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The Spread of Fake News on Social Media: A Comparative Study of Kazakhstani and Chinese Content

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Abstract. This study analyzes seven representative fake news incidents related to public safety rumors and crisis-related misinformation in Kazakhstan and China to examine the overall logic of how misinformation is generated and disseminated on social media. Rather than treating it as an isolated phenomenon, the study approaches fake news as a structurally embedded process shaped by information vacuums, trust within familiar networks, algorithmic amplification of emotional content, and users' instinctive responses to uncertainty. Using a qualitative research design and content analysis, this study draws on texts, screenshots, and short videos from platforms including Telegram, WhatsApp, Weibo, and Douyin to trace how fake news evolves through cross-platform transmission and reprocessing. The findings show that, despite differences in platform ecosystems, fake news follows a consistent multi-stage dissemination pattern. It originates in private spaces then gains amplification on semi public platforms, undergoes emotional rewriting within short video environments and also exploits delays in official information release to keep spreading. Through continuous reprocessing misinformation gradually gets features of authenticity, making timely correction more harder. Based on these findings this study proposes a transnational governance approach which emphasizes improving platform transparency, timely institutional communication and also users judgement under conditions of uncertainty. It argues that combating fake news requires not only limiting its spread but also stabilizing the digital environment by reducing information vacuums, improving platform alert systems and making users easier access to reliable information. This study helps better understand how misinformation works in digital media environments and also gives some practical ideas for responding to fake news across platforms institutions and user communities.

Keywords: Fake News; Misinformation; Social Media; Cross-Platform Dissemination; Information Diffusion, False Narratives; Kazakhstan; China.

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Introduction

In the modern digital world, social media has been firmly embedded in the day-to-day lives of people. The news will cease to be delivered by the old media platforms but will appear in their ever-changing feeds on their mobile devices. Social media has been an essential platform for getting information that is expressive of opinions and engaging in social dialogue, whether in Kazakhstan or China. With the decrease in the barriers to platform access and the acceleration of content creation, the problem of fake news has become more noticeable. Not only does it generate information chaos, but it also creates the overall information ecosystem of the society that slightly alters the opinions of the masses.

Fake news is a challenge to both Kazakhstan and China, but the digital environment has certain differences. Social media in Kazakhstan is more globalized with the presence of such services as Telegram, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as the local ones. The domestic platform ecosystem, which focuses on Weibo, Douyin, and WeChat—three major Chinese social media platforms widely used for public communication, short-video sharing, and everyday digital interaction, is established in China. Weibo functions as a microblogging platform where news topics and public discussions frequently emerge; Douyin is a short-video platform that strongly shapes online trends and information circulation, and WeChat integrates messaging, media distribution, and digital services, playing a central role in everyday communication in China. Such variations determine various channels of fake news spread in every nation. The fact that they share all of these qualities is also evident in the fact that, in most cases, fake news spreads faster than fact-checking, which refers to the process of verifying information accuracy through professional media organizations or independent verification platforms, and in Kazakhstan this role is often performed by organizations such as Factcheck.kz, while in China verification is commonly conducted by official media institutions and platform-based rumor-refutation mechanisms. Since platforms are becoming decentralized and user-generated content is on the rise, fake news spreads more easily across platforms, is constantly rewritten, and is constantly amplified.

This study examines the structural logics of fake news. It explores the root causes of its spread in the social media world. The flow patterns via platforms and their content development. It also talks about the structuring of the fake news governance in a multi-platform, multilingual, and multi-ecosystem context. These problems relate not only to the fake news itself but also to the security of the population's information and the sustainability of the social information communication system in the age of digital technologies.

Kazakhstan and China were selected as case studies because both nations are undergoing rapid digital transformation and have experienced varying degrees of information distortion, rumor propagation, and cross-platform content migration on social media. Differences in their platform structures, user habits and information ecosystems provide crucial observation points for identifying commonalities and distinctive features of fake news. This study pursues four objectives: revealing the structural mechanisms of fake news generation on social media, analyzing its diffusion pathways and propagation characteristics across platforms, illustrating cross-platform migration and chain-like diffusion through case studies, and proposing a transnationally applicable governance framework to inform digital governance practices worldwide.

Literature Review

As social media has become the primary channel for global news dissemination, research on fake news has rapidly developed across various disciplines, gradually forming a systematic theoretical framework. In international studies, fake news is often defined as information presented in journalistic form but containing false or misleading content. To better clarify this concept, it is necessary to distinguish it from related terms such as misinformation and disinformation. According to Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan (2017), misinformation refers to false information that is shared without intent to cause harm; disinformation involves deliberately created and disseminated false content intended to mislead audiences. Compared with these concepts, fake news is more specifically associated with information that imitates the format and style of news reporting. This increases its credibility and persuasive power in digital environments. In this study, the term fake news is adopted as the core concept, as the focus is on how misleading information presented in news-like formats circulates across social media platforms. Its production and dissemination frequently rely on the open, multi-source, and high-speed transmission structure of social media. Allcott and Gentzkow view it as a news phenomenon that spreads rapidly due to platform business logic, noting that social media's lack of professional gatekeeping mechanisms allows false content to bypass traditional news production processes and reach users directly (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Concurrently, Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral's large-scale Twitter data analysis revealed that false information spreads faster, farther, and deeper than truthful information, demonstrating particularly potent dissemination power in social issues (Vosoughi et al., 2018). These studies lay the groundwork for understanding the digital dissemination mechanisms of fake news and have spurred academia to conduct more nuanced analyses from multiple angles, including user behavior, algorithmic structures, and content characteristics.

Regarding platform architecture and algorithmic governance, social media is no longer viewed as a neutral "information container" but rather as a mechanism deeply involved in information ranking through recommendation algorithms, interface design, and content moderation practices. Gillespie (2018) posits that platforms serve as "the implicit gatekeepers of the digital public sphere," emphasizing how algorithmic recommendation systems and platform business logic jointly shape what users see, how they see it, and how much they see. Empirical studies on platforms like Weibo, Twitter, and Instagram reveal that fake news diffusion often follows a "cascade propagation structure" (Luo et al., 2021): a small number of highly central nodes (opinion leaders or popular accounts) drive initial dissemination, while a large number of ordinary users, acting as secondary nodes, further replicate, repurpose, and migrate the content across platforms. Cross-platform studies also reveal that regardless of social media ecosystem differences, misinformation tends to rapidly cluster around trending events and gain high visibility through visual content, fragmented narratives, and emotionally charged headlines (Deng et al., 2021). Thus, the dissemination mechanisms of fake news depend not only on the content itself but are also shaped by platform structures, algorithmic preferences, and user interaction patterns.

In recent communication studies, "information ecology" has emerged as a key theoretical framework for explaining the generation and spread of fake news. Nardi and O'Day (1999) proposed that a nation or region's information system is dynamically shaped by multiple interwoven technological, role-based, practical, and cultural factors, exhibiting diversity and

interdependence. According to reports by IWPR and CABAR. The audience in Central Asia extensively uses Asia, Telegram, Instagram, and WhatsApp to receive news. This cross-platform arrangement allows the continuous migration, reprocessing, and mutation of misinformation between languages, platforms, and layers of users (IWPR & CABAR.asia, 2019). Other surveys (Demos.kz, 2022 and MISK, 2022) also indicate that although most users in Kazakhstan are conscious of misinformation, the habit of verification in practice is not used, and the practice of sharing unverified content is common. The local academic research supports this finding. Indicatively, Rakhymzhanova and Alzhan (2023) examined the issue of false and misleading news in the media in Kazakhstan during the pandemic and emphasised the dominant role of social media in distributing unconfirmed information. Aigelova (2023) emphasized how social media's fragmented structure accelerates fake news dissemination, undermining traditional media's agenda-setting authority. Meanwhile, Beimisheva (2025) found in her sociological study on disinformation impacts that most respondents “frequently encounter unreliable information,” yet only a minority systematically verify sources—a phenomenon linked to low media literacy and platform structures. Even at the technical level, local scholars have made strides. For instance, Sambetbayeva et al. (2025) constructed a bilingual Kazakh-Russian disinformation corpus and proposed a multi-level annotation model, laying the groundwork for subsequent big-data-driven disinformation detection research. This also suggests that fake news dissemination in Kazakhstan is not only driven by platform mechanisms, but is closely connected to broader socio-cultural contexts, linguistic environments and the overall information ecosystem in which such content is produced and circulated.

Fake news governance constitutes another critical research direction. International studies predominantly focus on three dimensions: national policies, platform regulation, and social self-organization mechanisms. Wang (2025) notes that the management of fake news should be combined with legal provisions, transparency in algorithms, and digital literacy; UNDP (2022) also highlights the need to consider cross-platform collaboration on an international scale. Nevertheless, the main weakness of these studies is that most of them are based on a certain political system or platform ecosystems, and thus, it is difficult to directly apply them to other countries. In Kazakhstan, Sultanbayeva et al. (2025) observed that the fact-checking system in the country is still in its developmental stages, as it does not have a full-fledged verification network and cross-media cooperation tools. Discussing the misinformation about the pandemic, Nussipova (2023) emphasised the interconnection between the state institutions, the trust of the population, and the technological systems. Akhmetova and Nussipova (2025) suggest that in multilingual, multi-platform settings, a significant role is played by digital literacy as the determinant of fake news recognition. Overall, local research has gradually expanded into descriptive investigations, media content analysis, and technical tool development. Despite the growing amount of research, a thorough analysis of how fake news spreads across different platforms, including the paths it takes and its structural patterns, is still lacking. This highlights the need for more research in this area.

Materials and Methods:

This study adopts a qualitative analysis-based research design, focusing on examining the dissemination mechanism, content characteristics and cross-platform diffusion paths of fake news on social media platforms. The reason for choosing a qualitative research framework is

that the dissemination of fake news is not merely the accumulation of information volume or the presentation of interaction data, but rather a comprehensive process involving platform structure, user behavior algorithm logic and information ecology. Through cross-platform content tracking and in-depth analysis of representative cases, this paper attempt to reveal the structural patterns of fake news dissemination at the macro level, while also examining the micro changes during the platform migration and content reprocessing processes. In other words, this study not only focuses on "how much fake news has been disseminated" but also pays attention to how it is generated, how it is rewritten, how it flows between different platforms, and why it can continuously gain visibility in a specific information environment.

The data sources of this study mainly consist of three categories. The first category includes publicly visible content on social media platforms, such as Telegram channels, Instagram pages, Weibo topic pages, Douyin TikTok posts, screenshots, short videos, forwarded text, and related comment clues. The second category consists of public materials related to debunking fake news and fact-checking, including verification content published by the Kazakhstan Factcheck.kz agency, the China Internet Joint Fact-Checking Platform, the "Truth-seeking" column of People's Daily, as well as clarification information released by relevant official institutions media and platforms. The third category includes public news reports, official announcements and media correction information used to assist in confirming the case background and dissemination process. All materials are obtained from publicly accessible channels and do not involve private account content, non-public group data, user back-end data, or personal privacy information, which complies with research ethical requirements. The cases analyzed in this study mainly cover typical fake news events that spread on social media in Kazakhstan and China from 2020 to 2024. The collection, organization and secondary verification of relevant materials were mainly completed during the writing and revision of the paper, and the final verification was completed by 2025. For each case this study mainly examines the dissemination process from the earliest publicly traceable misleading information to official clarification, media correction, or fact-checking release; for some cases with long-term repeated dissemination characteristics, this study also includes the subsequent re-distribution stage for observation, in order to more fully present the process of fake news being reactivated and reprocessed between different platforms.

In terms of case selection, this paper adheres to the "typicality principle". This typicality does not merely mean that the cases are representative in a general sense but is defined through more specific criteria. Firstly, the selected cases must be related to false news, misinformation or misleading information in the digital media environment of Kazakhstan or China. Secondly, the content of the cases must have certain public relevance, involving social issues such as natural disasters, public safety, financial panic, geopolitics, technology and health medical information or media misinformation. Thirdly, the cases must exhibit a relatively obvious cross-platform dissemination feature, meaning that the relevant information must appear on at least two or more social media platforms or communication channels, rather than being limited to a single platform. Fourthly, during the dissemination process of the cases, there should be observable content changes, such as text rewriting, screenshot assembly, video re-editing emotional narrative pseudo-expert explanations, false documents or the reuse of old content. Fifthly, the cases must be verifiable through public debunking materials fact-checking reports official statements media corrections or platform clarifications, thereby providing a relatively stable and traceable evidence base for the research. Based on these criteria, this article ultimately

selected seven specific cases covering various types, such as natural disasters, public safety, geopolitics, technology and health medical information and media misinformation. These cases are not intended to represent a single "typical rumor" but serve as analytical windows to observe the structural dissemination mechanism of false news. By comparing cases across different themes, different contexts, and different platform paths, this article can more comprehensively understand how false news is generated, how flows are reorganized and amplified in the digital information ecosystem.

The selection of these cases is not intended to compare the strengths and weaknesses of the information governance capabilities of the two countries. Instead, it aims to identify the common mechanisms and differentiated paths of cross-platform dissemination of fake news in the juxtaposition of different platform structures and social contexts. Specifically, the case of Kazakhstan typically shows the dissemination chain from familiar networks or semi-closed communication spaces to public platforms such as Telegram, Instagram and TikTok. The case of China more prominently demonstrates the dissemination structure from private chat groups, Weibo topic spaces to short-video platforms. These differences in platform ecosystems help to reveal that the dissemination of fake news does not rely on a specific platform alone, but forms different dissemination paths depending on the social media structure, user habits and information flow patterns of different countries. At the same time, the cases of both countries also jointly show the significant roles of information vacuum, emotional amplification, trust relationships, algorithm recommendations and content reprocessing in the dissemination of fake news.

In the process of specific analysis, this paper adopts a method that combines content analysis with cross-case comparison. Firstly, the study reconstructs the chronological process of each case, attempting to identify the earliest publicly traceable version of misleading information and record the platforms and dissemination nodes it subsequently entered. Secondly, this paper outlines the cross-platform diffusion paths of each case, including the initial dissemination space, subsequent platforms entered the sequence of platform migration and the number of platforms involved in the dissemination. Thirdly, the study compares the relevant content on different platforms, observing the changes in text, images, video titles, narrative emotions and information source expressions, particularly focusing on how the content is repeated, rewritten, supplemented and visualized during the migration process. Fourthly, this paper records the debunking entities' forms of debunking and approximate time differences in each case, and compares the time relationship between the spread of fake news and official clarifications or fact-checking. Finally, the study conducts a horizontal comparison among the seven cases, summarizes the recurring dissemination patterns, reprocessing methods and governance difficulties, thereby summarizing the common structure and specific differences in the dissemination of fake news on different platform ecosystems in Kazakhstan and China.

The coding categories used in this study mainly include: the country where the case is located, the case theme, the initial dissemination platform or dissemination space, the subsequent diffusion platform, the number of platforms, the dissemination path, the type of content reprocessing, the emotional expression method, the claim of the information source, whether old content is reused, whether pseudo-experts or pseudo-scientific explanations are involved, the official or institutional debunking entities, the time difference between debunking and the corresponding governance responses. These categories were not randomly summarized after the analysis was completed; instead, they were gradually formed and adjusted based on

the research objectives of this paper; the initial reading of the cases and the cross-platform dissemination characteristics. Through these coding categories, the study can transform scattered case materials into relatively comparable analytical units, thereby presenting more clearly the similarities and differences between different cases.

To enhance the rigor of the research, this paper adopts multiple verification methods in the process of data processing and analysis. All cases must be supported by at least public denials, official clarifications, fact-checking reports or reliable media coverage and cannot rely solely on a single social media post as the basis for judgment. When reconstructing the transmission path, this paper tries to compare the content versions on different platforms to avoid inferring the entire transmission process based solely on materials from a single platform. For cases where the transmission sequence denial time and content reprocessing form are not clear enough the research will confirm through cross-checking from multiple sources. If public evidence is insufficient to support a complete analysis it will not be included in the final case scope. This paper repeatedly compares seven cases to ensure that the coding standards and analysis logic remain consistent. Through this approach the research not only can describe the surface content of fake news but also can further explain why it flow and spread in specific ways across different platforms.

The methodological design of this paper does not rely on a single perspective. Instead, it combines content analysis, tracking of communication paths, observation of platform mechanisms and cross-case comparison. On one hand, the research focuses on the textual and visual presentation of fake news, including how it is written, packaged, and organized of information and how it creates credibility. On the other hand, the research also tracks the flow of these contents across different platforms, observing how they are repeatedly rewritten, re-edited and gradually magnified. Based on this, this paper further focuses on the platform structure itself, especially how the recommendation mechanism, content review practices and user interaction patterns affect the speed and scope of information dissemination. By integrating these aspects, this paper not only analyzes the surface content features of fake news but also attempts to explain the underlying structural communication dynamics, thereby linking the micro-level content changes with the macro-level digital information flow mechanism.

Discussion and Results

Through analyzing seven cross-platform fake news cases, it becomes evident that the emergence and spread of fake news on social media are not isolated incidents driven by a single factor. These phenomena, in contrast, constitute a "systemic product" molded by platform architectures, user behavior, and the broader information environment. This can be analyzed through the lens of "affective publics," a framework positing that emotions, technological capabilities, and networked interactions collectively influence the creation and dissemination of public discourse (Papacharissi, 2015). In other words, fake news is not misinformation that suddenly appears in the digital space; it is a structural phenomenon that naturally grows within specific technological environments and social sentiments. Many cases share the same origin—they often emerge during an "information vacuum" when public information remains unclear. Whether it's sudden earthquakes, natural disasters, or public health crises, as official information is still being verified, public fear, anxiety, and uncertainty rapidly accumulate, creating fertile ground for unverified speculative content. The rapid spread of the Almaty

earthquake rumor and the resurgence of old flood footage from China online both illustrate a pattern: the less clear the information about an event, the easier it is for fake news to seize the narrative initiative. This suggests that fake news spread is not simply a series of isolated events, but develops within structured conditions where uncertainty emotional reactions and platform environments interact and reinforce each other during moments of informational instability.

At an early stage, fake news usually does not start from large public platforms, but more often appears first in what can be called “familiar networks”. These spaces can also be understood as a kind of emotional infrastructure, where trust between people, social relations, and feelings are already there before the information itself comes in. Because of this, emotions here are not only personal reactions but also influence how communication happens in the first place (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019). For example, WhatsApp family groups, Telegram small chats, as well as WeChat or QQ groups, although they belong to different countries, actually work in a quite similar way. In these spaces, emotion and trust are closely connected. Information coming from friends, relatives, or people we know is easier to accept and also more likely to be shared without too much thinking. People often do not separate the relationship from the content, so trust in the person becomes trust in the message. Because of this, fake news can quickly gather attention in these small and relatively closed circles. It is not just spreading, but also getting stronger in emotional sense, which makes it easier to move to a wider public space later. In this sense, this kind of “starting from familiar networks” is not something special in one country, but a quite common pattern in today’s digital environment. Overall, these observations show that trust-based relations and emotional factors in close networks make people less likely to verify information. As a result, information can circulate faster at the beginning, and already gain some momentum before it enters larger platforms.

When content transitions from closed spaces to more open platforms, it is often no longer in its original form but has undergone repeated “reprocessing.” This reprocessing is not mere replication but successive rewrites—sometimes adding emotional language, sometimes collaging screenshots with visual exaggeration, sometimes re-editing short videos, and sometimes even using AI to create “pseudo-expert interpretations” or “pseudo-scientific reports.” As it flows across platforms, fake news is continually repackaged, supplemented, and polished. It isn’t transmitted statically but gains new momentum through constant “reshaping.” This chain of content evolution keeps fake news vibrant during cross-platform migration and repeatedly grants it visibility within broader information landscapes.

The lag in debunking misinformation is evident across all cases and this delay cannot be simply attributed to inadequate governance. Instead, it stems from a combination of platform mechanisms, information verification processes and the dynamics of social sentiment. Debunking speed tends to be relatively faster for rumors about natural disasters, while geopolitical and health-related false information is more prone to repeated dissemination. Media misreporting incidents such as the erroneous announcement regarding Yuan Longping, exposed structural risks inherent in news organizations’ pursuit of timeliness. Fake news exhibits a highly consistent and replicable propagation structure within the digital ecosystem. It typically emerges amid uncertainty, achieves initial diffusion within familiar networks and gains amplified reach through repurposing on public platforms, creating a pronounced temporal gap with fact-checking efforts. This pattern is strikingly consistent across different platform environments in Kazakhstan and China, indicating that the core mechanisms of fake news share transnational commonalities. Taken together, it can be seen that the spread of fake news often

follows a relatively similar path across different platforms. It usually appears when there is uncertainty, then first circulates inside trusted networks, and after that gradually expands as the content is repeated and slightly changed on different platforms. This process looks quite similar in different national contexts. It shows that fake news is not just a random or isolated problem, but more like something embedded in the way digital information environment works today.

1. Cross-Platform Diffusion Pathways on Social Media: From Private Spaces to Public Spheres.

There are very consistent trends in the diffusion pathways of fake news between platform structures and user ecosystems. Seven case studies indicate that the manifestations of false information seldom occur in the arenas of public discourse. It rather quietly develops within so-called covert networks, closed spaces with a high degree of trust, weak verification mechanisms, and very low barriers to dissemination. Some of these are WhatsApp family groups, Telegram small channels, WeChat groups, or QQ groups. In such spaces, the presentation of information can be accompanied by informal stories, such as those shared by a friend, inside scoop, or just heard about, and it becomes less difficult to attract initial credibility and attain momentum that makes spreading information fast. This is especially true at times of high uncertainty, such as earthquakes, financial panics, or emergencies, when the rate at which information reaches people via the familiar social chains is often many times greater than that of the public media, allowing fake news to reach the first round of acceleration.

Case	Country	Platform Dissemination Path	Number of Platforms	Re-editing Occurred	Main Re-editing Types	Official Debunking Entities
Almaty Earthquake Warning Rumor	Kazakhstan	WhatsApp → Telegram → Instagram Stories → Facebook Groups → TikTok → Official Statements	6	Yes	Fake "Emergency Notice" images, audio warnings, edited CCTV footage, panic-style videos	Emergency Ministry, FactCheck.kz, StopFake.kz, Kazinform, Almaty Akimat
ATM/ Bank Cards Shutdown Panic Message	Kazakhstan	WhatsApp → Telegram News Channels → Instagram Stories → Facebook → TikTok → Bank Official Accounts → Fact-check Platforms	6	Yes	Fake bank notices, edited screenshots, panic short videos, rewritten text ("insider info")	Kcell, Kaspi Bank, Halyk Bank, StopFake.kz, Ministry of Digital Development

“China Will Lease Kazakh Land for 99 Years” Rumor	Kazakhstan	Facebook → WhatsApp → VK → Instagram → Telegram → TikTok → Official Fact-checking	7	Yes	Multiple rewritten versions across years, nationalist framing, image reposts	FactCheck.kz, StopFake.kz, Kazinform, Ministry of Agriculture, MFA Kazakhstan
“5G Towers Spread COVID-19” Rumor	Kazakhstan	YouTube (Pseudo-science) → Facebook → WhatsApp/Telegram → TikTok → Instagram → Official Health Departments	6	Yes	Pseudo-science videos, AI-generated “expert interviews,” fake charts	Ministry of Health, FactCheck.kz, StopFake.kz
Old Dam Collapse Video Misrepresented as 2024 Disaster	China	WeChat/ QQ Groups → Weibo → Douyin/Video Platforms → Government Emergency Accounts	4	Yes	Added subtitles, timestamps, dramatic edits	Xinhua News Agency, People’s Daily, Emergency Management Bureau
“Fake Vaccine” Health Misinformation (Multi-wave)	China	WeChat → Weibo → Douyin/ Kuaishou → Multiple Recirculation Waves → Official Fact-checks	5	Yes	Reposted screenshots, exaggerated claims, short video re-editing	National Health Commission, CDC China, Xinhua News Agency, WeChat Fact-check
Premature Reporting of Yuan Longping’s Death	China	Weibo Media Account → Weibo Users → WeChat → Douyin/ Kuaishou → News Aggregators → QQ → Official Confirmation	7	Yes (media competition)	Fast reposting, mourning videos, algorithmic amplification	Xinhua News Agency (official confirmation), People’s Daily, CCTV

Table 1. Cross platform dissemination paths and structural features of misinformation cases in Kazakhstan and China

(Source: Compiled by the authors)

Table 1 illustrates the propagation patterns of four typical cases across different platforms, with each diffusion chain exhibiting an inward-to-outward progression rhythm. fake news often quietly originates within closed spaces rapidly amplified by familiar networks that accumulate initial emotions and anxieties. It then enters more open semi-public platforms via screenshots voice messages, or short videos, accelerating its spread. This transition suggests that the spread of

fake news is not random or isolated but unfolds within structured conditions, where uncertainty emotional responses, and platform-specific environments interact to shape its trajectory. The Almaty earthquake rumor circulated via voice messages in WhatsApp groups before being reposted to Telegram public channels reaching a broader audience. The "ATM shutdown panic" spread rapidly on Telegram, before spilling over into other online spaces via Instagram stories. China's "old reservoir dam video" traveled a different route, moving from WeChat groups to Weibo and then to short video platforms. Weibo was the first to give it significant exposure. Douyin and Video Accounts then reworked the footage, which only increased its visual and emotional impact. The "Yuan Longping misreport" demonstrated the unique dissemination effect of media accounts when media outlets prematurely released unconfirmed information, erroneous content swept across multiple platforms in an extremely short time. These cases reveal a relatively stable pattern of fake news diffusion. It often begins in low-visibility yet high-trust environments, builds initial momentum through interpersonal connections, and is later expanded through platform-driven exposure and continuous content transformation.

When fake news moves into semi-public platforms, its spread usually becomes faster. Spaces like Telegram public channels, Instagram Stories, and Weibo topic sections are no longer limited to familiar circles, so the information can quickly reach people who do not know each other. At the same time, platform algorithms often prefer content that is visually strong or emotionally intense, which makes this kind of information easier to be picked up and spread again. Because of this, rumors are more likely to go through another round of diffusion. This phase is characterized by a shift from "passive forwarding" to "active dissemination," which can be understood through the logic of participatory culture, where users are not just receivers but active agents in circulating and reshaping content (Jenkins, 2006). This change shows how diffusion is no longer limited by social boundaries, but becomes increasingly shaped by algorithmic visibility, where platform mechanisms start to strongly influence how far and how fast information can spread.

When false information reaches fully open platforms, its propagation rhythm changes again. Short-video platforms typically serve as the final accelerator where subtitles, music, and editing techniques transform originally ambiguous content into something vivid and urgent. Kazakhstan's TikTok, China's Douyin and WeChat's Video Account all demonstrate this capability, propelling rumors into public view with heightened visual tension, thereby expanding both reach and speed. At this stage, the process can be seen as a kind of visual amplification, where the use of video, sound, and editing makes the content more emotionally engaging, and at the same time reduces users' tendency to critically question what they see. False information isn't merely disseminated it's regenerated through processes of visualization, rhythmic pacing, and emotionalization making the time gap between debunking and its spread increasingly difficult to bridge. A closer look at these cases shows that cross-platform diffusion tends to follow a relatively stable and repeatable structure: it begins in closed networks, expands through semi-public spaces, and reaches broader amplification on fully open platforms, especially with the help of short-video content. This pattern seems to emerge from the interaction between trust-based social relations, users' emotional responses, and platform-driven amplification mechanisms, which together produce similar dynamics of fake news spread across different countries and issue contexts.

2.Reprocessing Mechanism the "Content Evolution Chain" of Fake News.

Fake news rarely remains unchanged when spreading across platforms. Nearly all cases

undergo various forms of reprocessing during circulation texts are rewritten screenshots are spliced videos are re-edited and even pseudoscientific explanations fake expert credentials and AI-generated content appear. The six categories of reprocessing shown in Figure 2 form a more structured “content evolution chain.” As illustrated in Figure 2, these re-editing practices do not occur randomly, but tend to follow a relatively stable pattern across cases, with text rewriting, screenshot editing, and emotional amplification appearing as the most frequent and consistent forms of transformation. As fake news migrates it becomes progressively “refined” emotions are amplified narratives are expanded simultaneously boosting its virality and perceived credibility. As illustrated in Figure 2, these re-editing practices do not occur randomly but follow a patterned distribution across cases, with text rewriting, screenshot editing, and emotional amplification appearing as the most consistent and pervasive forms of transformation. Instead of being a simple process of copying this stage reflects a form of continuous reconstruction where content is repeatedly adjusted reframed and reshaped to better fit platform logics and audience expectations. Content transforms its identity across platforms to better suit different audiences, an evolution that propels fake news further in its dissemination. This process can be seen as a layered transformation mechanism, in which each round of reprocessing gradually strengthens both the emotional appeal of the content and its perceived credibility.

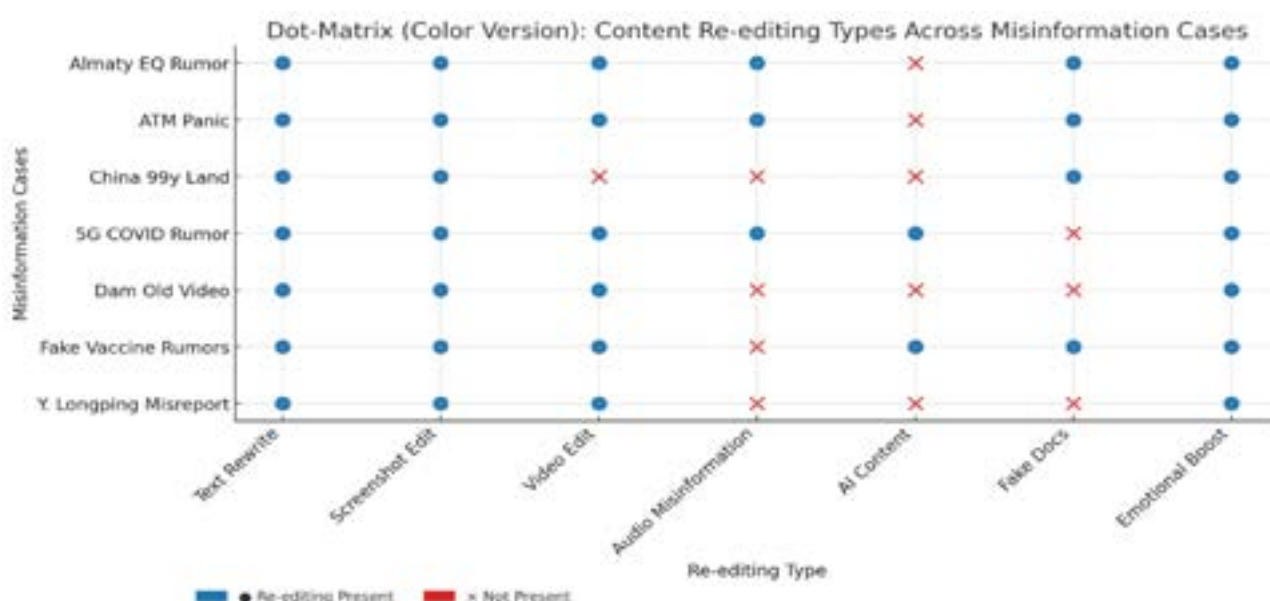


Figure 2. Content re-editing types across seven misinformation cases in Kazakhstan and China.

(Source: Compiled by the authors)

As shown in the figure 2, the most common repurposing methods for fake news about natural disasters and financial panics (such as earthquake rumors and ATM shutdown incidents) are “screenshot splicing” and “voice transcription.” These tactics often attempt to create the illusion of “insider leaks.” For instance, in the Almaty earthquake rumor, users captured screenshots of WhatsApp voice messages and spliced them into genuine earthquake footage, misleading viewers into believing “the video was filmed locally” and “the screenshots are credible.” Similarly, the widespread “screenshots of internal bank notices” in ATM rumors, despite their crude

formatting, were sufficient to convince users of the information's authenticity. This reprocessing doesn't enhance content quality but boosts its "pseudo-authenticity"—making it resemble "fragments of real information" and thus more believable. In this sense, pseudo-authenticity works as a kind of credibility shortcut, where users tend to treat fragmented recombined and visually familiar content as trustworthy even when there is no clear or verified source behind it.

For the geopolitically sensitive rumor like "China leases land for 99 years", the way it is reprocessed becomes more diverse. As can be seen from the figure, this kind of fake news is not only rewritten in text, but also combined with so-called "scientific" explanations and even made-up policy interpretations. This suggests that during the spread, users are not just passing information, but also trying to make it more convincing. In many cases, they fill in what seems to be missing parts, and build some causal links that look reasonable on the surface. These explanations may not be true, but they make the story easier to accept. In this sense, the reprocessing of fake news is not random. It is more like a process of making the narrative look logical. Users actively connect different pieces of information and give them some kind of explanation, so that the content appears more complete and believable. This also relates to the idea that misinformation does not only persuade through the content itself, but also through how it is explained and understood (van Dijk, 1998). Fake news gradually becomes less dependent on an original source. Instead, it turns into something that can be expanded continuously, where each new layer of explanation makes the story feel more "reasonable", even if it is not true.

Health-related and media misreporting-related fake news follow a different pattern. Figure 2 shows that they most frequently employ tactics such as "pseudo-expert credentials," "AI-generated explanations," and "video re-editing." For instance, in the "fake vaccine" rumor, users employed AI voiceovers to create "doctor interviews," attempting to simulate professional explanations; In the "old reservoir dam footage" incident, videos were re-edited with added subtitles and music, breathing new life into outdated content. In the Yuan Longping misreporting case, users repurposed hastily published media text into mourning-themed short videos, transforming the misreport from mere news into an "emotional event." This repackaging amplifies the visual and emotional impact of misinformation far exceeding the influence of the original message. At this stage, the process can be understood as a form of visual-emotional amplification, where changes in audiovisual form not only intensify users' emotional involvement but also help misinformation stay visible and circulate for a longer period of time.

The repurposing mechanism shows that fake news does not spread only because users share it, but more because it is constantly transformed and adjusted during circulation. As content moves across platforms, it gets repeatedly modified—texts are rewritten, visuals are altered, captions are added, and sometimes even "expert-like" voices are inserted, making the information look more convincing than it actually is. Through this kind of iterative reworking, misinformation gradually becomes more aligned with platform affordances, algorithmic preferences, and what audiences expect or react to. Over time, this makes fake news more adaptable, and in some cases even harder to challenge or correct, since it keeps reshaping itself to stay visible within changing digital environments.

3. Delays in Debunking and Response Mechanisms: Why Fake News Gets There First.

Across all cases, one striking pattern emerges: fake news invariably surfaces faster than debunking. Natural disasters, health scares, financial panics, even media misreporting and geopolitical rumors all follow the same rhythm: false claims emerge first, with official information

chasing behind. This kind of time difference points to a structural imbalance, where producing and spreading information is relatively easy and fast, while verification and confirmation usually require more time and institutional processes. This isn't coincidental; fake news seizes the initiative for structural reasons. Spreading false information requires no verification; it can be disseminated on impulse. Coupled with platforms' inherent bias toward content that elicits reactions fake news naturally spreads faster. Figure 3 shows that the timing of debunking varies quite a lot across cases, ranging from only a few hours in some situations to several weeks in others and in certain cases there is not even a clearly defined debunking point due to repeated cycles of misinformation. Even in cases where responses appeared relatively quickly, fake news had already gone through its initial stage of spread, which in a way shows the inherent advantage that early misinformation holds in the overall diffusion process.

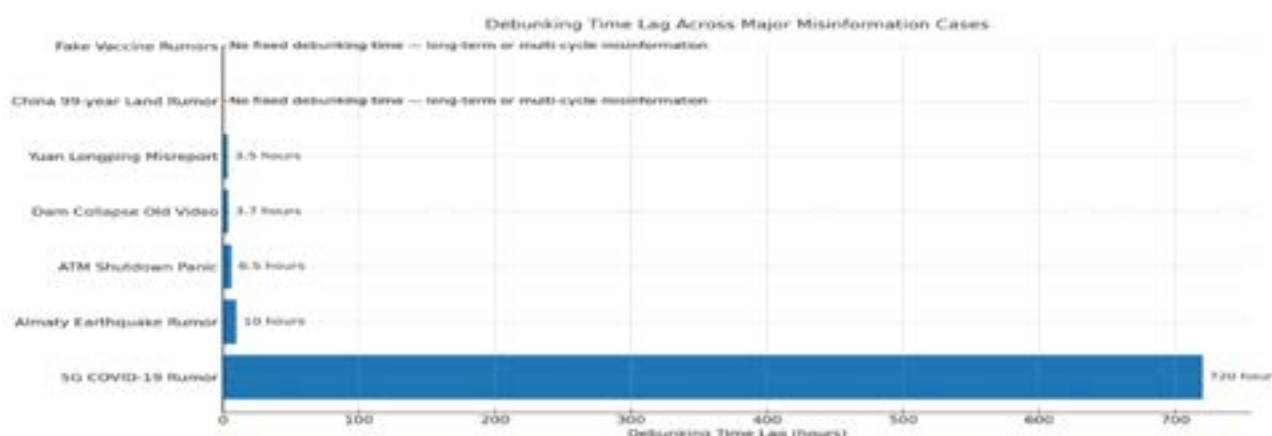


Figure 3. Figure 3. Debunking time lag across major misinformation cases, illustrating temporal asymmetry and the structural delay of verification processes in Kazakhstan and China.

(Source: Compiled by the authors)

The figure 3 shows that for highly sudden and informationally complex events—such as the “old video of a Chinese reservoir dam” case—debunking occurred significantly later than for the Almaty earthquake or ATM outage panic. This disparity stems not from governance capacity but from the nature of the events themselves: images and videos often require cross-departmental verification, while tracing the source, release date, and location of old footage demands technical investigation. This necessitates that official debunking be both accurate and authoritative. Fake news lacks this “verification balance,” meaning it doesn't have a good connection between how quickly information spreads and how reliable the verification is. In official communication, accuracy requires time, teamwork, and checking facts. In contrast, misinformation spreads without these controls, creating an inherent conflict between speed and trustworthiness. This situation further points to a structural gap between the ease of producing and spreading information and the much higher costs associated with verification, which in turn gives misinformation a clear advantage in terms of speed within the overall diffusion process.

In cases of fake news about natural disasters, such as the earthquake rumors in Almaty, debunking does occur relatively quickly. Emergency response departments have well established procedures and information verification is not overly complex. Once official channels confirm the information they issue responses promptly. Yet the time gap in the chart reveals that false information still occupies a brief window. This period is sufficient for screenshots voice

messages and repurposed content to circulate among users. Once emotions are stirred official statements struggle to swiftly reverse public perception. This can be understood as an anchoring effect formed at the early stage, where the first piece of information people encounter tends to shape how they interpret the situation, making later corrections harder to fully change that initial understanding. The first content users encounter often leaves a lasting impression and subsequent debunking is repeatedly contrasted against it trust remains stubbornly resistant to progress.

The "Yuan Longping misreport" incident presents a different situation. The spread of false information didn't start with anonymous sources; instead, it began with media organizations that published the news quickly. As a result, the correction process happened within the media, rather than involving a delay between outside groups and the public. Media outlets face pressure in the race for timeliness often publishing first and verifying later. This structural pressure also increases the likelihood of misreporting. By the time retraction is issued public sentiment has often already crystallized. Debunking then must address not only factual clarification but also fallout from amplified emotions. The lag exposed in this case isn't a technical flaw but a structural risk inherent to journalism's fast paced competitive environment. This phenomenon can be understood as a process of accelerated news production driven by competition. In this process, the pursuit of speed makes it easier for unverified or inaccurate information to enter the information ecosystem through institutional media channels. False reports thus become more likely and retractions face greater difficulty in reining in public sentiment.

Financial panic-inducing fake news such as the "ATM shutdown" rumor, reveals another layer of delay: prolonged coordination time between institutions. Banks, network operators, and government agencies require unified messaging, yet during this period, users' panic behaviors (withdrawals, queuing, mutual alerts) have already spread through social networks. The chart indicates that debunking speed for such incidents falls into the "medium lag" category. Yet even this moderate delay proves sufficient to trigger unnecessary social panic. This demonstrates that fake news in financial contexts possesses an exceptionally potent "behavioral driver effect," more readily provoking offline reactions than emotionally charged misinformation. This structural risk means every minute of delay in debunking can translate into tangible real-world consequences.

The time lag shown in Figure 3 should not be seen as just a simple delay, but more like a structural asymmetry built into the process itself. Fake news tends to occupy the early stages of information diffusion, while debunking usually appears much later, often after the content has already spread. This creates a mismatch between two different logics: misinformation spreads with a focus on speed, whereas institutional responses are constrained by the need for accuracy and verification. Because of this, simply trying to make debunking faster is not enough. What matters more is to understand and address the underlying conditions that allow misinformation to spread so quickly, including platform structures, user behavior, and algorithmic amplification processes.

4. Correspondence Between Academic Research Structures and the Logic of Fake News Governance.

The preceding discussion examined the dissemination pathways reprocessing methods and delayed debunking of fake news through case studies. These phenomena recur frequently on social media and defy simple explanation. To better understand their place within the academic context. It is necessary to revisit the research structures themselves and examine how the scholarly community perceives and responds to the issue of fake news.

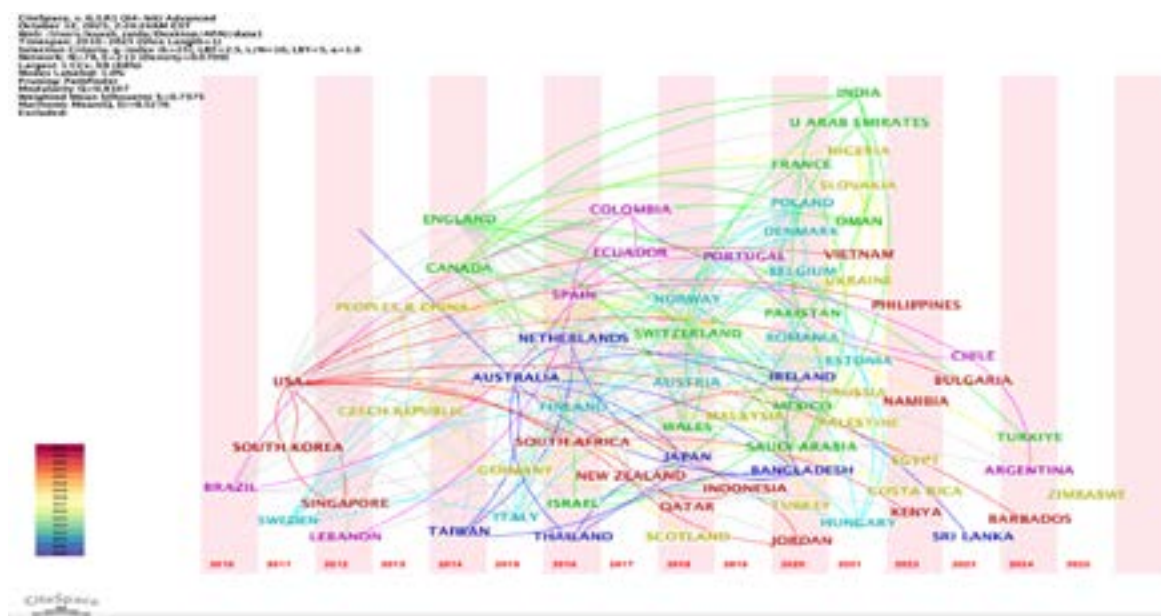


Figure 4. Timeline Map of Country Co-Authorship in Fact-Checking Research (2010–2025) (Source: Reprinted from Indicators of Inaccurate Information and Disinformation in Kazakhstan by Sultanbayeva et al. (2025), p. 197. Qazaq University.)

Figure 4 reveals that fact-checking research initially concentrated in English-speaking nations like the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. During this phase, the research network remained relatively compact with discussions primarily focused on journalistic standards and information verification mechanisms. Over time the number of collaborating countries gradually increased, leading to the expansion of the research network. As more nations entered this field, fake news ceased to be a concern confined to a few countries and gradually emerged as a shared global risk.

This shift readily reveals that fake news is not a unique societal affliction. Nations confronting information distortion invariably undergo similar cycles of unease hesitation and recalibration. The expansion of academic collaboration networks reflects a growing international consensus: fake news has become a shared challenge of our era.

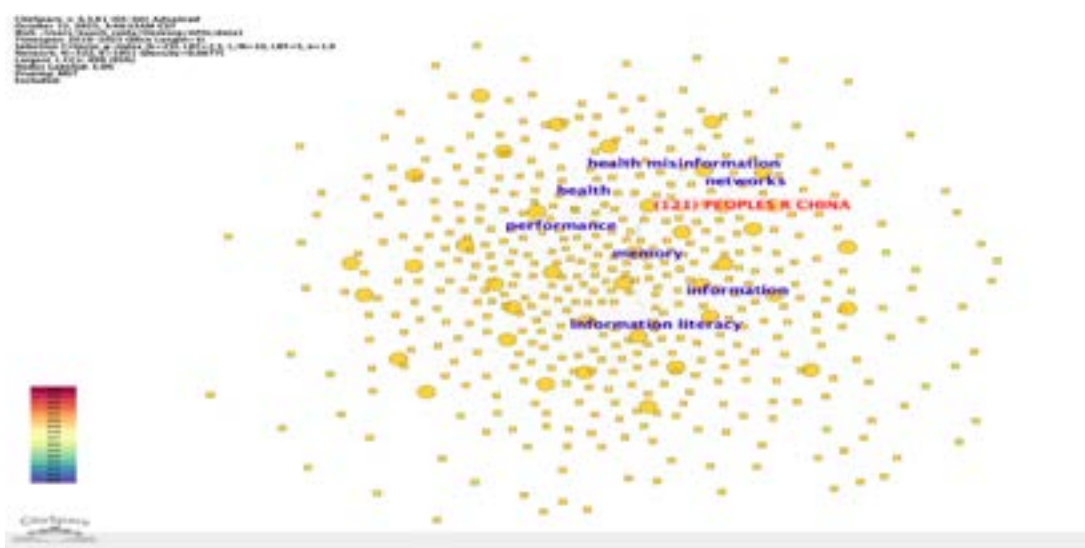


Figure 5. “China–Keyword” Co-Authorship Map and Research Focus on Health-Related Misinformation (2010–2025) (Source: Reprinted from Indicators of Inaccurate Information and Disinformation in Kazakhstan by Sultanbayeva et al. (2025), p. 199. Qazaq University.)

As shown in Figure 5, the keywords most frequently studied in China primarily revolve around health, online dissemination memory and information literacy. This is no coincidence, but rather closely tied to the substantial risks associated with health information that emerged during the pandemic. Within the Chinese context the most immediate impact of fake news is felt through its disruption to public health and social stability.

Chinese academia is less concerned with whether fake news exists and more focused on why people believe it. How misinformation influences public judgment persists in memory and gradually alters behavioral choices has become a research priority. The repeated emphasis on information literacy stems not from theoretical importance, but from the reality that misinformation repeatedly disrupts public events. In Chinese cases, fake news predominantly surfaces during pandemics disasters and social crises and academic research centers focus precisely on these issues. The core focus of this research is the relationship between individuals and fake news: how people receive it and why they struggle to escape its influence.

This understanding also positions fake news governance as a longterm endeavor. Platform regulation authoritative information dissemination, and public education require continuous coordination and adaptation, not a one-time fix. While imperfect, this approach has emerged as a pragmatic choice under real-world pressures. Real-world communication challenges continually reshape research directions while research, in turn, influences perceptions of governance solutions. Within this dynamic interplay, fake news is increasingly recognized as a tangible yet persistent phenomenon within the digital society.

5. The Structural Drivers of Fake News Dissemination.

By comparing seven cases, we can clearly see that the emergence of fake news is not caused by a single factor, but rather the cumulative result of platform structures, media ecosystems, and user psychology. It resembles a “systemic reaction” — once certain conditions are met, it naturally emerges and rapidly spreads along predetermined pathways, which can be understood as an emergent property of digital information ecosystems where recurring structural conditions repeatedly give rise to similar patterns of misinformation. In other words, fake news is not accidental. It is a structured phenomenon that repeatedly manifests within digital spaces.

At the platform level, the decentralized structure of social media provides fertile ground for the generation of misinformation. Nearly all fake news originates from user-generated content (UGC) which lacks fixed barriers to entry and lacks review processes, allowing anyone to publish a “heard it through the grapevine” or “inside scoop” within seconds. Platform algorithms further amplify this mechanism: highly emotional conflict-driven and resonant content gains greater visibility through recommendations. The situation described objectively shows an algorithmic bias that favors misinformation. This is because such content often includes heightened drama urgency or fear which then increases user engagement. This observation highlights an algorithmic inclination to prioritize high-arousal content; ranking systems predicated on engagement metrics are more prone to amplify emotionally charged and sensationalized information, while simultaneously diminishing the visibility of accurate but less captivating content. In conjunction with the widespread availability of AI tools, the fabrication of pseudoscientific justifications, the creation of forged screenshots, and the invention of expert opinions have become exceedingly

simple. Content that previously necessitated specialized technical skills can now be produced within a matter of minutes. This technological advancement has fueled a category of “mass-replicable rumor content” while continuously lowering the production costs of fake news.

Within the media landscape, “timeliness pressure” has become a major driver of fake news. Especially on highly competitive platforms, media outlets often face the structural dilemma of “first-mover traffic advantage.” The Yuan Longping misreporting serves as a prime example—media did not intentionally spread false information but were propelled by the industry's structure to rush for “exclusive scoops.” This dynamic shows more concretely how under competitive pressure media organizations tend to prioritize being first to publish. Sometimes releasing information before full verification makes speed a key advantage but also increases the risk of inaccurate or misleading reporting. In this ecosystem, even non-fictional content released prematurely can become part of misinformation. Other false narratives exploit traditional media's slower fact-checking processes and slower reaction times compared to social media, seizing the moral high ground. This “media lag versus social media immediacy” time gap consistently allows misinformation to stay one step ahead in public information streams.

From a user perspective, the spread of fake news is deeply influenced by social sentiment and individual psychology. When confronted with unknown, dangerous or sensitive information, people instinctively seek answers even if those answers are inaccurate. In the Almaty earthquake and ATM outage incidents, users often shared information not because they “believed” it, but out of a “just in case” mentality. This “better safe than sorry” mentality grants fake news extraordinary vitality within closed social networks. In this case, users are not really focused on whether the information is accurate but more on avoiding possible risks. So, sharing becomes a precaution rather than a verification-based decision. Simultaneously, users overwhelmed by information overload increasingly rely on “cognitive shortcuts” judging content authenticity based on common-sense emotion or source rather than verification. Familiar networks amplify this mechanism: when information originates from family groups neighborhood chats or friends' shares the cost of skepticism paradoxically increases.

Thus, the origins of fake news should not be seen as a simple or linear process but rather as something that develops through the interaction of several overlapping factors. Including platform structures, media pressure for timeliness users' emotional responses and the ease of technological production. When these elements come together, they create relatively stable environment where misinformation can be produced adjusted and circulated again and again. This also helps explain why fake news does not just appear once, but tends to re-emerge across different platforms. And over time, as the structural conditions supporting it do not easily disappear.

6. Structural Analysis of Fake News Dissemination in China and Kazakhstan.

A comparison of these seven cases reveals that despite significant differences in the digital platform ecosystems of Kazakhstan and China, the dissemination logic of fake news exhibits strikingly consistent structural commonalities. This comparison highlights an important point: despite differences in platform systems and regulatory contexts fake news tends to follow similar structural logics across countries. This helps explain why misinformation can persist and spread in comparable ways even under very different digital environments. When confronted with highly uncertain public events, users in both countries tend to rely on personal networks and semi-public platforms to obtain and exchange information; Platform algorithms, though operating under distinct mechanisms in different national contexts, similarly favor emotional,

dramatic, and conflict-driven content; official institutions, when releasing information, universally require verification and confirmation processes. Regardless of speed, they struggle to fully catch up with the “first-mover advantage” gained by fake news during its initial spread. This indicates that the emergence and dissemination of fake news are not problems unique to any single platform or society, but rather the result of the collective dynamics of the entire digital ecosystem. This pattern can be understood as a form of acquaintance-based diffusion, where trust within close social networks plays a key role in shaping how misinformation is first received interpreted and legitimized before it spreads to wider public spaces.

Further examination of disinformation pathways in both countries reveals differences naturally shaped by social structures and platform ecosystems. In Kazakhstan, false narratives almost invariably ferment within small, private spaces like WhatsApp family, work, and community groups before entering Telegram public channels for their first broad exposure. This “acquaintance chain”-centered dissemination method means that by the time fake news becomes public, it has often undergone multiple rounds of reprocessing, carrying heightened emotional intensity, more detailed narratives, and a greater sense of “pseudo-authenticity.” During the public dissemination phase, Instagram and TikTok further amplify the content's emotional and visual appeal, rapidly pushing the fake news to broader audiences. Consequently, in Kazakhstan's case, tracing the original version of rumors is often difficult because they undergo significant distortion within the acquaintance chain.

In China, fake news is more likely to generate the “first wave of public opinion” on public platforms. While WeChat groups serve as crucial early-stage nodes, Weibo typically marks the first entry point for rumors into nationwide public discourse. Whether repurposing old disaster footage or spreading false celebrity death reports, Weibo functions as a core hub for amplifying emotions and aggregating attention. Subsequently, short-video platforms like Douyin Kuaishou and Video Accounts further intensify the emotional impact, triggering a “second wave” of fake news. This propagation structure—from private spaces to public platforms to short-video platforms—differs markedly from Kazakhstan's trajectory, yet shares highly consistent underlying drivers: platform algorithms favor emotionally charged content; users are more easily drawn to visual material when confronting uncertain events; and media outlets, driven by timeliness competition, are more prone to unverified “scoop” reporting. Consequently, in China's case, fake news possesses a significantly higher probability of entering national discourse within an extremely short timeframe. This pattern can be understood as a kind of public-sphere-oriented diffusion, where fake news reaches broader visibility much earlier in the process, making it easier for localized rumors to quickly expand into wider, even nationwide discussions.

Taken together, the comparison between Kazakhstan and China shows that although differences in platform ecosystems do shape how fake news moves across spaces, they do not really change the underlying logic of its spread. What varies more is the path and speed of diffusion in each context, while the core mechanisms such as emotional amplification, algorithm-driven visibility, and trust-based circulation remain quite similar in both countries.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of seven cross-platform fake news cases, this study shows that misinformation in contemporary digital environments is not a random anomaly, but a socially

produced phenomenon that emerges under certain structural conditions. It tends to develop in situations marked by information uncertainty, emotional pressure, algorithmic amplification and users' instinctive reactions to risk. Although the cases differ in topic, platform settings, and national context, the basic logic of fake news dissemination remains largely consistent, following similar chain-like diffusion patterns. This consistency is especially visible in the comparative cases of Kazakhstan and China. In Kazakhstan, fake news typically originates in closed spaces dominated by acquaintances. Apps such as WhatsApp and Telegram are gradually spreading through screenshots, voice messages or short videos into more open public discussions. In China, fake news often emerges from WeChat groups, but its entry into the mass consciousness is driven by public platforms like Weibo Video Accounts and Douyin. While the transmission pathways differ slightly between the two countries, the underlying drivers are nearly identical: user anxiety stemming from information gaps, platform algorithms amplifying content during viral outbreaks, media outlets potentially rushing coverage under time pressure, and the constant reprocessing of content. These factors collectively enable fake news to repeatedly breach platform boundaries, spreading faster and farther with each iteration.

These dissemination structures reveal not merely "how information travels" but "how people act amid uncertainty." Fake news spreads not so much through direct persuasion but through a set of widely shared psychological responses. These seemingly "irrational" behaviors represent humanity's most natural defense mechanisms against risk. Consequently, false information spreads far faster than debunking within closed social networks. At the public media level, platforms' recommendation algorithms themselves provide "acceleration for dissemination." Whether it's Telegram's channel pushes Weibo's trending topic algorithms or TikTok Douyin's short-video recommendation systems. These platforms fundamentally assess content value based on engagement metrics, emotional intensity, and visual appeal. Under such mechanisms, content that delivers greater shock value, sensory stimulation, and emotional tension naturally gains stronger dissemination capabilities. As a result, the continued spread of fake news is not simply driven by individual intentions, but more by structural conditions in which platform systems tend to favor content that provokes immediate user reactions.

The reprocessing of fake news during dissemination has become a significant structural factor. Much content undergoes continuous transformation as it moves across platforms: some instances involve text rewriting, others combine and reassemble screenshots, while some re-edit old videos into new narratives, and others introduce AI-generated "expert opinions." As users continually add new details, fake news quickly diverges from its original form, becoming increasingly complex and convincing with each modification. This evolution strips fake news of its original context, making it more persuasive and visually impactful, thereby complicating debunking efforts. Debunkers often confront not a single claim but an entire false narrative collectively constructed by numerous users.

Viewed from a broader perspective, combating fake news is not merely a technical or communication issue; it is fundamentally a systemic societal challenge. The key lies not in accelerating debunking speed or placing sole responsibility on any single platform but in structurally reducing the conditions that enable rapid misinformation spread, making it harder for false narratives to gain traction. In this regard, the cases of China and Kazakhstan offer a transnationally applicable governance direction: for platforms, institutions and users must coordinate efforts at their respective levels rather than operating in isolation.

At the platform level, enhancing information transparency proves more effective than merely

restricting content. If platforms clearly indicate information sources, make visible how content is shared and circulated and provide early warnings when abnormal dissemination patterns appear, this can help reduce misunderstanding to a considerable extent. Short-video platforms also face a clear issue their algorithms tend to prioritize emotionally charged content. The aim of governance is not to remove emotional content but to make sure that users are also exposed to sufficient contextual information so the chances of emotionally driven misjudgment can be reduced. This prevents them from being swept away by sentiment while facts lag behind. At the institutional level, maintaining communication during uncertainty is crucial, rather than waiting until all information is confirmed before issuing a single response. During the rapid spread of many fake news stories, the public often needs not the final answer but a signal that we are verifying. This reassurance prevents unverified claims from filling every information gap. Cross-departmental collaboration serves this purpose precisely, reducing breakdowns in information flow so that debunking isn't perpetually a step behind. At the user level, media literacy isn't merely about distinguishing truth from falsehood but more about exercising restraint when emotions run high. While users cannot realistically verify every piece of information, they can still pause before sharing emotionally intense content avoiding quick forwarding or uncritical trust in information coming from familiar networks. The stability of a media environment hinges on the maturity of the relationship between users and information.

Fake news is not a problem that can be eradicated entirely but rather a digital-age reality requiring long-term management and ongoing communication. Its recurrence stems not from shortcomings in any single country or platform but from the shared human nature, platform logic and dissemination mechanisms inherent in digital societies. The experiences of China and Kazakhstan demonstrate that while transmission pathways differ the underlying structures and driving forces are highly consistent. Future fake news will continue to emerge in new forms. As long as we understand its underlying structures respond at multiple levels, and maintain transparency and communication amid uncertainty, its impact can gradually be contained. While the digital information environment may never be completely free of misinformation, it can gradually become more resilient and stable through continuous efforts in governance, communication and user awareness.

The contribution of the author

Kairat A. – developed the research concept, conducted case analysis and data collection, performed data visualization, and wrote the manuscript.

Buyenbayeva Z. – supervised the research process, contributed to data interpretation, revised and edited the manuscript, and ensured the academic quality of the study.

Berikbol T. – assisted in literature collection and data organization, participated in the general review and discussion of the manuscript.

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Әлеуметтік желілерде жалған ақпараттың таралуы: Қазақстан мен Қытай материалдарын салыстырмалы зерттеу

Аңдатпа. Бұл зерттеу Қазақстан мен Қытайдағы қоғамдық қауіпсіздік пен дағдарыс кезеңдеріндегі дезинформациямен байланысты жеті мысалды талдай отырып, әлеуметтік желілерде жалған ақпараттың пайда болуы мен таралуының құрылымдық логикасын айқындайды. Жалған ақпаратты жеке-дара құбылыс ретінде емес, ақпараттық вакуумдардың, әлеуметтік желілердегі сенімнің, эмоцияға негізделген контентті алгоритмдердің күшейтуінің және нақты әрі сенімді ақпарат болмаған кезде пайдаланушылардың инстинктивті әрекеттерінің ықпалымен қалыптасатын құрылымдық үдеріс ретінде қарастырылады. Зерттеу сапалық контент-талдау тәсіліне негізделген. Эмпирикалық деректер Telegram, WhatsApp, Weibo және Douyin платформаларынан жиналған мәтіндер, скриншоттар және қысқа бейнематериалдардан тұрады. Бұл деректер жалған ақпараттың кросс-платформалық таралуы мен қайта өңделуі барысында қалай өзгеретінін бақылауға мүмкіндік береді. Зерттеу нәтижелері платформалық экожүйелердегі айырмашылықтарға қарамастан,

жалған ақпараттың таралуы тұрақты, көпсатылы үлгіге бағынатынын көрсетеді: ол бастапқыда жабық коммуникациялық ортада пайда болады, кейін аудиториясы кең платформаларда күшейеді (мысалы, мессенджерлер, жабық арналар мен топтар), қысқа бейне форматтарында эмоционалдық әрі визуалдық тұрғыдан қайта өңделеді және ресми ақпараттан жылдамырақ таралады. Үздіксіз қайта өңдеу барысында жалған ақпаратқа деген сенім біртіндеп артып, оны жоққа шығару уақыт өткен сайын едәуір қиындайды. Алынған нәтижелер негізінде платформалардың ашықтығын арттыруды, институционалдық коммуникацияның жеделдігін қамтамасыз етуді және сенімсіз ақпарат тараған жағдайда пайдаланушылардың сыни қабылдау дағдыларын дамытуды көздейтін трансұлттық реттеу тәсілдері ұсынылады. Зерттеу нәтижелері жалған ақпаратқа қарсы әрекет тек оның таралуын тоқтатумен ғана шектелмей, ақпараттық вакуумдарды азайту, дер кезінде немесе алдын ала хабарландыру тетіктерін жетілдіру және пайдаланушылардың сенімді ақпаратқа қолжетімділігін кеңейту арқылы цифрлық ақпараттық ортаны тұрақтандыруды қажет ететінін көрсетеді. Сонымен қатар, бұл зерттеу цифрлық медиа кеңістіктегі дезинформацияны түсінудің теориялық аясын кеңейтіп, платформалар, институттар және пайдаланушылар деңгейінде жалған ақпаратқа қарсы тиімді стратегияларды әзірлеу тұрғысынан практикалық маңызға ие.

Түйін сөздер: жалған ақпарат; дезинформация; әлеуметтік желілер; кросс-платформалық таралу; ақпараттың таралуы; жалған нарративтер; Қазақстан; Қытай

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Распространение фейковых новостей в социальных сетях: сравнительное исследование казахстанских и китайских материалов

Аннотация. Данное исследование анализирует семь показательных случаев фейковых новостей, связанных с общественной безопасностью и кризисной дезинформацией в Казахстане и Китае, с целью выявления структурной логики генерации и распространения дезинформации в социальных сетях. В отличие от подходов, рассматривающих фейковые новости как отдельное явление, в данном исследовании они интерпретируются как структурно обусловленный процесс, формирующийся под влиянием информационных вакуумов, доверия внутри замкнутых социальных сетей, алгоритмического усиления эмоционально насыщенного контента и инстинктивных реакций пользователей в условиях неопределённости. Исследование основано на качественном подходе и методе контент-анализа и опирается на тексты, скриншоты, короткие видеоматериалы, собранные с таких платформ, как Telegram, WhatsApp, Weibo и Douyin, что позволяет проследить трансформацию фейковых новостей в процессе кроссплатформенного распространения и переобработки. Результаты показывают, что, несмотря на различия в платформенных экосистемах, фейковые новости следуют устойчивой многоэтапной модели распространения: они возникают в закрытых коммуникационных пространствах, усиливаются на платформах с более широкой аудиторией (к примеру, мессенджеры, закрытые каналы и группы), подвергаются эмоционально-визуальной трансформации в среде коротких видеосервисов и распространяются быстрее официальной информации.

В процессе постоянной последовательной переработки дезинформация постепенно приобретает признаки достоверности, что существенно затрудняет её своевременное опровержение.

На основе полученных результатов предлагается транснациональный подход к регулированию, направленный одновременно на повышение прозрачности платформ, обеспечение своевременной институциональной коммуникации и развитие критического восприятия информации пользователями в условиях неопределённости. Результаты исследования показывают, что противодействие фейковым новостям требует не только ограничения их распространения, но и стабилизации цифровой информационной среды за счёт сокращения информационных вакуумов, совершенствования механизмов раннего оповещения на платформах и расширения доступа пользователей к достоверной информации. Вместе с тем данное исследование расширяет теоретическое понимание дезинформации в цифровой медиасреде и имеет практическую значимость для разработки эффективных стратегий противодействия фейковым новостям на уровне платформ, институтов и пользователей.

Ключевые слова: фейковые новости; дезинформация; социальные сети; кроссплатформенное распространение; информационная диффузия; ложные нарративы; Казахстан; Китай

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