Whose COVID-19 Tweets Carry More Impact: Celebrities, Politicians, or Health Authorities?

Poznań University researchers (Poznań, Poland) recently examined the influence that COVID-19 tweets from scientific institutions, governmental authorities, and celebrities gained. This is also the first study that compares the reaction to tweets from a different group of opinion leaders.

Twitter is a leading microblog platform with 275 million users globally, where users can follow poster accounts and react to tweets with likes, comments, or share the message by 'retweeting'. Each tweet has the potential to reach a large audience. Psychological reasons behind dissemination include that people favour information that confirms their beliefs or copy others' actions in a herd mentality (social proof). Some people will tweet to condemn the tweet's author to gain favour within their network. Many of these tweets convey health information that impacts patients' health choices.

Thus, this study explored the influence that scientific institutions, governmental authorities, and celebrities carry through Twitter and its messaging and content. About 17,331 COVID-19-related tweets originated from 338 accounts held by scientific institutions, governmental authorities, and celebrities from western Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The most likes were received by celebrities' tweets, followed by those of politicians and health agencies. Celebrities also posted the most retweeted messages, followed by those of politicians and health agencies.

While celebrities and politicians posted positive messages, health and scientific authorities often conveyed a negative sentiment. Posts with positive views gained more likes than negative ones. Overall, COVID-19 tweets of celebrities and politicians outperformed those coming from health and scientific institutions.

Source: [Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking](#)

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