence of social media sites. That has made the world a continuous and uninterrupted network of social interactions. Moreover, it is possible to affirm that individuals, groups, lobbying groups, and political, cultural, and social campaign leaders have become the most effective online, not the states themselves.

Consequently, today's new media reality and how to deal with it has become inevitable, especially with the spread of rumors like wildfire, to the extent that no one can stop or reduce them. Hardly a day goes by without hearing or reading a set of political, economic, social, and other rumors.

Perhaps one of the reasons the new media contributed to spreading the rumor, as indicated by the applied study, is that many users who spread rumors through these means do not realize the severe consequences of this issue. In addition, such standards have become accessible for all age categories. Contrary to the recent past when all channels and communication means were limited. It was possible to follow them or punish their sources and promoters, and this is what made the rumors of social networking sites characterized by the following [10]:

- The speed of spread as the rumor is transmitted quickly and smoothly by simply "clicking the button."
- Many recipients and the diversity of their cultures, types, and educational levels, and here lies the danger.
- Transcending the boundaries of one geographical place to distant areas that may lack social awareness.
- Supporting attachments in electronic rumors makes their use of images and sound more convincing.

7.2. Definition of rumor

The rumor is defined as: "promoting a fabricated news that has no basis in reality, or deliberately exaggerating, intimidating, or distorting the narration of a story that contains a small part of the truth, or adding false or distorted information to a true news or its interpretation is incorrect and commenting on it in a manner different from reality and the truth, with the aim of psychological influence on public opinion to achieve certain goals on the scale of a state or several countries" [11]. based on many definitions and the above definition, the researcher defined the rumor as: "unconfirmed news transmitted by members of society about their living conditions or the conditions of their countries through new media sites, as a result of the blackout, lack of or complete absence of news."

Regarding the importance of the rumors, many countries have been interested in studying them to reveal their nature and the factors behind their promotion. There are many motives for which rumors are launched. The most important of them are as follows [12]:

- **-Aggression:** towards the person or (group) targeted by the rumor to tarnish the reputation.
- **-Projection:** The rumor promoter drops what he harbors in himself on another person or people, such as fear, neglect, betrayal, bribery, or deception, so he falls it on others.
- **-Prediction:** The rumor refers to future possibilities that the rumor promoter believes are imminent.

There are various types of rumors, such as Creeping rumors, Impulsive rumors,

and Diving rumors. There are also Dream rumors that spread in the circles that wish for their validity, and there is a rumor of fear that spreads in the atmosphere of fear-generating threat.

7.3. Resisting the rumor:

Dealing with rumors is to refrain from promoting any information until after verifying it, as resisting the rumor is the responsibility of the individual, the group, society, countries, and the world. Given the impact of rumors, opposing them, working to avoid their danger and effects, and limiting their spread is necessary. There are multiple ways and methods to achieve this, including the following: checking the accuracy of the information, publishing accurate, objective, and comprehensive news, and responding quickly to rumors. The research agrees with the opinion that social networking sites will play an influential role in social, cultural, and political life in the world as a whole and in the countries of the Middle East in particular [13]. Therefore, those people in charge, including political leaders and scholars in various fields and disciplines, must be attentive and careful by working to combat rumors and confront them through a straightforward and integrated scientific approach.

7.4. Uses and gratifications theory

This theory plays a major role in explaining the relationship between the sender and the receiver (the audience or the recipient). And it is considered an essential media theory that views the audience as positive participants who choose what they want to watch based on their psychological and social needs. The emergence of this theory is due to the world Katz and Blumer In 1974 AD, and he expressed it in his book (Using Mass Communication).

Due to the increase in the number of Internet users and news sites, these sites were able to provide the needs of the public by publishing various issues and topics and exciting news, and due to the significant increase in these sites. The competition between them has become more remarkable in the speed of publishing and publishing news to attract the

most important number of followers. This led to abundant rumors, even though they were not confirmed. From here, the research found that the theory of uses and gratifications is appropriate due to its relevance to the subject of the study. This is in addition to the use of the prioritization theory, as the news sites, through the distorted news they publish, direct the news to serve specific goals for a specific topic within an integrated plan through which rumors are prepared. And then activate its spread and highlight certain aspects to support the rumors raised.

8 Research methods

The methodological procedures were followed in the field study related to exposure to news networks through social networking sites and their reflection on spreading rumors among public relations students as follows: -

- **Research community:** the research community means all items or units of the phenomenon or problem under study. Moreover, the research community includes a sample of media students from the fourth academic level in some Sudanese universities. The sample members' enjoyment of modern communication technologies and their permanent follow-up to various issues in these communication platforms help develop recommendations that serve the research. The sample was selected from public relations students at the media colleges affiliated with Omdurman University and the University of Sudan because the colleges mentioned above are in Khartoum and include students from different cultures and geographical diversity. First, the cluster sample was selected and implemented. Then, the study population was divided into smaller groups according to several criteria, especially since the sample type is most appropriate for prominent people, especially those geographically dispersed on a wide scale. After that, the researchers chose a deliberate sample of students in the last semester from each selected group.

- **Tools of data gathering:** The method of gathering data was determined based on the nature of the intended data; consequently, the following tools were used: -

- **Interviews** are a reasonable means of conveying information and are defined as oral information provided by the respondents through a meeting between them and the researchers.
- **Online questionnaire:** It is a set of questions and inquiries related to each other to achieve the goal or goals the researchers seek [14].
- The authors used both Interviews and in-depth discussions with some media professors in the fields of journalism, radio, television, and media, while the questionnaire was used with students online.

- **Preparing the data collection tool:** The research team chose the online questionnaire tool to carry out the analytical description of the tool for collecting information related to the topic of the study. First, a sample representing the community was selected, considering the inclusion of the sample and its representation of the research community. In addition, some steps were taken to design the questionnaire so the respondent could answer it. [15]

- **Study population and sample selection method:** The community means all the items or units of the phenomenon under study. The study population represents a random sample of fourth-level students from several media faculties in many public universities. (300) questionnaires were distributed (100) questionnaires to three universities. The cartoon questionnaire was designed as the most appropriate for the categories of learners and in an easy way that contains many questions answering the study's questions and achieving its objectives. The total number of the research community who responded and interacted was 280 respondents, and the research was conducted thereon. Students of the Department of Public Relations were chosen for several reasons. The most important of which are: that students of public relations and its graduates are the ones who have the responsibility to defend the reputation and status of the organization against various rumors and that the number of public relations students in media colleges is the largest compared to other majors. Hence, the researchers chose. This category of media students dealt with without other students.[16]

- **Validity and reliability test of the study tools:** To test the validity of the study tool, the research team presented it to a group of arbitrators with competence and experience in areas related to the topic of research and study in the field of media and sociology¹. The questionnaire was modified according to modifications and notes of the jurors to the paragraphs of the questionnaire to ensure the validity of the questionnaire and its measurement of what was prepared to be measured. As for the reliability coefficient, the test-pre-test testing method was applied and re-applied with a time difference of ten days on a sample of 40 individuals. The research team calculated the reliability of the questionnaire results on the Cronbach alpha coefficient, so the percentage of certainty on all paragraphs of the questionnaire was high, indicating the

¹ The questionnaire was judged by a number of academics known for their competence and research experience, and they are: Dr. Khaled Khalaf Suleiman University of Science and Technology, d. Abdo Daoud, University of Fujairah, d. Ali Al-Mahmoodi University of Sudan.

tool's validity for application. However, the statistical means used varied between the frequencies and the percentage.

- **Statistical processing methods:** The statistical processing process was carried out by coding answers and data entry through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences "SPSS" program, internal consistency was conducted, and the data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages for all questionnaire axes.

9 Discussion and conclusion

Table 1: shows the participants' ages

Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Less than 21	85	30%
21 and less than 25	151	54%
25 and less than 30	31	11%
30 and more	13	5%
Total	280	%100

It is clear from the above table that 54% of the research community is between the ages of 21 and less than 25, 30% are in the age group of fewer than 21 years, and 11% are between 25 and less than 30 years old, while those over 30 years old their percentage has reached 5%. It is noted that the most significant percentage is for the category under 25 years, with a percentage of 84%, an age group in which the young man is about to graduate. This matter can be attributed to the new media exceeding the traditional media's content, method, and communication mechanisms. The new media is liberated and goes beyond time and place limits. Moreover, it is multi-media; with new and successive developments, it plays completely new roles that the traditional media can no longer play.

Table 2: shows the participants' gender

Category	Frequency	Percentage%
Male	157	%56
Female	123	%44
Total		%100

It is clear from the above table that 56% of the research community are males, and 44% of the research community are females. It is noted that males are dominant over females.

It is noted that the percentage of males is higher than the percentage of females. It is also noted that the percentage of females reaches 44%, which indicates that women have entered the worlds of media and technology well, unlike in the past, when they were not allowed to enter the media field. This percentage is consistent with the nature of conservative Arab society and the difference in society's view and treatment of females from males. The above result is consistent with logic, especially in our Arab societies, where women's use of new media remains low compared to men, despite women's strong participation outside the new media.

Table 3: In your opinion, does youth use of news networks through social media influence the spread of rumors?

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	172	%62
To some extent	93	%33
No	15	%5
Total	280	%100

It is clear from the above table that 62% of the research community agree that young people's use of news networks through social media sites affects the spread of rumors, while 33% of the same society see its influence to some extent, and 5% believe that young people's use of news networks through social media sites does not affect the spread of rumors. It is noted that 95% of the research community believes that young people's use of news networks through social media influences the spread of rumors. The above result is seen from the reality that there is a danger behind youth's dependence on new media as a news source instead of the official institutions. Rumors pose a real challenge in emergencies. Rumors may create ethical dilemmas and influence emergency responders' perceptions of their situations. Organizational leaders

must have policies and guidelines to manage rumors that spread within their organizations during emergencies. These should include a direct means of notifying the organization of the rumor, and the employees of its integrity.

Table 4: shows the quality of the social media sites used by the public relations students affects and helps the rumor spread.

Category	Frequency	Percentage%
Yes	176	%63
To some extent	91	%32
No	13	%5
Total	280	%100

It is clear from the above table that 63% of the research community believes that the quality of social media sites used by young people helps the rumor spread. In comparison, 32% see that it helps the rumor spread to some extent, while 5% of the research community sees that the quality of social media sites has no evident effect on the rumor spread.

It is noted that the percentage of those who fully agree and agree to some extent reached 95%, a way that gives an evident indication that the new media has a role in promoting and spreading rumors, owing to the rapid exchange of information and the large base of the social media sites' users. They focus on gathering the latest information or news from people around the world. Anyone with an internet-connected device can share ideas or update events in real time. Social media sites help reporters share useful information. But at the same time, it also leads to the deliberate spread of rumors, so reporting unchecked information can help keep a distance from spreading information that could end up being false. The openness of online social networking platforms (such as Twitter or Facebook), machine learning, and technologies based on NLP (Natural Language Processing) allows us to investigate people's behavior regarding disseminating information.[17]

Table 5: shows that users of news networks are predominantly young people, which helps spread rumors

Category	Frequency	Percentage %
I strongly agree	120	%43
I agree	113	%40
I don't have a specific opinion	23	%8
I disagree	19	%7
I strongly disagree	5	%2
Total	280	%100

It is clear from the above table that 43% of the research community agrees that technology users are predominantly young people, which helps spread the rumor. In comparison, 40% of the research community agree, 7% disagree, 8% believe that I have no specific opinion, and 2% strongly disagree. Based on the above results, 83% believe that the youth group dominates technology users in a way that helps to spread the rumor. The matter may be that the youth group can interact more than any other group with the requirements of modern technology, which is not available to the rest of the categories of society. Social media promotes the effective dissemination of information and facilitates the spread of rumors, which requires providing a platform for users to verify the information and reduce uncertainty. Undoubtedly this is a feature that can help uncover rumors.

Table 6: shows a relationship between the frequent use of social networking sites and the spread of rumors among public relations students.

Category	Frequency	Percentage %
I strongly agree	115	%41
I agree	127	%45
I don't have a specific opinion	22	%8
I disagree	11	%4
I strongly disagree	5	%2
Total	280	%100

It is clear from the above table that 45% of the research community agree that there is a relationship between the frequent use of social networking sites and the spread of rumors among public relations students, while 41% of the research community strongly agree, 8% of the research community said that they have no specific opinion, and 4% of the research

community believe that they don't agree. It is noted that 86% agree that there is a relationship between the frequent use of social networking sites and the spread of rumors among public relations students. Moreover, the primary mechanism by which rumors can be warned against is to facilitate self-correction by motivating users to block unchecked messages regardless of their authenticity. If users generally suspect rumors, they may choose not to support them due to unwillingness to risk the possibility that they will be false. On the one hand, it can prevent the spread of false rumors. On the other hand, it makes it challenging to achieve bottom-up self-correction. This vision can help explain why statements from official sources and professional journalists play a crucial role in enabling self-correction and why users may struggle to distinguish between true and false rumors.

Table 7: shows the opinion of the research community about the environment of social networking sites and their fertility for the growth of rumors

Category	Frequency	Percentage %
I strongly agree	163	%59
I agree	104	%37
I don't have a specific opinion	9	%3
I disagree	4	1%
I strongly disagree	0	%0
Total	280	%100

It is clear from the above table that 59% of the research community strongly agree that social networking sites are a fertile environment for the growth of rumors, while 37% of the research community agree, and 3% of the research community affirms that the fact that they have no specific opinion. In comparison, 1% of the research community does not agree. Despite the effectiveness of social networks in conveying events in real-time, they are, on the other hand, a fertile environment for the growth of rumors. The above result proves that social networking sites are a fertile and effective environment for spreading and promoting rumors. The public is also not good at distinguishing between truth and rumor; the public tends to spread rumors and does not correct them if it is based on false information. Therefore, it is important to focus on the element of the technology used by users, as these networks should be for the benefit of society, not for what destroys. This prompts us to pay attention to raising awareness of the rules of religion and normal social behavior, which users must consider. These criteria are represented in preserving the five necessities that God Almighty commanded us to preserve, which are as follows (religion, self, honor, money, and mind).[18]

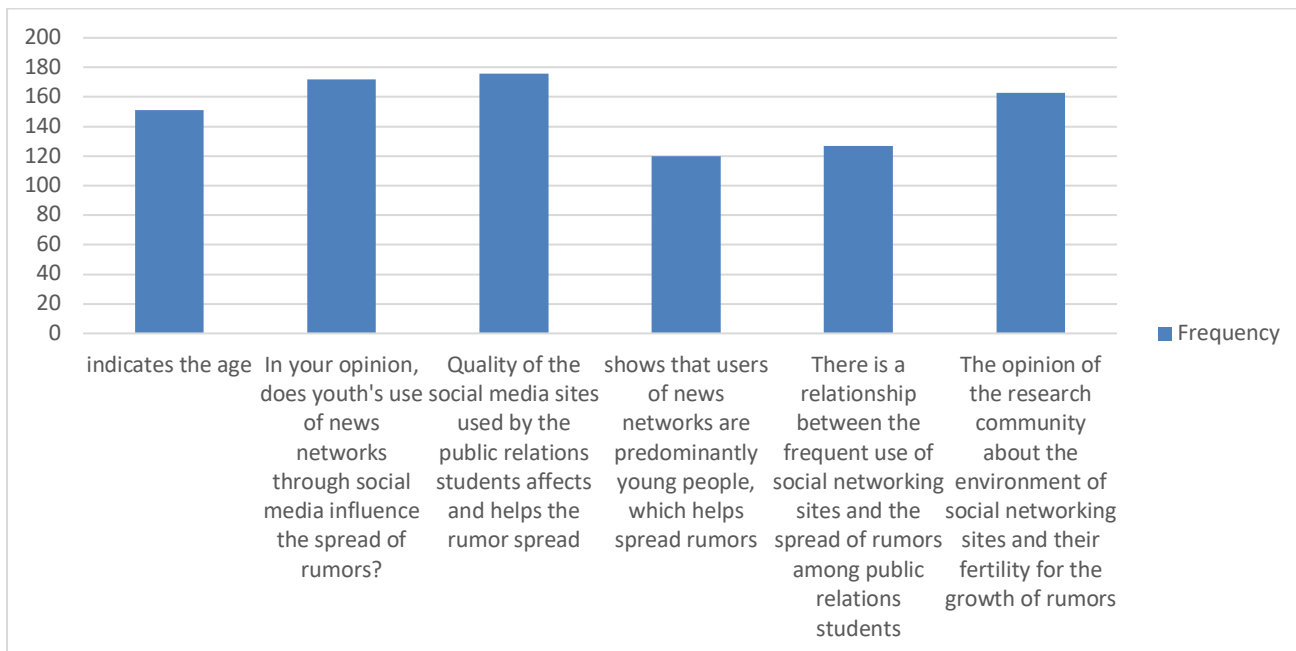


Fig. 1: shows the highest percentages and frequencies for all research questions in the previous tables.

10 Results

The results of the study indicated the following:

- 1- 62% of the research community believes that the youth's use of news networks through social media influences the spread of rumors. Perhaps this result is consistent to a large degree with what came out of the study conducted by Mercy et al. This dealt with the Assessment of the spread of fake news of Covid-19 amongst social media users in Kano State, Nigeria. The previous study concluded that 65.6% of the respondents were aware of fake news about Covid-19 in Kano State, Nigeria.[19] Additionally, 33% of the same society sees its influence to some extent. However, 5% thought it did not have an impact.

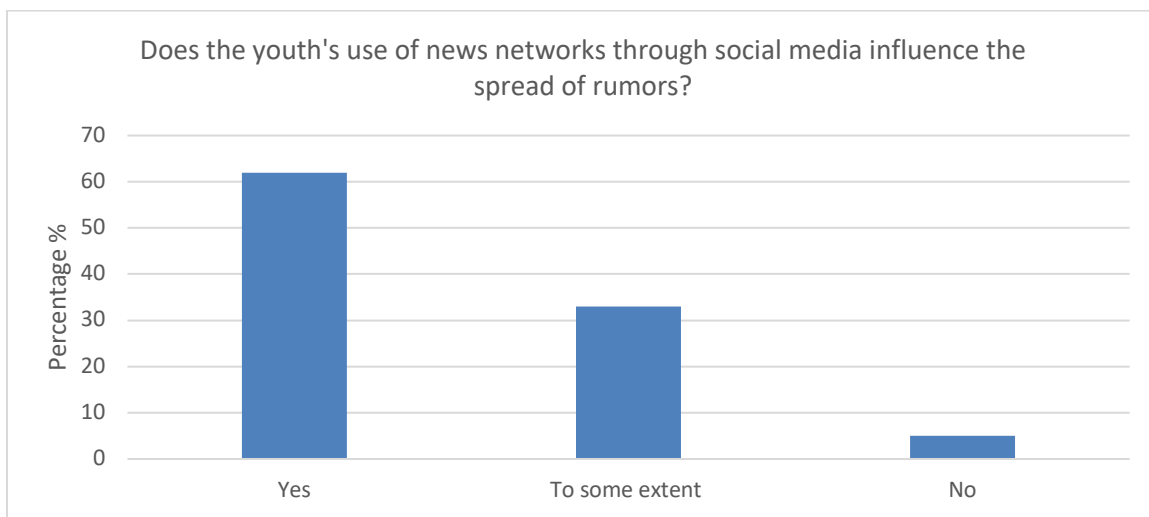


Fig. 2: shows that most of the youth's use of news networks through social media influences the spread of rumors.

- 2- 63% of the research community believes that the quality of social networking sites used by young people helps spread rumors. Because many news platforms and websites deliberately formulate the content and news content with information and images. This makes them at the top of professionalism and professionalism, noting that it is full of misleading and false information, which means that members of society pay attention to the type of media content published through these unreliable news networks in return. In addition, 32% think it allows rumors to spread somewhat. However, 5% thought it didn't help the rumors spread.

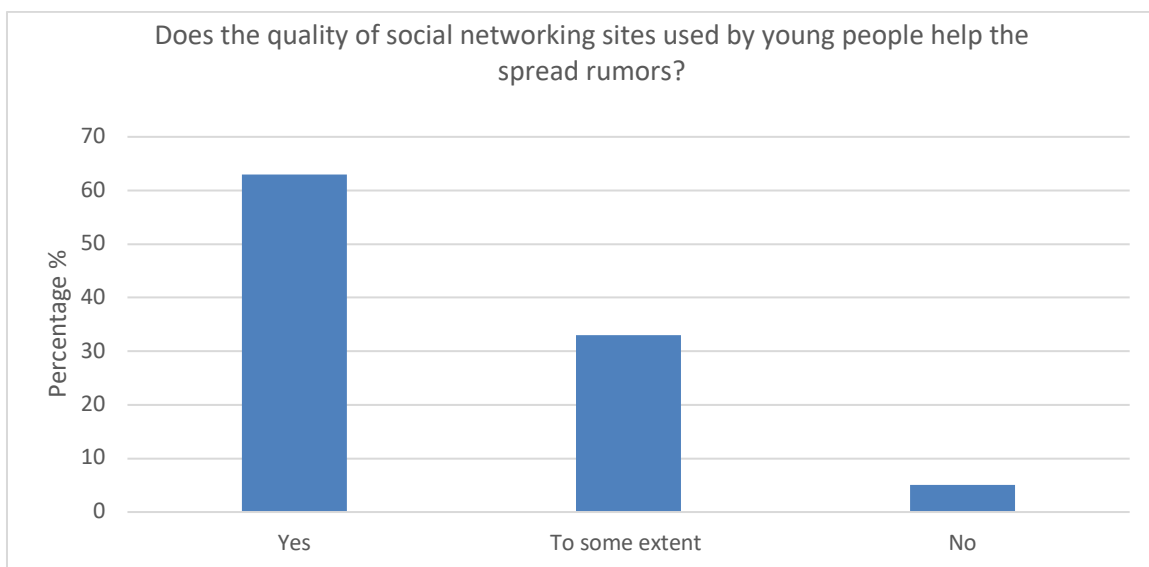


Fig. 3: shows that the quality of social networking sites used by young people helps spread rumors

- 3- 43% of the research community strongly agree that technology users are predominantly young, which helps spread rumors. This result agreed with Ying Zhen's study, "The Study on the Generation and Spread of Internet Rumors about the New Crown Epidemic, " emphasizing that the Internet contributed to the rapid spread of rumors. The two

main characteristics of the new crown pneumonia epidemic and the current development of Internet technology have provided people with more convenient and faster communication channels and communication in spreading rumors and misleading news.[20] While 40% of the research community agree. 8% of the community did not have a specific opinion. However, 7% disagreed with the given statement, and 2% strongly disagreed.

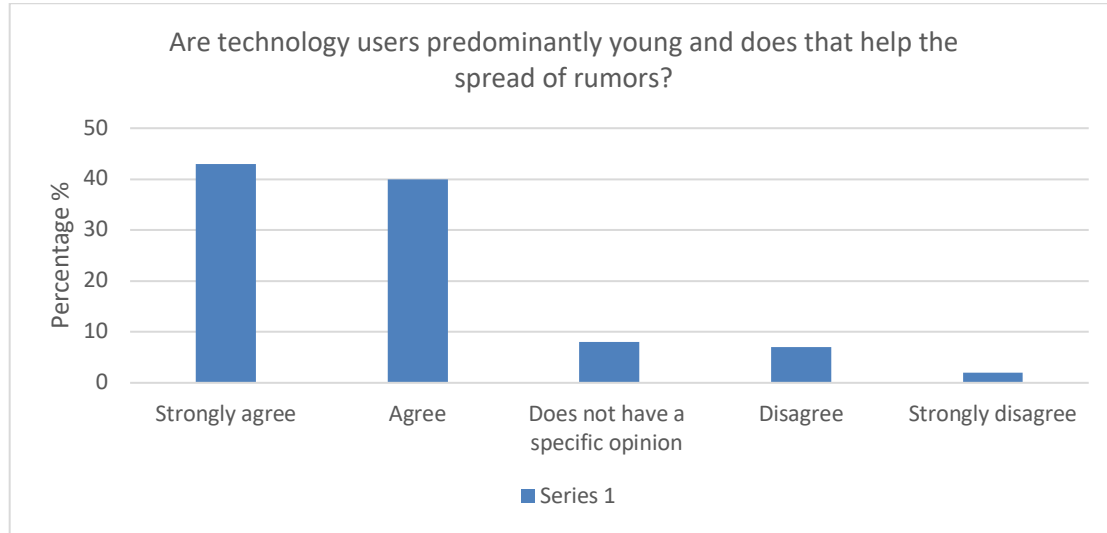


Fig. 4: shows that technology users are predominantly young, which helps spread rumors

- 4- 45% of the research community agreed that there is a relationship between the frequent use of social networking sites and the spreading of rumors among PR students. Here, it must be noted and linked between this result and what was published by the Stat Counter website for statistics, which indicated that the average hours spent by the user on social media platforms amount to 2 hours and 20 minutes. Most users rely on phones when browsing social media sites. This result confirms that the number of hours and frequent use of unreliable news networks that use social networks contribute significantly to identifying more rumors. While 41% of the research community strongly agree. 8% of society does not have a definite opinion. However, 4% do not agree with this statement, and 2% strongly disagree.

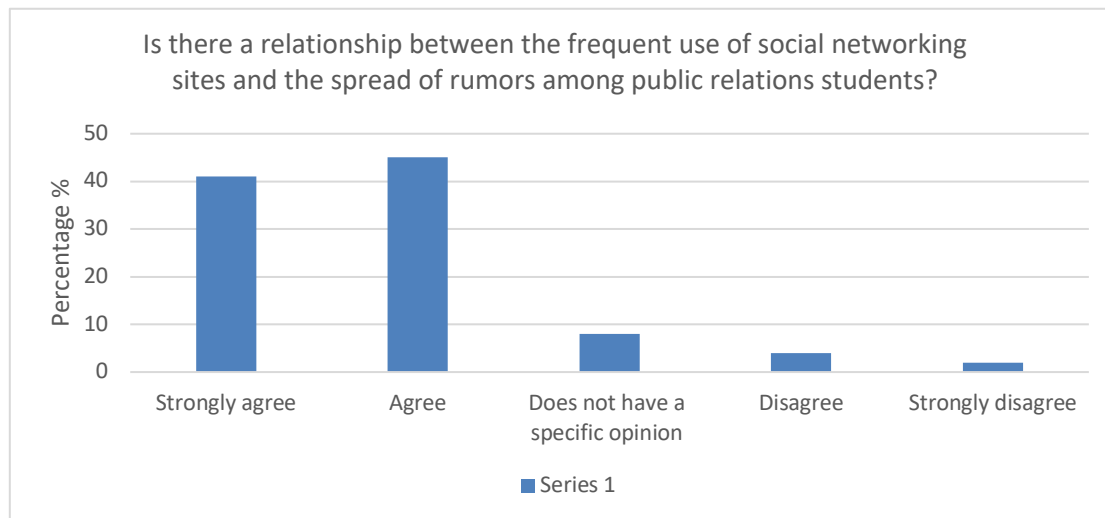


Fig. 5: shows a relationship between the frequent use of social networking sites and the spreading of rumors among PR students.

- 5- 59% of the research community strongly agree that social networking sites are a fertile environment for rumors to grow. This is consistent with the results of the previous study by researcher Rehab Mohamed, entitled Employing Official Infographics on Social Networking Sites in Confronting Rumors: Which concluded that the widespread use of the Internet in Egypt and the misuse of many young people of social media, especially "Facebook," helped make the Internet a fertile environment for generating and promoting rumors, 37% of the research community agreed with

that. On the other hand, 3% of society does not have a definite opinion. However, 1% do not agree with the given statement.

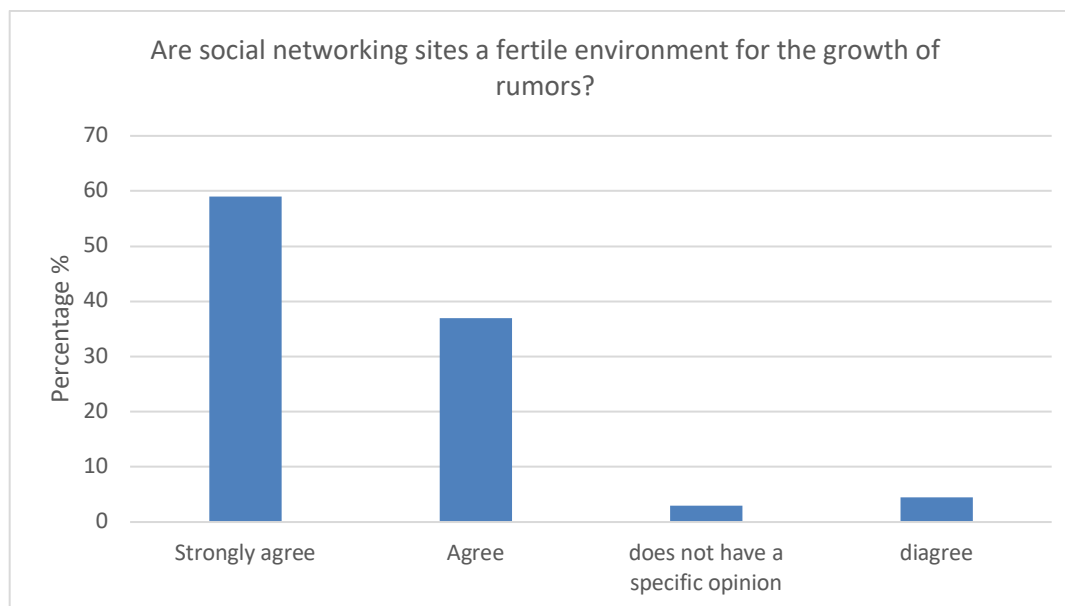


Fig. 6: shows that social networking sites are a fertile environment for rumors to grow.

11 Recommendations

In reviewing the results of the study, the research recommends the following: -

1. News websites need to pay attention to the way of dealing with the crises and investigate the accuracy and credibility of presenting the information.
2. Increasing effective communication between leaders of countries, institutions, citizens, and the public through various means and methods of communication to facilitate refutation and elimination of rumors.
3. Creating electronic accounts on the new media websites of official institutions, ministries, and community leaders for continuous interaction with the public, providing these communication sites with information and updating them immediately and continuously, following up on reactions and direct response to inquiries and addressing rumors before they escalate and spread.
4. The necessary monitoring and controlling of new media sites by the relevant institutions to identify the issues and topics going on, which may develop into a rumor targeting the institution and undermining its reputation, to be dealt with in the best manner.
5. Rumors are not pursued through cyber and information crime units. Although this is one of the prevention and response mechanisms, the most appropriate in our time is to broadcast, publish and present the complete and uncompromised facts through the same new media.
6. Modern technology is too quick to enact legal legislation, and the only optimal way is to put in place measures to accommodate this technological revolution to serve positively in the interest of society and to attract and absorb the new energies represented in the young people and their positive and rational interaction with the technical revolution.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict regarding the publication of this paper.

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