Original Paper

Factors Shaping People's Memories of the Covid-19 Global Pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused immense damage to the world, including its impact on the global economy and public health. The pandemic has also exposed the weaknesses in the healthcare and economic systems. While many factors have influenced the global COVID-19 pandemic, there is a lack of research on the key shapers of COVID-19 and their importance. This article explores this issue through the perspectives of media, narratives of COVID-19-infected individuals, and visual images. The impact of COVID-19 on the global pandemic is analyzed from the viewpoint of self-reports and visual images of COVID-19-infected individuals. The paper suggests ways to improve preparedness for future global health crises by analyzing these issues and ensuring that we can learn from the pandemic's memory.

Keywords

COVID-19, pandemic, media, narratives, visual images, global health crises, memory

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 global pandemic has profoundly impacted the world since its emergence in late 2019. As of 6 January 2023, the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has killed 6,706,275 people worldwide (WorldoMeter, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic has also sent a massive shockwave through the world economy and triggered the largest global economic crisis in over a century (The World Bank, 2022).

It is of great concern that the frequency of pandemics has increased over the last few decades (Ross, Crowe, & Tyndall, 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic has once again exposed the weaknesses of human health care and economic and social systems, and it is necessary to explore the question of who is remembered as the shaper of covid-19 and its importance. However, as the covid-19 pandemic has yet to end, there is a lack of research on the main shapers of covid-19 and why they are important. This article discusses this issue from the perspective of the media, the narratives of covid-19-infected people, and

visual images. The impact of covid-19 on the global covid-19 pandemic from the perspective of self-reports of covid-19-infected individuals and visual images. The global context of the covid-19 pandemic has numerous influencing factors, such as government, social media, and other factors. However, most research lacks an examination of the impact of media and visual images on the shaping of public memories of the pandemic, and self-reports of covid-19-infected individuals should also be the focus of attention. This paper analyses these issues and suggests ways in which, from the perspective of a witness, we can ensure that by remembering the pandemic, we can take the necessary steps to improve our preparedness for future global health crises.

2. Topic Sentence: The Media Promotes Public Memory of Events

As a public information dissemination tool, the media plays an important role in shaping the public's memory of the epidemic. The media is the primary means by which the public receives information, and it can effectively convey information to the public, meeting the public's need for knowledge, information, and other information. The role of the media is important in shaping the public's memory, and in assessing the concept of public memory, the media is increasingly important in shaping our contemporary culture of remembrance (Gunn & Davis, 2018).

The media can convey important information and events to the public. When events occur, many people cannot experience or witness them first-hand, but the media can present these messages and events to the public through various means to help them remember them. For example, on Tuesday, 11th September 2001, suicide attackers hijacked an American airliner and crashed it into two skyscrapers in New York, killing thousands of people. The attack remains one of the most traumatic events of the century, not only for Americans but also for the world (Jackson, 2021). The events of 11th September had a huge impact on the United States and the world, but many people did not experience the tragedy first-hand, and the media coverage allowed the public to understand and remember the event.

Similarly, from the beginning of the covid-19 outbreak, media worldwide have been reporting on the spread of the virus, the measures taken by governments and health organizations to combat it, and the impact of covid-19 on people's lives. In addition, Google trends counted the number of searches for the term covid-19 across the web from 22nd March to 28th March 2020 and the number of searches for the term covid-19 across the web from 22nd March to 28th March 2020. -In addition, Google trends has also calculated the number of searches for the term covid-19 across the world, from 22nd March to 28th March 2020 and from 2nd August to 8th August 2020, which shows that the number of searches for the term covid-19 reached 100, far exceeding the number of searches for other hot terms. Where searches are measured in terms of buzz, words with the highest number of searches by the population over the same period are given a score of 100, and words without sufficient data are given a score of 0. The term Coronavirus became the most searched term worldwide in 2020 (Google Trends, 2022), a figure that represents the highest point of search buzz in the world region and period.

Searches		News	
1	Coronavirus	1	Coronavirus
2	Election results	2	Election results
3	Kobe Bryant	3	Iran
4	Zoom	4	Beirut
5	IPL	5	Hantavirus

Figure 1. Ranking of Global Search Terms & Global News Coverage in 2020

On the other hand, the data shows that the number of news stories related to covid-19 in the UK media continued to decrease after April 2021, and the popularity of the term covid-19 searched for by the UK public also decreased during the same period. It suggests that with fewer media coverage, many people in the UK are beginning to ignore and forget about covid-19.
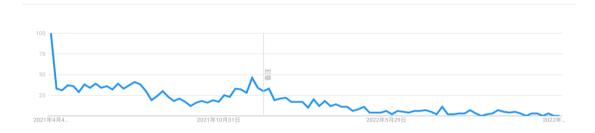

Figure 2. UK Coverage of Covid-19 Related News (April 2021 - 2022.12)
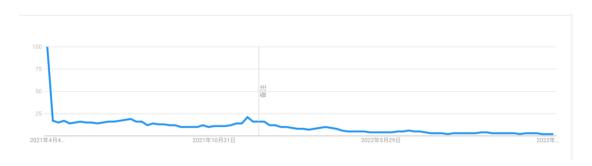

Figure 3. UK Public Web Searches on Covid-19 (April 2021 - 2022.12)

The volume of searches used to assess impact is positively correlated (Dilmaghani, 2019). The media brought a constant stream of information to the public eye, increasing the impact of covid-19; the media played a very important role in spreading information about the epidemic and helped shape the public's collective memory of the pandemic. It is thus clear that information about covid-19 can be brought to people's attention through media propaganda, including frequent news coverage and a large number of searches by internet users, and people's memories of covid-19 are thus created. At the same time, once the media lowered the number of reports on the covid-19 epidemic, internet users began to ignore the epidemic virus.

3. Topic Sentence: Covid-19 Infected People Have Better Memories, and Their Accounts are more Convincing

The personal experiences of infected people can give them a deeper understanding and memory of covid-19, and they can be very persuasive when dictating covid-19 symptoms to uninfected people. Covid-19 infected people play an important role in shaping pandemic memory through their stories and experiences. Concrete examples are easier to remember and recall than abstract descriptions (Regehr & Norman, 1996), and people are generally more likely to remember real, concrete events and stories rather than abstract concepts or theories. Covid-19-infected individuals were more detailed and comprehensive in describing the effects of the virus, and situational memory showed better recall effects across experiences (Eichenbaum, 2013).

In the documentary A Record of 80 Days in Jinyintan Hospital, the first covid-19 patients' real-life experiences of the disease are documented, with one covid-19 patient, Bloomberg, describing in detail the changes in his body after infection with covid-19. He said that he lost 40 pounds a month while infected with covid-19, that his body was covered in sores of all sizes, that he suffered from severe kidney failure due to covid-19, that he had to live on dialysis every day, that his facial muscles were damaged, and that his brain was in a constant state of consciousness for long periods (Bilibili, 2020). As one of the first infected people, it is clear from the meticulous description that he has a very deep knowledge and memory of the new crown.

Beyond this, the covid-19 infection gives a realistic insight into the reality of the covid-19 epidemic. Their experiences give people a real understanding of the dangers of the covid-19 epidemic and increase awareness of the covid-19 epidemic. The public becomes more aware of the seriousness of the disease when people learn about the specific physical state of covid-19-infected patients during their recovery process, recounting the difficulties they encountered and the physical ordeals they suffered during treatment. The public is given a more accurate picture of the epidemic through the detailed and specific accounts of people living with covid-19, which makes citizens more aware of the impact of the covid-19 epidemic and creates empathy.

In addition, documentaries narrate events from the perspective of the first-person infected person themselves, and first-person narratives are particularly empathetic in a variety of first-person narrative contexts (Keen, 2006). Research shows that first-person documentaries of the same type have an average of 1.643 million views and over 110,000 likes and comments each on the Bilibili video site (Bilibili, 2020), making them much more popular than other videos about covid-19 coverage. It shows that videos with a first-person narrative are more appealing to viewers.

4. Topic Sentence: Documentaries can Enhance People's Memories of Events

Memory depends on visual images (Sperling, 1963), and documentaries use visual images as a vehicle to convey information to the public when conveying information about covid-19. Not only does it capture the public's attention, but it also enhances the public's memory of the event. The images themselves are

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an effective way of conveying information. Images are a key vehicle in collective memory (Phillips et al., 2004), and pictures can form memory trails in the human brain, allowing information to be better stored and retrieved.

Related research has been shown to validate the dominant effect of visual images on memory. Experiment: A comparison of vocabulary and correctness rates was conducted on a group of university students after memorizing English words from pictures and words from the text over the same period. Conclusions were drawn through numerical quantification. It was found that pictures showed a memory advantage in terms of understanding the semantics of words and remembering the number of words (Ding, 2022). It suggests that the human brain prefers to process visual information (Marr, 2010) and is able to remember more information from visual images than from text. During the covid-19 epidemic, there were a large number of documentaries documenting covid-19-related content. The use of visual images to convey stories in documentaries gives them a unique advantage in enhancing public memory. Documentaries present the public with vivid images through visual imagery that captures people's attention more directly. Compared to text, images can show real scenes more directly, making it easier for people to understand the content of the story. Therefore, documentaries relying on visual images can improve the effectiveness of people's memory of covid-19, help people understand the information, and enhance the public's memory of covid-19.

5. Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic is a global crisis that has profoundly affected the lives of people across the globe. The media, the self-reports of people infected with covid-19, and covid-19-related documentaries made the pandemic memorable to the public. The constant media coverage, coupled with the increasing search volume of internet users, deepened people's knowledge and knowledge memory of covid-19 through this process. The personal experiences of those infected with covid-19 have created a deeper understanding of covid-19, and their accounts have been very persuasive to the public; covid-19 related documentaries have enhanced the public's understanding of covid-19 through vivid visual images. Overall, the catalyst of the internet in today's digital age has increased the spread and scope of media messages. Compared to covid-19 infected persons' self-reports and documentaries, the powerful propaganda role of the media has led to a particularly high number of public searches for buzzwords, which have shown a significant role and played a major role in influencing the shaping of covid-19 public memory.

The research in this paper helps to explore how the Covid-19 epidemic is remembered and will have a lasting impact on how it is understood and studied in the future. Exploring the role of epidemics as shapers of public memory is important to the human process, helping to increase public awareness of epidemics and helping the public to understand better their characteristics, modes of transmission, and preventive measures. It also helps to improve the public's ability to cope with epidemics and helps to reduce the spread of epidemics. Influencing how society responds to future epidemics and other global health crises, from which lessons can be learned. Secondly, it also helps to remember those who lost their

lives or were affected by the covid-19 epidemic. It is important to accurately remember the true impact and lessons of the epidemic to prevent a recurrence of the tragedy and to address the challenges of the future better.

This paper analyses the shapers of the covid-19 epidemic being remembered and its importance. Nevertheless, the limitations of this paper are that it does not analyze the shapers of covid-19 public memory in terms of other factors, nor does it consider the actual situation in different regions, as well as the fact that the media may have been biased in some aspects of their reporting, may have led to biases in the public's understanding and memory of the event. This paper provides a single analysis of the problem and also offers suggestions for the future of the epidemic; however, the solution requires efforts from multiple perspectives. As the world begins to emerge from the severe covid-19 epidemic, it is important to remember the lessons learned and continue to work to better prepare for future global health crises. The covid-19 pandemic caused unprecedented loss and suffering in the course of humanity, so we should acknowledge and pay tribute to those who were affected.

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