

An Analysis of Russel Brand’s Vlog on “The Truth about Pfizer’s Vaccines”

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ABSTRACT

The spread of misinformation is a growing concern in today's digital age. The Vlog by Russel Brand titled "The Truth about Pfizer's Vaccines" features various claims about the safety and efficacy of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine. The study sought to answer the question, “How does the Vlog “The Truth about Pfizer’s Vaccines” constructed for public understanding and engagement?” The study used Kenneth Burke’s Dramatism Theory to examine the arguments in Russel Brand’s Vlog. It analysed both stated and implied messages and made an in-depth look at the underlying reasons and purpose of such messages and meaning-making. In this study, Brand’s Vlog on Pfizer’s vaccines was examined using Burke’s Pentad. The study used a qualitative design with Textual Analysis as a tool. Concepts of construction, understanding, and engagement were examined using Dramatic Pentad while understanding and engagement were analysed using Identification and Guilt. The Vlog “The Truth about Pfizer’s Vaccines” was constructed for public awareness and engagement, not so much for understanding. The Vlog emphasized the possible conspiracy between academic scientists and pharmaceutical giants. It, however, failed to provide an understanding as to how the system operates given the health crisis, professional and ethical standards of industries and communities involved, and policies, programs, and regulations both in the private and public sectors. Overall, Brand’s Vlog appealed to the public with this formula: Keep the discussion simple, centre on the message by repetition, and target the public’s emotions.

Keywords: *Vlog, dramatism, conspiracy, pharmaceutical industry, Pfizer vaccine.*

INTRODUCTION

In every advancement, there are pros and cons, and with the technological breakthroughs in the 21st century, different concerns have been raised that need to be addressed to minimize their impact. One of which is the proliferation of fake news online. Fake news exists within a larger ecosystem of misinformation and disinformation (University of Michigan Library, 2023). Specific concerns related to the proliferation of fake news online include the impact on public trust and the potential spread of misinformation during a public health crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Manipulation, disinformation, falseness, rumours, and conspiracy theories – these actions and behaviours have existed as long as humans have communicated. New communication technologies have enabled the widespread distribution of fake news, making it more challenging to distinguish trustworthy information.

Vlogs oftentimes are tools for propaganda. Propaganda refers to the deliberate spread of information or ideas to influence the opinions or actions of others (UNDP, 2022). Vlogging refers to creating and publishing video content on the Internet, often on platforms such as YouTube or

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TikTok. Vloggers may cover a wide range of topics, including personal experiences, entertainment, education, and news. If a Vlog contains misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information, the Vlog may most likely be propaganda and be considered fake news.

Misinformation refers to false or inaccurate information that is spread unintentionally or without the knowledge of the person sharing it. Disinformation, on the other hand, refers to intentionally false or misleading information, while mal-information refers to information that is based on fact but is used in a misleading or harmful way (UNDP, n.d.)

During the pandemic, people mainly relied on social media given the limited mobility and the platform's popularity that made non-celebrities social media influencers. Even celebrities have penetrated the platform, generating a wider following and higher income. With almost everyone trying to make social media content for income, all kinds of content are available regardless of truthfulness, accuracy, and even propriety. The content will be on social media in minutes if it is controversial enough for public interest. The authenticity of information is put aside, especially for Vloggers who may not adhere to the same code of ethics and professional standards as journalists.

In the study of Luo et al. (2023), it reveals that situational factors, such as the need for social recognition or the urge to disseminate urgent news, elevate the likelihood of sharing fake news. The study also uncovers the complex nature of information-seeking behaviour: while sharing information generally leads to better-informed decisions, it can sometimes result in the sharing of unverified news under certain circumstances.

In the study of Azizan et al. (2023), it highlights the importance of altruistic values and prosocial behaviour in an organisation and hopes to shed light on the prominent role of linguistic strategies in online communication especially in managing a crisis.

In the study of Xinyu et al. (2023), misinformation studies were mainly found in the research of sharing information, governance, health, and politics. This study provides a macro framework for future researchers to examine pertinent issues of misinformation in the field of communication.

What happens if people believe in all the information found on social media? If people are not discerning and critical to determine false information from authentic news? If people do not see the difference between propaganda and truth, or even do not care anymore? The public becomes blinded by social media influencers, becomes confused about reality, and even becomes gullible to propaganda spread by people and organizations with selfish agendas and interests.

It is essential, then, to examine the content of Vloggers, especially on topics of urgent and important concerns like health. Academe has always taken pride in holding the highest ideals and living by these principles in educating the youth. It is one sector that has maintained its credibility with the public. Russel Brand's Vlog accuses the academy of conspiring with giant pharmaceutical companies for mutual benefits, i.e., for pharmaceutical companies to fund academic and scientific experiments and, in return, generate income through exclusive production and sales of vaccines. When institutions like the academe are tainted with suspicion and malice with unfounded accusations, there are fewer agencies the public can rely on for truthful and impartial information, and all the more, the public may be an easy target for propaganda and false

information. This study analysed the Vlog of Russel Brand (2021) on “The Truth about Pfizer’s Vaccines” and examined information used by the influencer for propaganda.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the issue of vaccines to the forefront and created more misinformation due to uncertainty and unknown facts about the virus. The spread of misinformation has become a growing concern in today's digital age. Tom Rosenstiel, Director of the American Press Institute and Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, believes that misinformation is not a problem that can be fixed, but rather it is a social condition that must be constantly monitored and adjusted (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017).

In recent years, the spread of misinformation and conspiracy theories through online platforms has become a major concern, particularly in the context of public health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The proliferation of so-called fake news has the potential to harm public health and safety by spreading false or misleading information about important issues (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Nyhan & Reifler, 2015). Misinformation can also undermine public trust in institutions, such as healthcare organizations and government agencies, critical to addressing the pandemic (Freedman & Fraser, 2020).

The issue of misinformation and conspiracy theories surrounding vaccines is not a recent development; it has become more prominent in recent years due to the rise of social media and the ease of spreading false information online. A study by Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) found that false information spreads faster and more widely on social media than accurate information, a major concern in public health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Inaccurate vaccine information can lead to decreased vaccination rates and increased outbreaks of preventable diseases (Nyhan & Reifler, 2015).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the problem of misinformation, as Freedman and Fraser (2020) have noted. The proliferation of false online information can undermine public trust in institutions, such as healthcare organizations and government agencies, critical to addressing the pandemic. This can make it more difficult to communicate important public health information effectively and impede efforts to control the spread of the virus. Betsch (2020) also discusses the psychology of misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the public's perception and behaviour.

Misinformation and its correction have been studied by Ecker, Swire and Lewandowsky (2020), who have found that misinformation can continue to influence people even after it has been corrected. This underscores the importance of accurate information and the need for effective strategies to address and counteract misinformation.

Data from the Pew Research Center (2020) stated that of the 86 percent of Americans using internet streaming services, 67 percent never use them for news. This may mean that Americans are well-aware of the propaganda in social media or may not care about news at all.

Local statistics show that Pulse Asia (2022) reported that over 60 percent of Filipinos think that social media, the Internet, and television are the leading sources of fake news about government and politics. Radio and friends/acquaintances make up a second group of fake news sources (32 percent and 28 percent, respectively). Twenty-one percent of adults aware of fake political news got such news from family/relatives. The least often mentioned sources of fake

political news are community leaders (4 percent), newspapers (3 percent), and religious leaders (1 percent).

Meanwhile, social media influencers, bloggers, and/or Vloggers are seen by most Filipino adults (58 percent) as peddlers of fake news about government and politics. "For a small majority of adults (58 percent), social media influencers, bloggers, and/or Vloggers are responsible for spreading fake political news in the country—an opinion shared by most residents of Metro Manila (69 percent), those in the rest of Luzon (67 percent), and those belonging to Class ABC and D (69 percent and 58 percent, respectively)," Pulse Asia said. As for those in Class E, they are most inclined to consider social media influencers, bloggers, and/or Vloggers (49 percent) and national-level politicians (40 percent) as among those peddling false political news (Pulse Asia, cited by De Vera- Ruiz, 2022).

With regard to Filipinos' identifying fake news as a problem, Pulse Asia (cited by De Vera-Ruiz, 2022) reported that eighty-six (86) percent of Filipinos think that false news or fake news is a problem in the Philippines, while only 14 percent said that it is not a problem. "The predominant opinion among Filipino adults (86 percent) is that fake news is a problem in the country," Pulse Asia said. "This is the prevailing sentiment at the national level (86 percent) as well as in each geographic area and socio-economic grouping (77 percent to 92 percent and 74 percent to 93 percent, respectively). Agreement with this opinion is more dominant in Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon than in the Visayas and Mindanao (87 percent to 92 percent versus 77 percent to 81 percent) and in the better-off Classes ABC and D than the poorest Class E (87 percent to 93 percent versus 74 percent)," it added.

Pulse Asia also noted that the majority of the country's adult population (90 percent) have read, heard, and/or watched fake political news. Almost the same percentages of adults have read, heard, and/or watched false news about government and politics a few times a week (26 percent), a few times a month (25 percent), or at least once a day (21 percent). Meanwhile, the rest of those aware of such fake news have read, heard, and/or watched fake political news once a week (17 percent). Only 10 percent of Filipino adults are not aware of untrue news regarding government and politics (Pulse Asia, cited by De Vera-Ruiz, 2022).

These data show that Filipinos are aware of false information and that the public considers it a problem. Another thing is how this awareness translates to being more critical and discerning of social media content. Media information literacy should, therefore, be strengthened. More studies on social media content and its impact should be made to understand the motivations and processes that make social media accessible by the public for news, even with high propaganda and false information.

Research on the relationship between news consumption and news media trust has shown that its direction depends on the type of news consumption of users. Tsftati and Cappella (2003) found that using mainstream news sources (print, TV) is associated with higher levels of general trust in news while using non-mainstream news (talk radio and online campaign information) is associated with lower levels of trust in news. In a more recent study, Tsftati and Ariely's (2014) cross-country study showed that exposure to news in TV and newspapers is positively correlated with news media trust, whereas exposure to news on the Internet is negatively correlated with news media trust. In other words, news media has higher credibility when exposed to TV and newspapers but lower news credibility when exposed to the Internet.

Trust in institutions is important for democracy. Research shows a correlation between trust in different institutions in a society (Jackob, 2012). Newton and Norris (2000) highlight the strong association of trust in political institutions with social trust: In countries with corruption and low social trust, it is difficult to “build the kind of vibrant civil society that spurs strong government performance, and the result will be low citizen confidence in political and public institutions” (p.12). Political trust is also connected to trust in media. Hanitzsch et al. (2018) showed that trust in political institutions is strongly associated with trust in the press. They further found that the correlation is stronger over time and is more powerful in politically polarized countries; findings also were consistent with Tsifti and Cohen (2005). Moreover, trust in news media is an important precondition for media to positively affect democracy. Ladd’s (2010) research in the US shows that those who do not trust the news media tend to rely more on their partisan predispositions and not on new developments when voting. Thus, the positive effects of news media are in part dependent on trust in news. These studies suggest that the credibility of the media and other institutions is somewhat affected by people’s trust in political institutions. Correspondingly, there is also a positive relationship between trust in political institutions and the press. The press needs to be trusted by the public for democracy to work.

The Vlog by Russel Brand titled "The Truth about Pfizer's Vaccines" features various claims about the safety and efficacy of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine. Russell Brand is a British actor (https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1258970/bio/?ref=nm_ov_bio_sm), comedian, author, and activist who rose to fame in the early 2000s with his stand-up comedy and acting roles in films like "Forgetting Sarah Marshall" and "Get Him to the Greek." Brand was born on June 4, 1975, in Grays, Essex, England, and grew up in a working-class family. Brand, with his increasing following, is considered a social media influencer. A social influencer is someone who has a large following on social media with the ability to influence the opinions and actions of its followers. Brand's Vlog is called "The Trews" (short for "true news"), launched in 2014, and provides alternative news and commentary on current events. The show often features Brand's opinions on politics, society, and culture. He has interviewed a range of guests, from politicians to activists to celebrities. In terms of his political inclination, Brand has been an outspoken critic of capitalism, government spending, and political system.

Reviews of Brand's Vlog have been mixed. Some viewers appreciate his unique perspective and engaging personality, while others criticize his rambling and random style (Di Placido, 2021). He also tends to make sweeping generalizations and exaggerations. Brand has built a dedicated following for his show, and he continues to use his platform to advocate for causes he believes in.

In his Vlog, Russel Brand emphasized the conspiracy between academe and pharmaceutical giants by using the British Medical Journal as the source. Conspiracy theories are unproven or unfounded explanations for events or phenomena that are often seen as unlikely or improbable (Douglas et al., 2017). These theories may be spread through the Internet, social media, or other forms of media. They may attract a following of believers who reject mainstream explanations.

The British Medical Journal (BMJ) is a peer-reviewed medical journal established in 1840. It is one of the world's oldest and most respected medical journals and is published by BMJ Group, a subsidiary of the British Medical Association. The journal covers a wide range of medical and

healthcare topics, including original research, clinical reviews, opinion pieces, and commentary on current issues in the field. It also publishes educational material and has a strong focus on evidence-based medicine. BMJ's nature is a scholarly academic journal with a high research and peer review standard. It publishes high-quality research relevant to healthcare professionals and policymakers to promote transparency and ethical standards in medical research and practice (<https://www.bmj.com/company/our-journals/>).

The study sought to answer the question, "How does the Vlog "The Truth about Pfizer's Vaccines" constructed for public understanding and engagement?". This study aimed to examine the information presented in Russel Brand's Vlog "The Truth about Pfizer's Vaccines." The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for accurate information about vaccines, as misinformation can have serious consequences for public trust and health.

The study analyzed the claims made in the Vlog using Burke's Dramatic Pentad. This research is important as it aims to understand the process of misinformation on public trust and health and to somehow identify and address any inaccuracies. By doing so, the study can help to maintain public trust in institutions and effectively manage and communicate the COVID-19 pandemic.

Maintaining public trust in institutions and effectively addressing the COVID-19 pandemic requires accurate vaccine information. This study sought to contribute by analysing the information presented in Russel Brand's Vlog using the dramatism theory. The findings of this research can inform future efforts to address misinformation and maintain public trust in the realm of public health.

The study used Kenneth Burke's (1973) Dramatism Theory to examine the arguments found in Russel Brand's Vlog on "The Truth about Pfizer's Vaccines." It analyzed both stated and implied messages and examined the underlying reasons and purpose of such messages and meaning-making. The Theory analyses human relationships through interpretive studies by comparing life to a drama and providing a direct route from human motivation to human relationships. It is a strategy that intends to help others view life and be able to compare each social unit or activity as one of the five elements of a drama for a better understanding of life's issues and relationships. The foundation of dramatism is the concept of motive: the reasons people do what they do. Burke believed that all of life was drama (in the sense of fiction), and we may discover the motives of actors (people) by looking for their particular type of motivation in action and discourse.

There are three elements of the Dramatism Theory. The first is that of the Dramatic Pentad. This instrument is used to create a set of relational or functional principles to understand the motive behind the decisions made. It incorporates the five (5) points of dramatism and provides a complete statement behind each element of the decision-making process. In this study, Brand's Vlog on Pfizer's vaccines was examined using Burke's Pentad. These are on (1) Act: What happened? What is the action? What is going on? What action; what thoughts? (2) Scene: Where is the act happening? What is the background situation? (3) Agent: Who is involved in the action? What are their roles? (4) Agency: How do the agents act? By what means do they act? (5) Purpose: Why do the agents act? What do they want? (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005).

The other two main principles of Dramatism are Identification and Guilt. Identification refers to the substance and con- substance—the former referring to our self-definition, and the latter referring to our association with others. Because there is overlap in every human

relationship, Burke argues that identification is impossible to ignore. It offers rhetoric, can be falsified, and is reflective of any ambiguities present within the substance being offered.

The root of all rhetoric lies in guilt. Burke sees human activity as a method to purge oneself of guilt, which often occurs through public speaking. Guilt has two stages, i.e., victimage and redemption. As people go through emotions of shame, anxiety, or disgust brought about by negative situations (victimage), they need to understand the process and be able to move past the problem (redemption).

The study looked into how these principles were observed and utilized in the Vlog. It examined how the arguments in the Vlog demonstrated the Dramatic Pentad, identification, i.e., substance and con-substance employed, and how guilt, i.e., conflict, was highlighted.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative design with Textual Analysis as a tool. The Vlog was examined using the concepts grounded on Burke's Dramatism Theory. With the Dramatism Pentad, the following concepts were observed:

1. Act- What was the issue with Pfizer's vaccines? What were points, i.e., analysis, examples, comparisons, etc., used as arguments?
2. Scene- How was context used in the Vlog? What situations were highlighted? What background information was provided?
3. Agent- Who were the players/ characters mentioned in the Vlog? How were they portrayed? What representations were used?
4. Agency- What mechanisms, i.e., channels, platforms, approaches, strategies, and means, were used in the Vlog to communicate the message and reach the public?
5. Purpose- What motives emerged from the Vlog? How are these motives observed? How do these motives help assess the Vlog's credibility and sincerity?

Overall, the Dramatic Pentad was used to examine how all these elements were used in communicating the message of the Vlog. With Identification, the following were used as qualifiers:

1. Substance- How were the speaker and the characters/ players included in the Vlog represented? What do they stand for? Their values? Their beliefs? Their actions?
2. Con- substance- What communities were used in association with the speaker and other characters/ players? How was the connection to others observed? What are values, beliefs, and actions shared?

With Guilt, the following were observed:

1. What conflicts were identified? What negative feelings and emotions were present?
2. Were people and organizations subject to criticism?
3. Were solutions offered?

Concepts of construction, understanding, and engagement were examined using Dramatic Pentad while understanding and engagement were analyzed using Identification and Guilt. The Vlog was transcribed and coded following the selected coding. Thematic analysis was then conducted, integrating the study’s literature and theory with the results.

Two of the researchers of this paper have a connection to the academe. One is a journalism chair at a state university, while the other worked in the past as a faculty member in communication. He works in media as an entertainment reporter, actor, and director. The third is an entrepreneur in line with video production and editing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dominant codes that appeared in the study are listed in the table.

Table 1: Dominant codes

Conspiracy	Corporate medicine	Academe	Funding	Product champions
Questions	Evidence-based medicine	Adverse effects Side effects	Profit- driven	Donations and financial incentives
Pharmaceutical industry	Millions	Patients	Scandals	Misrepresentations
British Medical Journal	Science (Veil and language of science)	Brand recognition	Corporate university	Suppression and control
	Scientific objectivity and impartiality			

Conspiracy appears to be the most dominant code. The use of the British Medical Journal highlighted the control of the pharmaceutical industry over the academic community with regard to producing medicines and vaccines, particularly for COVID-19. Millions of dollars are spent on the experiment, with academic scientists and universities getting the necessary funding and support from pharmaceutical giants. Brand suggests that this symbiotic relationship between the two leads to questionable results that may endanger public safety and health.

The academe that upholds and practices science and promotes evidence-based medicine is shown as profit-driven and has become a corporate university as it thrives on donations, funding, and financial incentives from pharmaceutical giants. With the academe as product champions and representing scientific objectivity and impartiality, the pharmaceutical industry uses this reputation to capitalize on the academe for its business.

This practice, along with reported adverse side effects, has raised doubts and questions on the credibility of these medicines generated by academic scientists, creating somewhat of a scandal, as labeled by Brand.

With the government lacking regulation and control on how this partnership of the pharmaceutical industry and academe operates, the public, i.e., patients needing vaccines and medicines, are the most affected.

In the 18-minute- Vlog of Brand, these are the concepts that are repeatedly emphasized, with a generalization that the academe and the pharmaceutical industry are in a beneficial relationship meant to advance their interests, with public safety and health merely coming in second of value. The action being pushed by Brand in the Vlog is for the government to implement policies and programs that will make the results (raw and final) public and, more importantly, make the side effects, adverse or not, known to the public.

Based on these codes, the Vlog highlighted the following elements of the Dramatic Pentad: Act, Agent, and Agency. Although Scene and Purpose were mentioned, arguments were mostly on the three A's (act, agent, and agency). These themes emerged from the codes anchored on the Dramatic Pentad.

Table 2: Themes on act, agent, agency, scene and purpose

Act. The use of academic branding for so-called science-based medicines driven by pharmaceutical interests manipulates and conditions the public to the efficacy of these drugs.

Agent. Scientific testing and experiments for COVID-19 vaccinations are funded by pharmaceutical companies hiring scientists in the academe whose actions are governed and controlled by the government.

Agency. The British Medical Journal emphasizes the possible conspiracy between and among the pharmaceutical companies, government, and academia.

Scene. The academe is considered a credible industry in a crisis where health and science are paramount.

Purpose. Being critical means questioning even those sectors in society that have maintained their credibility through the veil of science and language of science like that of the academe.

The main argument was the lack of transparency of the process and the results (raw and final) of vaccine testing to the public. The British Medical Journal was the main source to provide the rationale, importance, and implications of withdrawing certain information that would prevent the public from making sound judgments and choices. Examples are reported adverse effects that may have been otherwise prevented if only the public had been made aware of the results of initial tests.

Interestingly, the British Medical Journal (academic) highlighted the academic's credibility, citing science as the academic's main anchor and its questionable (maybe unethical) relationship with pharmaceutical companies. Hence, the academe is used to weaken its credibility.

The argument, however, failed to look into government regulations that may limit information released for public consumption. It also did not mention that medicines and vaccines have the level of efficacy that is made known to the public.

It also failed to include in the discussion the ethical standards practiced by the academe and professional standards, along with organizational and governmental restrictions that may prevent the academe from disclosing complete information. The Vlog did not discuss the dynamic operational relationship of government, media, academia, and business (i.e., pharmaceutical companies).

The academic scientists are seen as controlled by the pharmaceutical companies. Pharmaceutical giants are represented as profit-driven and lack empathy for patients who suffer side effects of medicines and vaccinations they produce and others who may suffer the same consequence. The government seems to be a non-player in the issue as no government regulations, policies, or programs are mentioned on handling health crises like the COVID-19 Pandemic. The media is also a non-player as it seems not to be asking the right questions and exposing such scandals based on Brand's Vlog.

The means used by Brand is both cognitive and emotional. Cognitive with the constant citation of the British Medical Journal, elaborating on arguments stated in the Journal. Examples and analyses provided are more on emotions, highlighting patients who suffered from adverse effects to the public that seems to be blinded on how to safeguard themselves from a pandemic, and with deaths of loved ones as a sacrifice for profit-driven medical experiments that could have been prevented with transparency of process and results.

The scene, however, was not included much in the Vlog--the COVID-19 Pandemic changing policies and programs, the balance between urgency and impact, unlikely collaborations and partnerships, crisis management and communication across the world, relationships (ideal and operational) between and among concerned sectors and industries that may have made the discussion more sound and complete.

The motive of the Vlog is one-sided. It pushes an agenda to question the academic scientists' collaboration with pharmaceutical companies and examine why the media and the government seem silent about it.

It failed to look into not only the scene and purpose but also its arguments oct, agent, and agency, as one-sided. It, however, raised a valid and important point—to remain critical even to what appears to be credible and objective, and that in the end, the public can only trust itself to make informed and discerning actions.

Brand rented himself as a member of the public with concerns and questions, the same as an ordinary citizen. He connects to the public by speaking the language common to most people, translating and converting the scholarly language of the British Medical Journal to what the public can understand later through examples that resonate with the public.

Values represented were honesty, integrity, kindness, and compassion. Brand demands honesty and integrity from academic scientists and pharmaceutical companies, emphasizing the principle of responsibility and accountability. On the other hand, he seeks kindness and compassion for the public affected by the lack of transparency in medicine and vaccination testing.

The Vlog suggests a policy on transparency; the Vlog is centred on institutional change more than individual behaviour change. In this case, there should have been a discussion of policy reviews, analysis, and implementation. However, what was highlighted was the supposed scandal of conspiracy between academic scientists and pharmaceutical giants.

The solution may have been more specific and concrete if the Vlog included policy analysis. If the Vlog included sources other than the British Medical Journal and other communities and sectors affected, it may have provided an objective discussion of the issue. Leaving out important areas of discussion guided by the Dramatism Pentad, Brand's Vlog falls short of an impartial, holistic, sound discussion of Pfizer's vaccines.

CONCLUSION

The Vlog “The Truth about Pfizer’s Vaccines” was constructed for public awareness and engagement, not so much for understanding. The Vlog emphasized the possible conspiracy between academic scientists and pharmaceutical giants. However, it failed to provide an understanding of how the system operates given the health crisis, the professional and ethical standards of industries and communities involved, and policies, programs, and regulations in the private and public sectors.

It aims to engage as examples and analyses are grounded on people’s needs, fears, and experiences (personal and vicarious). It highly targets the emotions grounded on values of honesty, integrity, kindness, and compassion- values that the public seeks in times of uncertainty, i.e., health crises.

Overall, Brand’s Vlog appealed to the public with this formula at work: Keep the discussion simple, centre on the message by repetition, and target the public’s emotions. Brand’s Vlog, as examined using the Dramatic Pentad, falls short of a conclusive discussion. Public engagement may not necessarily need all the elements of the Dramatic Pentad present and utilized in a Vlog; focusing on the conflict (guilt) and targeting people’s emotions may be enough to generate public engagement, as in the case of Brand’s viral Vlog. With the study’s findings, the following are recommended:

1. A study on comments and reactions of the public on viral Vlogs on health issues. This would provide data as to the level of awareness, understanding, and participation of the public on health issues.
2. A study on viral Vlogs with a focus on conflict (guilt), emotions, and values. This may provide data on guilt-, emotion-, and values- mapping on certain issues of certain communities.
3. A reflexive paper on Vlogs of Filipino influencers on health issues as a comparative analysis to Brand’s Vlog.

BIODATA

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