

American Journal of Psychology

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May 5, 2020

Dr. Harith Yas Khudhair
Azman Hashim International Business School
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia,
81310 Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia

Re: Manuscript Number 7668

Dear Dr. Khudhair:

I am writing with regard to your manuscript, "The Role of Social Media During the SARS-CoV-2 Outbreak in Spreading Misinformation and Stirring Fear." Before sending a paper out for review, I read it to determine whether it falls sufficiently within the range of articles published in *AJP* to warrant close consideration. I have read your manuscript and have decided that it is not a good fit for the journal. Therefore, I am not sending it out for detailed reviews.

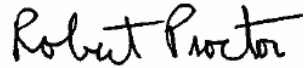
AJP is devoted mainly to articles reporting experimental research in the basic science of psychology and to reviews and theoretical developments grounded in those experimental literatures. The topic of your paper does not fall in those categories, but the spread of misinformation is one in which I have interest. So, I read the manuscript more closely than I might have otherwise, and I asked a colleague who is knowledgeable in the topic to give it a quick read. We both agreed that the current manuscript is not suitable for this journal.

The major problem I noted when I read the manuscript is that there were only descriptive statistics reported. My colleague picked up on that point, saying, "I think the topic is timely and interesting. However, they only did descriptive analysis. Without any statistical testing, it is really hard to draw any conclusion on the questions that they investigated. I suggest the authors to consider some control conditions (e.g., have one condition that includes Asia/Pacific, another condition that includes Middle East or people from other regions), add some statistical tests (e.g., evaluating region differences in topics, social media use, etc.), and re-submit the paper." The study must be developed more completely and analyzed in a more sophisticated manner since *AJP* is a journal devoted to scientific research. A lesser problem I noted was that you devoted far too much space to the demographics. You could present that information more succinctly, without so many figures, since the demographics are not the main concern.

To summarize, my colleague and I both see this topic as interesting but think that a more fully developed project and report is needed for your work to be given more detailed consideration for publication. I would be glad to receive a later report of this type, but without any guarantee that the ultimate outcome will be positive.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Proctor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'P'.

Robert W. Proctor
Editor