

Bibliometric analysis of research trends in information seeking on social media

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ABSTRACT

Background: The rise of social media has transformed how individuals seek, process, and share information. However, the spread of misinformation and the challenge of low digital literacy present significant barriers to accurate information seeking. While previous research has focused on how information is disseminated, less attention has been given to how users actively search for reliable information on social media platforms. **Purpose:** This study aims to examine trends in information seeking on social media, focusing on the role of misinformation and digital literacy, while conducting a bibliometric analysis of the relevant literature. **Methods:** A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was combined with bibliometric analysis using Biblioshiny from the Bibliometrix R-package. Data were retrieved from the Scopus database, covering publications from 2020 to 2024, and a total of 627 articles were included after filtering. **Results:** The analysis identified the most influential publications, the most prolific authors, and dominant keywords. A co-occurrence network analysis was also conducted to map the connections among key concepts such as misinformation, digital literacy, anxiety, and information-seeking behavior. The findings reveal that misinformation remains a major challenge, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, while digital literacy plays a significant role in shaping users' information-seeking behavior. Notably, Dadaczynski, Hu, and Li emerged as the most productive authors, each contributing five publications. Prominent topics include infodemics, health literacy, and vaccine hesitancy. These findings highlight the importance of improving digital literacy and developing more effective communication strategies to navigate the evolving information ecosystem on social media.

Keywords: Bibliometric; digital literacy; information behavior; information seeking; social media

Analisis bibliometrik tren penelitian dalam pencarian informasi di media sosial

ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: penggunaan media sosial telah mengubah cara individu mencari, memproses, dan berbagi informasi. Namun, penyebaran misinformasi dan tantangan rendahnya literasi digital menjadi hambatan besar dalam pencarian informasi yang akurat. Meskipun penelitian sebelumnya telah fokus pada bagaimana informasi disebarkan, perhatian yang lebih sedikit diberikan pada bagaimana pengguna secara aktif mencari informasi yang dapat dipercaya di platform media sosial. **Tujuan:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tren pencarian informasi melalui media sosial, dengan fokus pada peran misinformasi dan literasi digital, serta melakukan analisis bibliometrik terhadap literatur yang relevan. **Metode:** Studi ini menggabungkan Systematic Literature Review (SLR) dengan analisis bibliometrik menggunakan perangkat lunak Biblioshiny dari Bibliometrix. Data dikumpulkan dari database Scopus, dengan rentang waktu tahun 2020 hingga 2024, menghasilkan 627 publikasi yang relevan setelah tahap penyaringan. **Hasil:** Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi publikasi paling berpengaruh, penulis paling produktif, dan kata kunci dominan. Selain itu, dilakukan analisis co-occurrence network untuk memetakan hubungan antarkonsep seperti misinformasi, literasi digital, kecemasan, dan perilaku pencarian informasi. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa misinformasi tetap menjadi hambatan utama, khususnya selama pandemi COVID-19, sedangkan literasi digital berperan penting dalam memoderasi perilaku pencarian informasi pengguna. Beberapa penulis teratas yang paling produktif adalah Dadaczynski, Hu, dan Li, masing-masing dengan lima publikasi. Topik-topik utama yang muncul meliputi infodemi, literasi kesehatan, dan vaksinasi. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya strategi komunikasi yang adaptif dan peningkatan literasi digital dalam menghadapi arus informasi yang berkembang di media sosial.

Kata-kata kunci: Bibliometrik; literasi digital; media sosial; pencarian informasi; perilaku informasi

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INTRODUCTION

In a digital world, the way individuals look for, process, and share new information has transformed the way we do things. The advent of social media platforms has revolutionized the way individuals consume information, providing unparalleled access to news, education, and social discourse (Ahmad, 2024; Widjaya & Komara, 2023). Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have also become important sources of information, enabling users to get live updates on matters of interest from personal news to world events (Gon, 2021). As these platforms are becoming more prominent in our information gathering, it becomes increasingly important to understand how information is sought in the context of social media environments. The capacity to distinguish between credible sources and to navigate the forest of content on social media grows all the more crucial, particularly when misinformation can be deadly, as in matters of health, or volatile, as in politics (Almeida et al., 2023).

Information seeking has been influenced in several traditional information environments, which is recognized as the way people search, assess, and use information to meet specific requirements. However, the breakneck rise of social media as a primary information source requires us to evaluate current frameworks and models (Sarkar et al., 2022). Social media's interactive nature, providing the opportunity for direct engagement with content, coupled with the high number of both reliable and unreliable information, all lead to new challenges for information seekers (Keshavarz, 2021). Given this transformation in the information ecosystem, it becomes imperative to revisit theoretical approaches concerning how people interact with and use information in these online contexts.

Information-seeking behaviors on social media are diverse, multi-faceted, and not easily categorized. People don't just passively consume information; they seek it out, interact with it, and share it with others (Tang & Zou, 2021). Several elements, including digital literacy, social impact, and platform design, impact this active engagement. There has been little research on the people who engage in information-seeking activities, such as searching for keywords or browsing through social media hashtags. Besides that, if users understand these behaviors, they are better placed to find adequate responses to these challenges for information seekers navigating the social media ecosystem.

Amid this COVID-19 crisis, the spread of fake news makes us question: How real is the information we are looking for and/or sharing? Misinformation can distort public perception, shape decisions, and drive harmful behaviors, especially in health-related settings (Liu, 2020). Both of these areas were featured prominently in the analyses we discuss. They should be further examined through future research as the role of misinformation continues to shape the information-seeking process

in the arena of social media source credibility. As misinformation spreads rapidly on social media platforms, it underscores the critical need for digital literacy, enabling individuals to identify, evaluate, and navigate information effectively to avoid harmful consequences.

Digital literacy has also been shown to play a mediating role in information-seeking behaviors on social media (Komara & Widjaya, 2024). As misinformation increases, individuals' capacity to critically assess information on the internet has never been more relevant (Singh & Banga, 2022). However, little is found in the research, no more than the subject of digital literacy (mainly social media). Although some studies have covered the role of digital literacy in navigating online spaces, little has been done to analyze how it impacts information seeking in social media environments. Digital literacy reveals both the technical skills needed to access information as well as the critical thinking skills needed to determine whether it is accurate and relevant (Reddy et al., 2023; Vodă et al., 2022). Improving understanding of how digital literacy influences information seeking will help guide educational programs and strategies designed to enhance users' capacity to critically assess information in the digital age (Machin-Mastromatteo, 2021).

This research seeks to address these gaps by examining the evolving landscape of information seeking on social media. By focusing on the relationship between information-seeking behaviors, digital literacy, and misinformation, the study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of how individuals interact with information in online environments. Additionally, this bibliometric study will explore and synthesize existing research on Information Seeking on Social Media. To guide this research, we frame the following research questions into (1) What is the publication trend in Information seeking on social media research?, (2) Which are the most influential articles contributing to Information seeking on social media research research?, (3) Who are the top prolific authors in Information seeking on social media research research?, (4) What are the major themes and topics studied in Information seeking on social media research research?, (5) What is the future scope of research in Information seeking on social media research?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Information Seeking

Information seeking has long been a popular topic among information science researchers focused on studying how people use, search, and find information to meet a particular need or solve a problem. The main concepts of information seeking, such as the information search process by Kuhlthau, do show a cognitive and emotional aspect of searching for information (Putri et al., 2024). According to Kuhlthau's model, information seekers pass through unique stages, beginning with generation and progressing to formulation, exploration, and completion, all of which come

with their difficulties and unknowns (McNicholas & Marcella, 2024). This framework has been used in numerous domains to gain insight into how people use information in a range of scenarios, from academic research to everyday decisions.

Social media has emerged as a significant source of information to seek and engage with content (Khatri, 2021). Social media aid in information seeking, as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram act not only as a medium for communication (Bashir et al., 2021; Marcella-Hood & Marcella, 2023), however, a necessary space for information sharing. Over the last decade, social media has allowed for new opportunities for community organizations, social movements, and activists, as well as for governments. Research has shown the scale of misinformation and its impact on public argument crises, such as health crises or political events (Chowdhury et al., 2023). These challenges underscore the need for a closer examination of how information seekers evaluate and process information coming from these platforms.

Social Media

The evolution of the concept of social media has changed how people communicate, share information, and interact with content. The platforms for social connection and information, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, have become familiar, daily routines (Nguyen, 2021). Social media, by its nature, should express user-generated content and interaction (Santos, 2022). This quality sets it apart from traditional media, which are generally one-directional and static. Users can post information, comment on it, like it, share it, and do many other things on social media, making them active participants in the creation and dissemination of information.

Social media serves two essential functions: it is a source of information and a channel for discovering new information. Therefore, social media analysis can be explored in the context of information seeking. Studies Hernandez et al. (2024) demonstrate that the number of people who consult social media instead of traditional media for news and health-related information is on the rise, as they tend to skip newspapers and television. Social media makes it so easy to share content that much of that misinformation, with dire consequences, especially during times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, proliferates (Desai et al., 2021). Research has shown that Olan et al. (2024) the spread of false information is known to be faster than that of accurate information on social media. This issue becomes even more worrisome when considering how social media information can affect public opinion based on misinformation or biased information.

RESEARCH METHOD

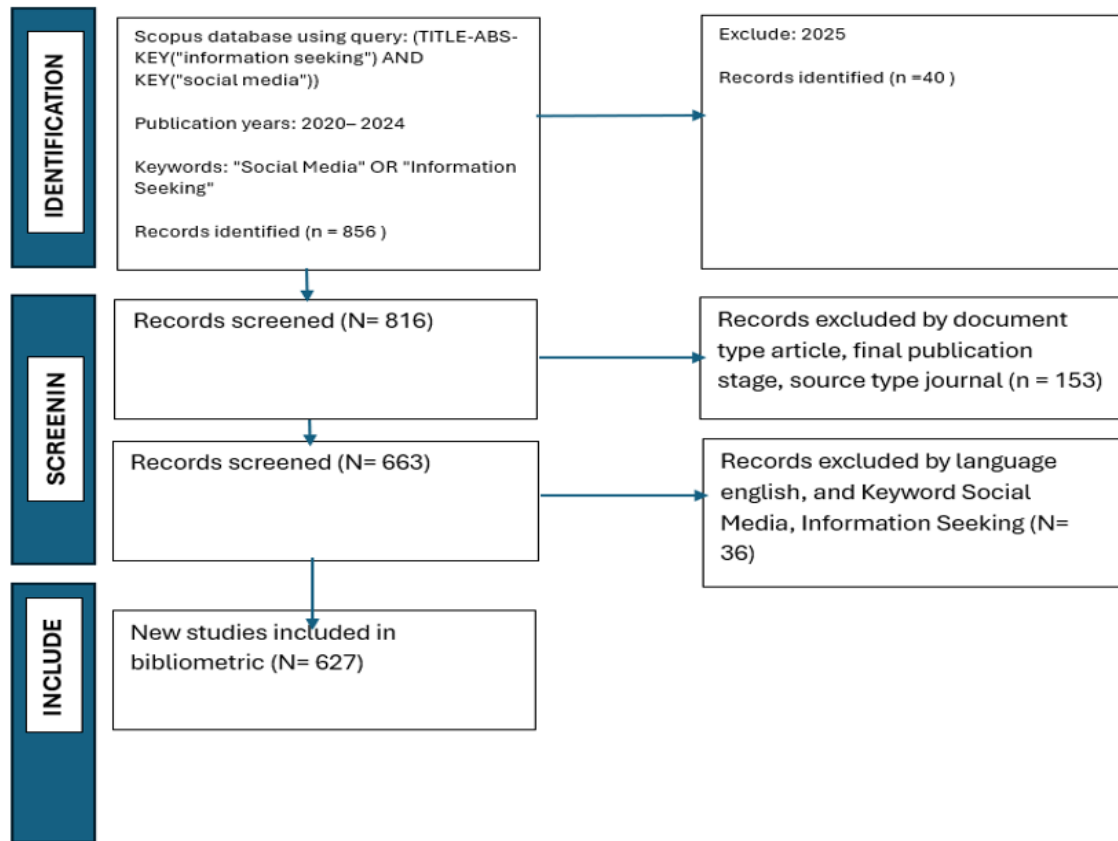
This study utilizes a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), which is a systematic, comprehensive

method for searching, evaluating, and aggregating studies for a hypothesis or topic. To provide a comprehensive overview of the current study's status in the subject, it entails systematic searching in relevant databases, study selection according to predetermined parameters, and synthesis of results. In this SLR, researchers used PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). PRISMA is a guideline that guides reporting SLR results wholly and transparently. PRISMA ensures that SLR research follows good reporting standards, so that research results can be replicated and verified by other researchers.

In this bibliometrics study, researchers utilized Biblioshiny, a web-based application that offers a user-friendly interface for Bibliometrix, an R package for bibliometric analysis. Biblioshiny serves as a tool for visualizing and analyzing data from databases to gain insights into research landscapes. Bibliometric analysis, through statistical and mathematical means, compares scholarly articles and reports information regarding the number, impact, and dissemination of studies over time (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Hidayatullah et al., 2024). Integrating both methods enables researchers to map trends, areas for study, and developing areas in a subject, as well as evaluating the range and scope of available literature, thereby shedding light on how a theory or subject has evolved and in what direction future study could be directed.

According to, there are bibliometric research analysis designs, including those (1) Establish the objectives and boundaries of the research, which in this study seeks to identify, understand, and analyze the novel, evolving phenomena of Information Seeking on Social Media across multiple digital communication environments. (2) Consists of selecting the bibliometric techniques, such as citation analysis, co-citation analysis, or keyword analysis. (3) The bibliometric study will provide access to peer-reviewed articles published in English and indexed in the Scopus databases, while excluding unrelated or irrelevant sources. (4) Bibliometric analysis will use specialized software tools, Biblioshiny, to process the obtained citation data and create visual displays of citation networks, keyword trends, and co-citation clusters.

The key stages of bibliometric research on Information Seeking encompass the entire research process, from defining research objectives to evaluating the development of Information Seeking on Social Media. It continues through the methods researchers' analysis of the Co-Occurrence network and the co-words network that have been used in the study. Set at Scopus, the selection of Scopus as the database was driven by its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed, English-language scholarly publications, ensuring a high standard of data quality and relevance for bibliometric analysis. Only peer-reviewed English-written data is kept. Then the analysis is performed employing Biblioshiny to produce visualizations of networks of citations and trends in keyword usage in an attempt to derive a scholarly impact.



Source: Research, 2025

Figure 1 PRISMA Structure

The PRISMA in Figure 1 describes the methodology used to select studies for a bibliometric analysis of research on “Information Seeking” and “Social Media.” Searching for information in the Scopus database uses boolean logic with the following details: (TITLE-ABS-KEY (“information seeking”) AND KEY (“social media”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2020) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2021) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2022) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2023) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2024) OR EXCLUDE (PUBYEAR , 2025)) AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , “Social Media”) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , “Information Seeking”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , “ar”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE , “final”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , “English”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , “j”)). A systematic search in the Scopus database returned 856 records in a specific query, which included filtering on articles published between 2020 and 2024 containing the keywords “Social Media” or “Information Seeking.” In the preprocessing stage, researchers establish rules to retain only the most relevant information. Researchers sift through studies by year, type, and language. Then, researchers read titles, abstracts, and keywords. After all, researchers are doing data cleaning to cut out anything that does not fit the work. The inclusion criteria were then refined to include only articles published in English, in journals, and at the final stage of publication. This process resulted in 816 records being screened for relevance to our research objectives.

Afterward, 153 records were removed based on their document type, publication stage, or source type. Subsequently, 663 records were assessed in detail, and 36 based on language and keywords were excluded, yielding a total of 627 that met all inclusion criteria. These 627 studies were subsequently published in a bibliometric analysis assessing trends, impactful articles, prolific authors, and emerging themes in information seeking and social media research. Their focus on systematic and structured processes helps to ensure that only appropriate, high-quality studies are included.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

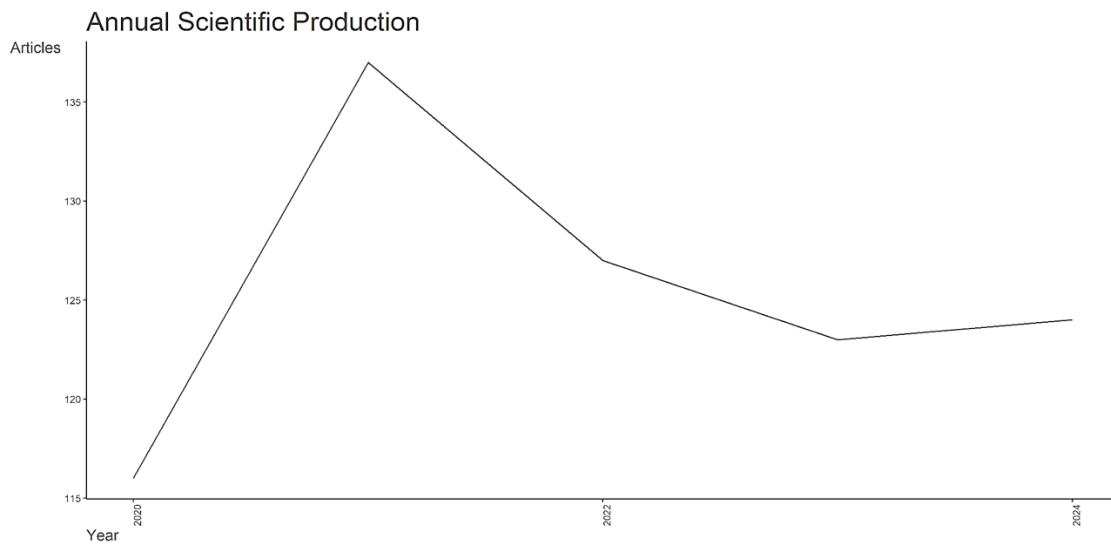
Bibliometrics is a broad and methodical analytical framework based on sophisticated statistical techniques that analyzes, interprets, and measures aspects of the evolution of science, as well as writing, literature, and books in a discipline. This systematic technique utilizes a range of documents and analyzes primary and secondary sources, encompassing a comprehensive review of academic journals, research articles, books, and reports. Bibliometrics provides readers with tools to identify patterns and trends and depict relations between different elements of scholarly literature in a single document. Little by little, it also analyzes more accurately and in detail the effects, connections, and contributions based on the dissemination of scientific publications.

The objective of this research is to present bibliometric data on the use of ISM, a popular communication theory, in an attractive manner from 2020 to 2024. This study aims to help identify the topics with the least and most interest in the scientific paper application of Information Seeking. It will enable analysis of the trends regarding the use of the theory in specific academic fields.

Annual Scientific Production

Figure 2 depicts a spike in initial publications in 2020, reaching a high peak. This increase may reflect an increase in information seeking (especially on social media). When looking at the years that followed, a steady decrease in the number of published articles is evident, so much so that, despite the upward trend, the number of articles does not appear to grow much beyond 2023 or 2024. This trend could indicate a saturation of output on this topic within the literature, or that many scholars may have investigated this topic thoroughly in the first few years of the pandemic, and novel theories or research have now waned.

Variations in the number of articles published can also reflect a normal evolution of research interests or an adaptation of the research landscape, such as changes in funding distribution, academic focus, or shifts in social media usage. The decline in scientific production as of 2020



Source: Research, 2025

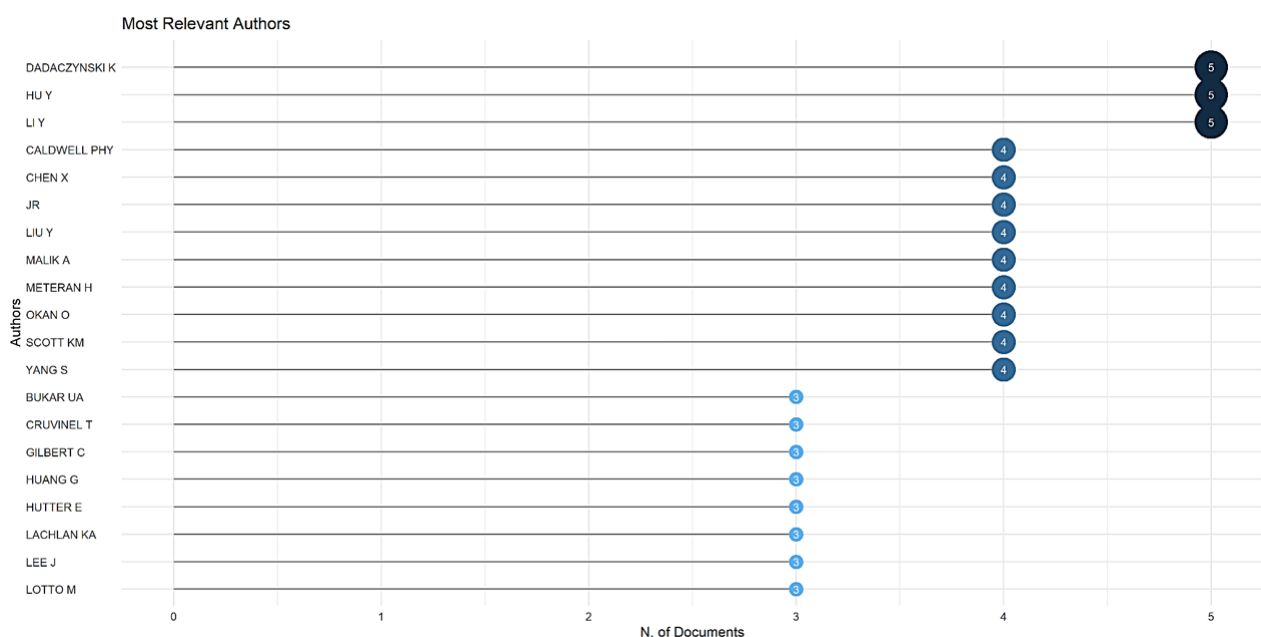
Figure 2 Annual Scientific Production

reflects a shift in orientation among researchers toward other themes of inquiry or topics within the broader field of digital media and communication.

Most Relevant and Authors' H-Index

Figure 3 shows the Most Relevant Authors in terms of the number of documents contributed to the field of research. The top authors in this study are determined by the highest number of publications they have published, and they are DADACZYNSKI K, HU Y, and LI Y, all of whom received five publications each in this study.

Other authors listed only four documents, indicating they are pretty involved in the research,



Source: Research, 2025

Figure 3 Most Relevant

but their contribution is less than that of the top three. The graph indicates a clustering of research contributions around a small subset of authors. Figure 3 suggests a highly centralized research landscape where a few key individuals are responsible for a significant portion of the published work.

Systematic Literature Review

To investigate the impact of research on information seeking and social media, Table 1 performed a citation analysis of the most cited articles indexed in Scopus, and the top 10 most influential articles identified based on citation counts are shown. Table 1 allows for the identification of core scholarly works that have significantly shaped the understanding and development of these interconnected fields.

The most cited article is by Allington et al. (2021) which has 521 citations. The relationship between health protective behavior, social media use, and belief in conspiracy theories during the COVID-19 pandemic. The article is an essential contribution to understanding the impact of information and misinformation spreading via social media on attitudes and behavior during a public health crisis. The second-most-cited is the study by Apuke and Omar (2021), with a total of 489 citations. This study aims to examine the spread of COVID-19 fake news on social media platforms and the factors that encourage users to share such misinformation. This article has become a reference point for studies investigating misinformation, hoaxes, and social media's

Table 1 Bibliometric research analysis design

Rank	Author	Cites	Title
1	Allington et al. (2020)	522	Health-protective behaviour, social media usage and conspiracy belief during the COVID-19 public health emergency
2	Apuke, O. D., & Omar, B. (2021)	489	Fake news and COVID-19: modelling the predictors of fake news sharing among social media users
3	Tangcharoensathien et al. (2020)	367	Framework for managing the COVID-19 infodemic: methods and results of an online, crowdsourced WHO technical consultation
4	Drouin et al. (2020)	262	How parents and their children used social media and technology at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and associations with anxiety
5	Naeem & Bhatti (2020)	244	The Covid-19 'infodemic': a new front for information professionals
6	Liu (2020)	228	COVID-19 information seeking on digital media and preventive behaviors: the mediation role of worry
7	Basu et al. (2021)	177	A cross-national study of factors associated with women's perinatal mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic
8	Ali et al. (2020)	172	Trends and predictors of COVID-19 information sources and their relationship with knowledge and beliefs related to the pandemic: nationwide cross-sectional study
9	Thomas et al. (2020)	132	Student Loneliness: The Role of Social Media Through Life Transitions
10	Liu & Liu (2020)	126	Media exposure and anxiety during COVID-19: The mediation effect of media vicarious traumatization

Source: Research, 2025

influence on public perceptions during a global health crisis.

The third most cited article by Tangcharoensathien et al. (2020) has received 367 citations. This work highlights the need for effective communication strategies to counter misinformation and minimize its adverse effects during the COVID-19 infodemic. The fourth article Drouin et al. (2020) has 262 citations. The findings offer insight into how parents and children were using social media and technology at the beginning of the pandemic and the results of that usage on the anxiety and mental health of the parents and children. The research shows how social media was as much a destination for information as it was part of the problem of rising psychological anxiety in a crisis.

Moving on to the paper that has been cited 244 times is that of Naeem and Bhatti (2020) wherein they engage with the notion of the 'infodemic', presenting a new challenge for information professionals. This study highlights the indispensable role librarians and information experts play in combating the proliferation of hoaxes. Information seeking related to COVID-19 on digital media and its relationship with preventive behaviors and individual anxiety level, Liu (2020) with 228 citations to date. This study examines the role of information seeking on social media in shaping the public perception of risk and influencing preventive actions during the pandemic.

The study, which investigates factors contributing to the mental health status of pregnant women during the pandemic, specifically examines the effect of social media in disseminating health information. The following article Ali et al. (2020) has 172 citations. This study analyzes trends and predictability of informational sources about COVID-19 and the association of these sources with public trust in the pandemic. It uncovers how social media as a source of information influences public perceptions and beliefs (policy) in the context of COVID-19.

The study by Thomas et al. (2020) found that general student loneliness and social media as part of their life transitions during a pandemic was ninth with 132 citations. The results suggest that while social media helps students stay connected, excessive use can lead to feelings of isolation and a lack of social relationships. The last article Liu and Liu (2020), which has 126 citations, investigates the relationship between media exposure and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic, examining the psychological impact of frequent news consumption. This Analysis demonstrates that Social media constituencies significantly contribute to the development of both a system of information patterns related to COVID-19, with links to the orderly way information seeking occurs, as well as to building a trust system and an anxiety generator. These top publications provide relevant information on using social media as an effective means of communication during health crises.

Co-Occurrence network

Social media is one of the primary avenues for locating and spreading information, particularly on health issues. This refers to the analysis of Scopus scientific articles with the main topic

terms in this category include (1) Misinformation, (2) Risk Perception and Anxiety, (3) Vaccine and Vaccination Hesitancy. (4) Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit.

Blue Cluster: Health Literacy and Infodemic

The blue cluster focuses on how social media can enhance health literacy and influence health information behaviors. It also examines how people access, interpret, and utilize health information on social media, as well as the control of infodemics. This cluster indicates barriers to health literacy. Some key ideas in the opened category are Health Literacy (1), Public Health and Health Communication (2), Infodemic and Infodemiology (3).

Red Cluster: Pregnancy-Related Information

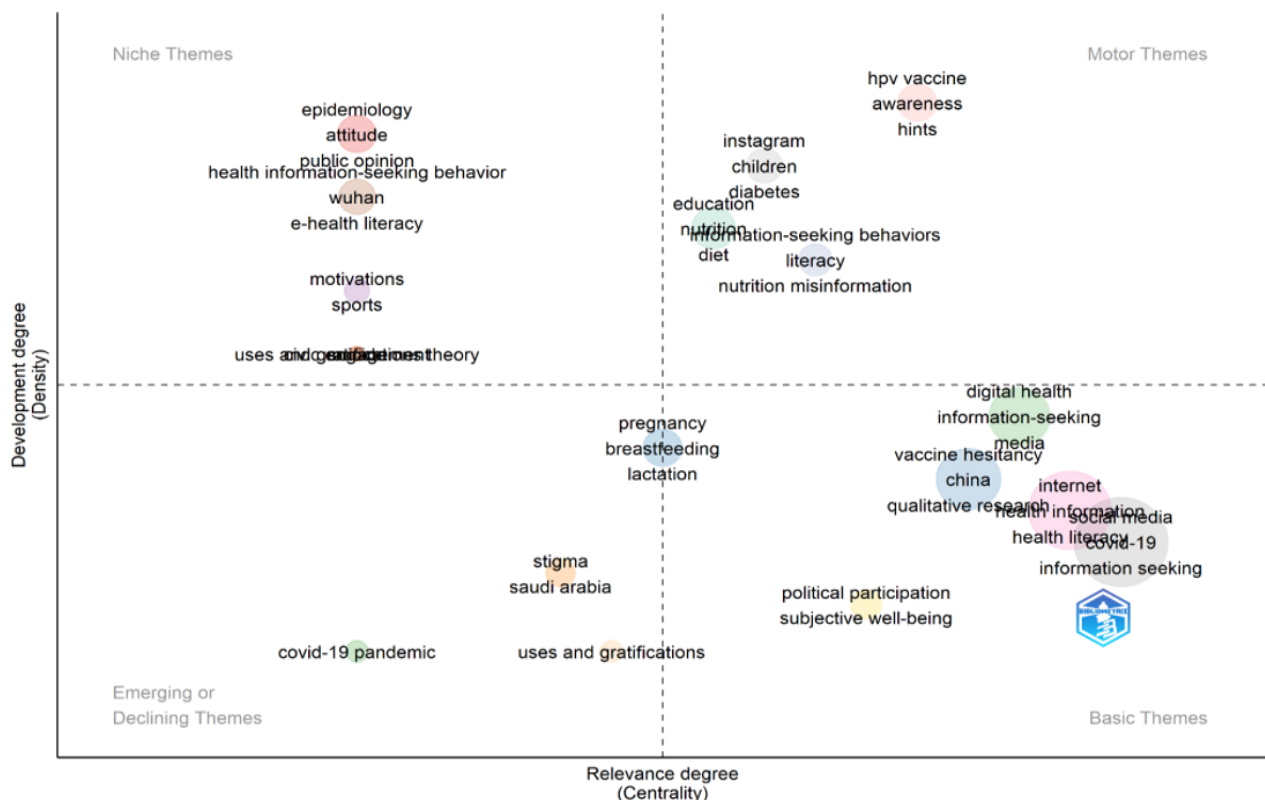
The first significant finding of this network is the existence of a red cluster, which reveals that social media is a substantial information source for pregnant women. Here are a few of the primary keywords in this cluster: (1) Pregnancy. This suggests why many pregnant women tend to use social media as an avenue to get information about their health and their pregnancy. (2) Information-seeking, thus, social media shows itself to be a source of information seeking by individuals requiring health-related knowledge.

Purple Cluster: Alternative Media and Patient Education

The purple cluster is associated with alternative media platforms and health information-seeking behavior. The highlights in this cluster are (1) Google Trends, an analysis tool for trends in health information searches, (2) YouTube and Media, the terms relates to the analysis of the impact of video-based platforms on the destruction of a widespread free-to-access health knowledge base to the general public, (3) Patient Education, the terms demonstrates how social media acts as a patient education platform and provides insights into the health education dissemination on social platforms.

Thematic map (co-word analysis)

The thematic map of Figure 5 can be divided into four quadrants: Motor Themes (top right quadrant), Niche Themes (top left), Emerging or Declining Themes (bottom left), Basic Themes (bottom right) Here in the Motor Themes quadrant, we recognize that "HPV vaccine," "awareness," "hints," and "information-seeking behaviors" are the subjects that ascend, with this topic at the very core, essentially and methodologically. These themes demonstrate high significance in terms of both density and centrality, indicating they are the most developed and closely connected research areas within the domain. The focus on HPV vaccine, awareness, hints, and information-seeking behaviors suggests that these are the main drivers in the analyzed literature, forming the



Source: Research, 2025

Figure 5 Thematic map (co-word analysis)

core of the discussion and future research directions.

This suggests that social media is a key aspect of information seeking related to COVID-19, especially in a health-related context. This is evidenced by the frequent keywords in the word cloud, such as social media, Covid-19, and seeking information. During the period 2020-2024, the search for health information increased, as evidenced by the introduction of terms such as 'public health' and 'health information'. However, the risk of 'misinformation' is likely due to poor 'health literacy'. One of the platforms frequently used for information search is 'YouTube', which also aids in disseminating information about the pandemic.

The dramatic emergence of social media as a dominant modality for information seeking, especially in health-associated settings, has resulted in complicated changes in information processing and evaluation behaviors among individuals. Numerous resources can be found on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, but the information that users see is a mix of real data and misinformation. This has resulted in a new landscape of public health communication because the spread of misinformation now occurs at the same speed as trusted health information, affecting the way the public perceives these efforts and behaves accordingly (Chowdhury et al., 2023). This became particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when misinformation about the virus and its prevention spread widely on social media. The large amount of information related to vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic has made the media take responsibility for

curating valid information (Apriana et al., 2023). Identifying credible sources from unreliable ones became crucial, but many users lacked the skill or knowledge to do so due to varying levels of digital literacy (Igbinovia et al., 2021; Naeem & Bhatti, 2020). These developments underscore a key gap in contemporary education, as the importance of effective digital literacy initiatives is greater than ever.

Research shows that excessive exposure to health news, especially during a pandemic, can amplify anxiety and skew the perception of risk (Liu & Liu, 2020). Adding to the problem, emotions and sensations dominate social media. The algorithm that drives content is programmed this way, leading to the amplification and widespread dissemination of panic and inaccurate information. Hence, despite people's engagement in learning about health crises, misleading and emotional content limits their informed decision-making ability (Montesi, 2021). Findings by Ali et al. (2020) highlight the need to enhance public health communication efforts on social media. By utilizing these platforms, users are empowered to examine content and leverage evidence-informed decision-making critically.

With decreasing margins of political discourse, the power of digital literacy in making sense of these behaviors cannot be overlooked. However, studies show that digital literacy encompasses not only the cognitive skills required to assess the quality of information. This is indicative of a broader public health issue. As users increasingly turn to digital platforms for health information, it is crucial to ensure that this leads to healthy outcomes by embedding digital literacy within their overall health education. In short, this means teaching people not just how to find health information, but how to assess the credibility of that information.

The co-occurrence analysis and thematic map data in the study show interlinkage between social media, misinformation, health literacy, and infodemic. The high frequency of these terms highlights the increasing use of misinformation as a strategy in health communications. Although social media platforms can provide current events and tremendous amounts of information, they also play a significant role in the spread of inaccurate or misleading content (Aïmeur et al., 2023; Komara & Widjaya, 2024). However, this shift places a greater emphasis on responsible social media use and combating misinformation.

CONCLUSION

This research provides an extensive overview of the way information seeking occurs on social media, especially during an era of world uncertainty like the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on an integrating approach of Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and bibliometric analysis, the study charts the development of scholarly interest towards the phenomenon during the period 2020 to

2024. It reveals major influencers, prominent themes, as well as rising interest areas from the body of literature, providing a helpful starting point for scholars as well as practitioners working in the space of the information ecosystem digitally.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube now serve as primary channels for health information. Still, the ease with which they accept user-submitted material exposes them to the possibility of widespread dissemination of misinformation. The research indicates that the stronger a person's digital literacy, the better they can analyze the validity of information, distinguish between good and bad information, and make sound decisions. Yet the educational landscape of today reflects a lack of intensity in the examination of the cognitive aspects of digital literacy in social media.

The study also reveals structural gaps in the models of information-seeking behavior in the digital era. Previous models, such as Kuhlthau's Information Search Process, provide a starting point but lack the interactive, participatory nature of information seeking through social media. A theoretical refinement is needed to reflect the user's active role not only in the consumption of information, but also in the curating and sharing of it with their networks, as the study calls for.

Future research would do well to explore the psychological and sociocultural aspects of digital literacy, specifically around health misinformation. Comparative analyses in various cultural or geographic settings might shed light on how local values and media consumption habits influence information-seeking behavior. Opportunities for methodological creativity exist as well—longitudinal design and ethnography, for example, might better capture the dynamic process between users and platforms over time.

The research reinforces the necessity of revisiting current models of information-seeking to accommodate the participatory, emotive, and algorithmic nature of social media. In practice, it highlights the importance of incorporating digital literacy education into formal and informal educational settings. In summary, as social media increasingly dictates how we seek, engage with, and make sense of information, the stakes for disinformation—and the importance of critical digital literacies—are higher than ever. This study not only adds to the scholarly discussion but also calls for action in the development of more robust and discerning digital citizens in a world of boundless information.

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