How Does Social Media Influence People to Get Vaccinated? The Elaboration Likelihood Model of a Person's Attitude and Intention to Get COVID-19 Vaccines

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How Does Social Media Influence People to Get Vaccinated? The Elaboration Likelihood Model of a Person's Attitude and Intention to Get COVID-19 Vaccines

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Abstract: The global COVID-19 mass vaccination program has created a polemic amongst pro- and anti-vaccination groups on social media. However, the working mechanism on how the shared information might influence an individual decision to be vaccinated is still limited. This study embarks on adopting the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) framework. We examined the function of central route factors (information completeness and information accuracy) as well as peripheral route factors (experience sharing and social pressure) in influencing attitudes towards vaccination and the intention to obtain the vaccine. We use a factorial design to create eight different scenarios in the form of Twitter posts to test the interaction and emulate the situation on social media. In total, 528 respondents were involved in this study. Findings from this study indicated that both the central route and peripheral route significantly influence individually perceived informativeness and perceived persuasiveness. Consequently, these two factors significantly influence attitude towards vaccination and intention to obtain the vaccine. According to the findings, it is suggested that, apart from evidence-based communication, the government or any interested parties can utilize both experience sharing and social pressure elements to increase engagement related to COVID-19 vaccines on social media, such as Twitter.

Keywords: social media; COVID-19; vaccine; elaboration likelihood model; Twitter; factorial design; decision making

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1. Introduction

The global pandemic of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has entered a new phase where vaccines against the disease have been developed, approved, and administered for the masses all over the world. It is reported, that until January 2022, 9.95 billion doses of vaccines have been administrated and 4.11 billion persons have been fully vaccinated worldwide [1]. Despite the huge numbers, in relative, there are only 52.7% of the world's total who has completed the vaccination doses. It should be noted that several factors might lead to the small percentage of global vaccination rates, such as the limited number of supplies, logistics and procuring issues, and a country's low purchasing ability contributing to the number of those vaccinated [2].

However, one of the important aspects that need to be highlighted when discussing the low vaccination rate is vaccine hesitancy. Multiple studies have reported vaccine hesitancy amongst the general public across different countries. For instance, it is reported that COVID-19 vaccines hesitancy is more than 40% in Italy [3]; more than 40% in both France