Rapid Reviews COVID-19

Review 1: "Developing an accuracy-prompt toolkit to reduce COVID-19 misinformation online"

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RR:C19 Evidence Scale rating by reviewer:

- **Reliable.** The main study claims are generally justified by its methods and data. The results and conclusions are likely to be similar to the hypothetical ideal study. There are some minor caveats or limitations, but they would/do not change the major claims of the study. The study provides sufficient strength of evidence on its own that its main claims should be considered actionable, with some room for future revision.

Review:

This study analyses the impact of users' attention to accuracy on their sharing discernment of Covid-19 news. The study is innovative as it focuses on new ideas and solutions to reduce Covid-19 misinformation online. It does so by using an experiment conducted within a survey (or survey experiment) on social media users.

The use of a survey experiment is appropriate to establish the causal relationships in this study. There are, however, a few concerns that this study needs to pay attention to. Firstly, randomization is a very important process in an experiment. The study should explain how it randomly assigned the 9070 respondents to one or more experimental conditions. Secondly, the study conducted five waves of data collection (and stated that two treatments were administered in multiple waves), but the rationale for collecting data for each stage was not provided. Thirdly, the researchers administered eight experimental treatments in this study. I wonder why the last two treatments (no. 7 and no. 8) have multiple exposures. What makes the researchers decide that 'partisan norms' should be combined with selected conditions only and in a different order? Fourthly, an experiment is often lauded for its high internal validity whereas a survey is often lauded for its high external validity. How does the study plan to balance the two in this survey experiment? How do the authors ensure that differences between groups are caused by the manipulation rather than the differences between individuals in the groups? These issues should be addressed in this study.

In addition, this study briefly states that sharing discernment or 'the quality of news shared' is measured by the difference in sharing probability of true versus false headlines. The measure is plausible. I am of the opinion that deciding what is true and false is very tricky nowadays. This is because fake news aims to mislead people to think what is false is true. Hence, paying attention to accuracy alone may not lead to

sharing discernment because participants may not know how to differentiate between truth and lies. Perhaps, this explains why this study found a disconnect between accuracy judgments and sharing intentions. The researchers need to consider this factor when explaining the results of the study.

It is important to note that a priming experiment is difficult particularly because the researchers cannot be certain that the prime affects subjects as they intended. The researchers must explain how they overcome or minimize the problems associated with the priming experiment in their study. Scholars (eg.: Diaz, Grady & Kuklinski, 2020) suggest the use of priming experiments as part of a factorial experiment to ensure information equivalence and reduce confounding the prime with associated factors. I can see the possibility of designing a factorial experiment for this study. The researchers can arrange the treatment groups according to 'without additional information provided' and 'with some information related to accuracy provided'. By conducting a factorial experiment, the researchers will be able to evaluate interaction effects and draw better conclusions from the study.

The study is novel and has great potential for publication.