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Research-in-Progress

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Abstract

Social media enhances information exchange efficiency, yet it also facilitates the dissemination of rumors which can cause harmful consequences for companies and the society. Previous research mainly focuses on identifying online rumor messages and examining individual rumoring behavior; however, little is known about what makes some online rumor messages disseminate more than others. In this study, we propose that content unambiguity and emotional appeal influence dissemination of rumor, and when situational emotion is congruent with emotional appeal, the effect of emotional appeal on dissemination is strengthened whereas the effect of content unambiguity is weakened. To test the hypotheses, data were collected from Twitter and labelled via sentiment analysis and manual coding. This study contributes to previous literature by extending the conceptualization of content ambiguity and understanding how content ambiguity and emotions at different levels influence rumor message dissemination.

Keywords: Rumor, information dissemination, emotion, content ambiguity, social media.