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RUMOR GENERATION AND SPREADING ON WECHAT AND FACEBOOK DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Introduction. Global social media users currently exceed 5 billion, more than half of the Earth's population [1]. Every day social media users view and post various information, much of which is unverified or outright false. Many rumors are spread on the platforms of world giants Facebook and WeChat. Moreover, although the platforms are making significant efforts to fight fakes and unverified information, the spread of rumors is still a severe problem. It needs more active study and additional countermeasures.

Relevance of the study. The period of COVID-19 pandemic is an indicative period for studying the causes and methods of spreading rumors on social media and the mechanisms that social media platforms use to counter the spread of rumors. Therefore, our article aims to determine the features of the spread of rumors on the Facebook and WeChat platforms and compare the mechanisms for countering the spread of false information.

Methodology. The research involved a complex of general scientific and special methods. We resorted to critical analysis of scientific literature and data analysis from open sources. We also monitored the content of social media platforms Facebook and WeChat and carried out a comparative analysis of the ways of spreading rumors and countermeasures implemented by these social media platforms.

Results. During the research, we established some features of the spread of rumors in the mentioned social networks related to the work of platform algorithms. We looked at the measures taken by two major social media platforms, WeChat and Facebook, to combat rumors during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was determined that both platforms use a set of measures to counter the spread of disinformation and fakes. Also, during the spread of COVID-19, Facebook and WeChat actively cooperated with global organizations in the healthcare field, which contributed not only to countering the spread of rumors about the disease but also to the provision of operational information and public support.

Conclusions. Even though both global social media giants have actively implemented measures to counter the spread of rumors during the COVID-19 pandemic, the problem of spreading false information on social media is still relevant. Considering the results of the study, we proposed our own set of measures aimed at checking facts and countering the spread of rumors in social media.

Keywords. *Social media platforms, Facebook, WeChat, rumors, fact-checking, COVID-19.*

Introduction. The world's population totals about 8 billion, while the number of active social media users worldwide has surpassed the 5 billion mark [1]. In this case, the global

representative of social media platforms is undoubtedly Facebook, which reached 3.07 billion monthly active users in the fourth quarter of 2023, according to Facebook's fourth quarter 2023 earnings report [2]. Since globally popular social media platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), WhatsApp, and Instagram are unavailable in China due to policy restrictions, WeChat, a subsidiary of the Internet company Tencent Group, has become a giant in China's social media sector. According to Tencent Group's FY2023 financial report, WeChat had 1.343 billion combined monthly live accounts as of December 31, 2023, with more than 80% of those users in China [3].

Both WeChat and Facebook have evolved from the most basic instant messaging software to comprehensive social media platforms covering socialization, entertainment, and media communication. People spend a lot of time on these social platforms every day. In addition to socializing, people also view and even publish all kinds of news on these social media platforms. Everyone suffers from the pressure of being overloaded with false and misleading information.

The pandemic of COVID-19, which began in late 2019, has led to a proliferation of rumors on social media platforms like WeChat and Facebook, and identifying and managing rumors has become an essential task for social platforms.

The purpose of this article is to determine the features of the spread of rumors on the Facebook and WeChat platforms and compare the mechanisms for countering the spread of false information.

To achieve the goal, it is necessary to perform the following *tasks*: determine the audience of the two social media platforms Facebook and WeChat; to compare the features of spreading rumors during the COVID-19 pandemic; investigate the reasons behind the spread of rumors on these two platforms; review measures taken by platforms to combat rumors during the COVID-19 pandemic; and propose a more comprehensive set of improvement measures to help social media platforms respond more effectively to rumors and reduce their distribution.

The research *object* is the social media sites Facebook and WeChat. The *subject* is the mechanisms of spreading rumors and the principles of combating platforms for spreading rumors.

Research methods. We used a complex of general scientific and unique methods to conduct the research. In particular, we resorted to a critical analysis of scientific literature to form an understanding of the degree of development of the topic and analysis of data on the spread of rumors in social media, Facebook and WeChat, during the coronavirus pandemic. We also used the monitoring of the content of the specified social media and a comparative analysis of the ways of spreading rumors and the countermeasures used by the studied social media.

Results and discussion. At the end of 2019, there was an outbreak of new coronavirus pneumonia in many places around the world, and on February 11, 2020, the new pneumonia was officially named COVID-19 by the WHO. In China, in the first half of 2020, a complete blockade was imposed, and so far, the new coronavirus pneumonia epidemic has not yet been wholly cleared globally. In this epidemic, people are not only the receivers of information, but also the creators and transmitters of information, and the dissemination of information presents a mixed situation of true and false information, and rumors emerge one after another, which poses a significant threat to social security and puts forward a great test to the benign development of the media industry. As a result, rumor dissemination during the epidemic has attracted a lot of attention in society and academia.

First, most studies focus on the level of textual analysis. Yu Guoming conducted text analysis of the content distribution, title characteristics, etc. of 6,000+ rumor data based on Tencent big data [4]. A.E. Al Lily, S.R. Elayyan, and A. Alhazmi examine the style and content of rumors to explore the relationship between rumors and the societal attitudes and cultural meanings behind them [5]. F. Pierri, C. Piccardi, and S. Ceri studied and categorized rumors such as conspiracy theories, hoaxes, and headline parties based on topological networks [6]. N. Öztürka and S. Ayvaz examined the textual sentiment of the content of public conver-

sations about the Syrian refugee issue using sentiment analysis [7]. Secondly, attention is paid to the rumor-spreading mode. Zhao Min et al. analyzed the rumor propagation model of social networks with a governmental control effect. They found that the governmental departments’ exertion of control can effectively reduce the final number scale of rumors [8]. Xiong Yan used statistical analysis tools to find that content characteristics are a significant predictor of rumor awareness [9]. L. A Huo, Huang P. O explored the rumor propagation model under system dynamics and then adjusted the rumor prevention and control strategy [10]. Wang F, Lan Z. X proposed the parameter of the truthfulness of rumors to improve the formula of rumor propagation [11]. In addition, some scholars are focusing on the time distribution of rumors. Jiang Ying et al. collected rumor data from multiple platforms such as Weibo, Tieba and WeChat groups by using research and manual collection methods and statistically analyzed the distribution of their geographical dimensions [12].

Studies related to the public opinion environment have also emerged in the COVID-19 epidemic. Chen Yasai compares the rumor information of Tencent’s “Compare the Truth” platform with the textual characteristics of rumor responses of governments at all levels and investigates the government’s rumor governance strategy during the epidemic [13].

Zhu Jinping, through his observation of the public opinion field of the COVID-19 epidemic, believed that the dissemination of epidemic information should be dominated by the demand of the audience [14]. Lu Wengang and Zhou Wenqian put forward suggestions on the collaborative governance of multiple subjects through the study of rumor dissemination characteristics during the epidemic [15]. Wang Canfa and Yu Yinzhu divided the rumor spreading during the whole epidemic into four stages: the latent period, the development and spreading period, the outbreak peak period, and the retrospective long-tail period, and put forward the governance strategy for the characteristics of each stage [16]. S. Tasnim, M. Hossain H. Mazumder puts forward a program on rumor governance during the epidemic at the level of platforms, joint governance, and technologies [17].

In summary, scholars mainly focus on the theoretical investigation of the rumor-spreading process and the media’s response strategies but seldom involve the comparative analysis of social rumors on WeChat and Facebook, the two global social platform giants, during the epidemic to explore the different characteristics of the rumor spreading on these two mainstream social platforms. This paper aims to address this point.

In January 2020, Tencent launched several information channels to fight the spread of the epidemic. “New information channels have been created over a number of Tencent product platforms, including WeChat, Weishi and Tencent Kandian, to help users stay informed about the latest developments related to the coronavirus and quickly access information to help prevent and control the disease. In addition, given the overwhelming amount of information about the epidemic, a real-time fact-checker for novel coronavirus pneumonia has been launched on the Tencent News platform, enabling users to identify false news”, – says the news on the company’s website [18]. According to the Tencent Platform and Content Group (PCG) May 14, 2020 release of the “Together let the content create beautiful – Tencent content ecological war epidemic report”, only from January to May 2020, Tencent content open platform investigated and dealt with 42,000 rumors, the cumulative blocking, banning account 906. In addition, Tencent News, a subsidiary of Tencent, launched a special edition of its WeChat Public Account to combat pneumonia, took the initiative, and provided over 710 million rumor-debunking services in five months.

While the rumors were spreading, the School of Statistics and Mathematics of Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, a well-known university in Wuhan, which is located in the center of the epidemic, conducted small-scale user research as the audience characteristics of the rumors were analyzed. The survey was conducted for all residents of Wuhan, and a total of 858 valid questionnaires were collected [19].

It is noteworthy that these respondents are WeChat users. According to the survey, they subjectively believed that 6% of the respondents did not browse rumors on WeChat

during the epidemic (one cannot rule out the case that the respondents themselves could not recognize the authenticity of the information), 74% of the respondents browsed relatively minor and in general, and 20% browsed more and many rumors. Respondents' information came from various channels, mainly from the official WeChat Public Account platform and within their social circles. According to the research data, more than 50% of the interviewees use the official WeChat Public Account of media organizations and WeChat Moments to get information about the outbreak.

6% of respondents confirmed that they had spread rumors during the epidemic, while 12% were unsure. This shows that the respondents' ability to recognize the truth or falsehood of information could be higher in the face of the tremendous amount of information and that they need more motivation to seek confirmation afterwards. In the face of new information, only 17.48% of the respondents will go to the disinformation platform to seek evidence, and most of the respondents search on the Internet (49.65%) to judge the authenticity of the information. Most of the respondents spread the information twice without understanding the authenticity of the information, and most of these retweets happened in WeChat Groups and within WeChat Moments. This type of secondary communication aligns with WeChat's characteristic that both acquaintance and family socialization occur within WeChat. What is more noteworthy is that even if a piece of information is determined to be false, 31.35% of the respondents will still choose to remain silent. Most of the respondents choose to forward (43.36%) or private messages (49.07%) to inform people in their social network, and only 36.6% of the respondents will report false information to the official [19].

The Facebook epidemic rumor data is much higher than WeChat. On August 19, 2020, as the COVID-19 epidemic was spreading globally, AVAAZ-a global web movement to bring people-powered politics to decision-making everywhere-released, a study claiming that Facebook had failed to guarantee people's safety and right to information during the epidemic, "involving the global dissemination of health disinformation," and that Facebook had failed to guarantee people's right to information. Safety and the right to know, and that "a global network of health disinformation dissemination involving at least five countries received 3.8 billion reads on the Facebook platform last year (June 2019-May 2020)" [20].

The AVAAZ organization tracked down 82 websites known to spread disinformation about the health sector online and identified the top 10 of them. All of them have a core of fake news sites that have been more widely distributed through Facebook pages, groups, and profile links. These sites contribute 40% of the fake news reads (3.8 billion above), or 1.5 billion, with the No. 1-ranked Realfarmacy.com site alone having about 250 million reads.

The AVAAZ study further points out that out of such a vast amount of fake news, Facebook, for some reason, only put a warning label on 16% of them. In comparison, the remaining 84% were not classified as fake by Facebook, even after being fact-checked by a third-party organization or by one of Facebook's partners. The 16% that were labeled with a warning could have escaped the warning label with a different headline, a different language, or a change in content and could have been pushed out to users repeatedly with no problem [20].

At the same time, Facebook officials reported that "it took down 7 million posts pushing COVID-19 misinformation from its main social media site and Instagram between April and June as the company tried to combat the rapid spread of dangerous information about the novel coronavirus" [21].

Beyond these outbreak data, the characteristics of Facebook's epidemic rumor spreading also show significant differences from WeChat. WeChat and Facebook, as social platforms, have the essential characteristics of immediacy, interactivity, and extensiveness, which enable information to spread rapidly to many users. However, this communication characteristic also makes rumors able to spread rapidly and cause extensive impact, especially when rumors are combined with people's fear, anxiety, and other emotions; it is easier to trigger people's resonance and forwarding.

The social network structures of WeChat and Facebook are an essential link in information dissemination. Various information is spread through user relationships, user groups, and users’ social circles, which form the basis of social networks. The characteristics of these network structures, such as topology, sticky interfaces, and social network effects, can affect the spread of rumors, enabling rumors to have a rapid impact on social media.

The social features of WeChat and Facebook make it easy to stay in touch and share information with friends, family, and coworkers. However, some users may abuse these features by intentionally posting or retweeting rumor information to attract attention or create buzz. Especially during the epidemic, some users may intentionally create and spread rumors out of panic, boredom or mischief.

During an epidemic, the unstable and insecure social environment, as well as people’s concern for health, lead to a sharp increase in the demand for epidemic-related information. However, due to the complexity, variability and uncertainty of epidemic information, it is often difficult for people to obtain accurate and comprehensive information, which results in information asymmetry. When people are unable to obtain sufficient information from formal channels, they may seek information through social media, and rumors often fill this information gap quickly.

WeChat and Facebook have complex user structures, including user groups of different ages, occupations, and cultural backgrounds, and are basically able to cover the user structure of countries everywhere. During the epidemic, differences in the perceptions, attitudes and needs of different user groups may lead to the spread and proliferation of rumors among different groups. In addition, the herd mentality and herd effect in group psychology may also prompt people to believe and spread rumors.

The sudden outbreak of the epidemic is a brand-new challenge and understanding for the whole world, and all kinds of anti-epidemic measures, diagnostic and treatment methods, and viral research discoveries are all in the process of finding out the correct answers; that is to say, the epidemic itself is a process of constant correction, which objectively results in a lot of understandings and measures that were initially thought to be correct one day. However, the next day, it may be proved to be false or even judged as false information. In other words, a lot of information that is now regarded as rumors or fake news could not be judged to be accurate at that time.

It is also worth paying attention to some differences between Facebook and WeChat, which make Facebook more prone to generating rumors than WeChat. Facebook users generally follow numerous accounts, and whenever they open the app, they may see hundreds of updates on their homepage, which Facebook refers to as a “News Feed” of content. Facebook’s algorithms use a series of variables and calculations to determine which of the user’s content will be given higher placement in the News Feed.

In today’s fast-paced society, where people may read the first 10 of hundreds of content updates before moving on, Facebook’s algorithm initially favored the more important content. How do you decide if a post is important or not? The amount of feedback and comments it receives and the interest users show in group content and page posts, all of which move the post up a few spots on the “newsfeed”.

Compared to Facebook, which is more media-oriented, WeChat’s social attributes are more important. Users use WeChat more for daily communication and sharing information rather than passively checking news like Facebook because WeChat’s news is concentrated in the WeChat Public Account, while all the WeChat Public Accounts are concentrated in the “subscription” section. If users want to see the news, they need to click on the “subscription”, find their attention to the WeChat Public Account, and then click on it to see the news. In short, WeChat cannot take the initiative to recommend the news to the user, which also prevents WeChat users from being deceived by numerous homogenized rumors.

According to Facebook’s Q4 2023 earnings report, Facebook reached 3.07 billion monthly active users in Q4 2023, but the number of fake accounts on the platform remains staggering

[22]. In 2019, Facebook deleted an average of 2 billion fake accounts per quarter. Facebook says the number of fake accounts on the platform stays at monthly active users at around 5 percent, and with 2.5 billion active users per month, there are still 125 million fake accounts across the platform [23].

During COVID-19, both the WeChat and Facebook platforms adopted several measures for rumor handling, most of which are similar and are summarized below. For example, Facebook has partnered with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and health authorities in several countries to launch the New Crown Outbreak Information Center on its homepage. The information center brings together the latest information and tips from global and local health authorities, including epidemic prevention guidelines from official agencies, personal protection reminders, disinformation on false misinformation, and official pages and accounts of international organizations and local health authorities. Users searching for any information related to the COVID-19 epidemic on Facebook will be directed to this information center to ensure the accuracy of epidemic-related information. The platform also utilizes its social media properties to create a mutual support platform where users can also connect with their local communities and local health organizations for help [24].

WeChat focuses on the use of its platform "Mini Program" This feature synchronizes the real-time development of the national epidemic situation of the National Health Commission of China, the news of major epidemics around the country, and provides information on designated hospitals for medical treatment in each province and city, as well as fever clinics, to ensure that patients can receive treatment at the first time. In addition, users can also subscribe to the official WeChat Public Account of the State Council and the National Health Commission to get the latest information about the epidemic in their area. Various hospitals have also added unique epidemic columns through WeChat apps and official WeChat Public Accounts to help the public fully understand epidemic information. Only by providing sufficient information that is tailored to the needs of the audience will the audience be exposed to as little false information as possible [25].

During the pandemic, Facebook continued to promote its third-party fact-checking program, using the "fact-checking" label to mark false information related to COVID-19 and provide users with links to accurate information. According to statistics, in March 2020 alone, Facebook marked warning labels on about 40 million posts related to the new crown outbreak, and data showed that when people saw the warning labels, they would not continue to read the original article in 95% of the cases; while WeChat launched fact-checking tools such as rumor-identification apps in conjunction with Tencent News's "Compare the Truth" verification platform, which also plays a vital role in curbing the spread of false information.

Both WeChat and Facebook have a user reporting function that encourages users to report false information actively, and the platform will verify and process the reported content. This user reporting function was introduced when WeChat added the media attribute "WeChat Public Account" to try to avoid the possibility of rumors/fake news on the platform, and during the epidemic, WeChat officials even emphasized and encouraged users to use the reporting function, so that for content that is questionable or has solid evidence to confirm that it is a rumor, users can click directly on the page to report it. Users can click the report button on the page and choose different reasons for reporting, such as "plagiarism", "title does not match the content of the article", "fabrication of facts", etc. Users will report the rumors to WeChat. After the user reports, WeChat's backstage will carry out machine and manual auditing, and most of them can give a judgment within 24 hours; WeChat's platform will do shelving of the news content that is judged to be validly reported.

Although the COVID-19 epidemic has passed, rumors have not disappeared from social media platforms and current social platforms, whether it is WeChat and Facebook, which we discussed, or the equally popular X (Twitter), WhatsApp, Instagram, etc., are facing significant challenges from rumors.

Therefore, our previous study of WeChat and Facebook on rumor generation, processing, and audience during the outbreak is still relevant in today’s social media platforms.

Combined with the above experience of WeChat and Facebook during the COVID-19 epidemic, this paper proposes a complete set of improvement measures to help social media platforms more effectively respond to and reduce the spread of rumors, considering the current situation of social media platforms.

Enhance Algorithmic Auditing. Social media platforms should continue to invest in research and development to improve the accuracy and intelligence of their algorithms to more accurately identify and deal with rumor content.

Train algorithms to identify specific patterns, language styles, and common ways of spreading rumors by collecting and analyzing large amounts of rumor data.

Utilize natural language processing and machine learning technologies to detect misleading information in text, images and videos automatically.

Set up a rapid rumor-dispelling mechanism. Set up an efficient rumor-dispelling team responsible for real-time monitoring of platform content, and once rumors are found, immediately verify and release rumor-dispelling information.

Establish rapid communication channels with authoritative organizations to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of rumor information.

Provide a convenient way for users to report rumors and quickly respond to and handle the reports.

Increase authoritative information sources. Establish cooperative relationships with authoritative organizations such as governments, medical institutions, scientific research institutions, etc., and introduce their official accounts or certified accounts to improve the authority and credibility of platform information.

Show the release of authoritative information sources on the platform’s home page or in influential positions to guide users to obtain accurate information.

Encourage users to pay attention to authoritative information sources to reduce the chances of contacting and spreading rumors.

Improve users’ media literacy. Publish content on rumor identification, information verification and other media literacy education on the platform to help users improve their ability to identify and resist rumors.

Hold online lectures, seminars and other activities, and invite experts to explain the hazards of rumors and ways to deal with them.

Encourage users to verify the information before forwarding it to avoid becoming a spreader of rumors.

Strengthen user behavior guidance. For users who frequently share or forward rumors, take measures such as restricting their posting privileges and lowering their account weight to reduce their influence.

Encourage users to report and question suspicious content to form a healthy community atmosphere.

Increase rumor traceability. Use big data and artificial intelligence technology to track the source and spreading path of rumors and understand the process of rumor generation and spreading.

Demonstrate the spreading chain and critical nodes of rumors to help users understand the spread and influence of rumors.

Based on the results of rumor tracing, formulate targeted strategies and measures to dispel rumors to block their spread more effectively.

Establish a rumor database. Establish a database containing known rumors, rumor debunking information and rumor cases for users to query and refer to.

Regularly update the content of the database to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of the information. Provide search and browse functions to facilitate users find and understand rumor-related information.

Enhance community participation and interaction. Encourage users to discuss and question the content in the comment section or specialized discussion forums to form a diversified exchange and collision of views.

Set up special rumor topics or activities and invite users to participate in discussions and share rumor experiences.

Provide certain rewards or recognition, such as points and medals, for users who actively participate in rumor debunking to increase community participation and enthusiasm.

Formulate strict punishment measures for violations. For users who intentionally publish or spread rumors, according to the severity and scope of influence of their actions, take appropriate punitive measures, such as warnings, restriction of publishing privileges, and blocking of numbers.

Strengthen cooperation with law enforcement agencies and pursue responsibility according to law for publishers of rumors that cause serious consequences, and publicly expose their illegal behavior.

Establish a user credit system and incorporate users' violations into their credit records, affecting their rights and interests and treatment on the platform.

Conclusions. This paper focuses on hearsay data and analysis of the audience characteristics of the two social media platforms, WeChat and Facebook, during the COVID-19 epidemic and indicates that during the epidemic, the two social media platforms WeChat and Facebook have a wide range of users, and both have difficulties in finding evidence when faced with an epidemic, and there are still many rumors circulating on the platforms that they cannot deal with, even though they have a lot of experience in dealing with rumors. In addition, our study explains the reasons for the emergence of rumors on these two social media platforms, arguing that the functional characteristics of the two platforms, as well as the broad reach of users, combined with the fact that people's understanding of the epidemic is also a process from emotional to scientific, led to easy dissemination rumors, while Facebook's algorithmic recommendations, fake accounts and political positions have further fueled the generation and spread of rumors. We looked at the measures taken by two major social media platforms, WeChat and Facebook, to combat rumors during the COVID-19 epidemic. Both platforms have optimized the level of their technology and functions, which allows the dissemination of genuine and quality information as widely as possible. At the same time, both platforms cooperate with authoritative institutions and actively disseminate authentic, accurate, and professional advice on the epidemic, encouraging their users to report false information. These measures have achieved positive results. Combined with the above research in the fourth part of this article, considering the current situation on social media platforms, this article proposes a more comprehensive set of improvement measures to help social media platforms respond more effectively to rumors and reduce their distribution, which is the research value and significance of this article.

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СТВОРЕННЯ Й ПОШИРЕННЯ ЧУТОК У WECHAT І FACEBOOK ПІД ЧАС ПАНДЕМІЇ COVID-19

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Вступ. Кількість світових користувачів соціальних мереж наразі перевищує 5 мільярдів, що складає більше половини населення Землі. Щодня користувачі соціальних мереж переглядають та публікують різноманітну інформацію, значна частина якої є неперевіреною, або відверто неправдивою. Велика кількість чуток поширюється на платформах світових гігантів Facebook та WeChat. І хоча платформи докладають значних зусиль для боротьби з фейками та неперевіреною інформацією, поширення чуток все ще залишається серйозною проблемою й потребує більш активного вивчення та додаткових заходів протидії.

Мета дослідження. Показовим періодом для вивчення причин та способів розповсюдження чуток в соціальних мережах, а також механізмів, які використовують соціальні мережі для протидії розповсюдженню чуток, є період пандемії COVID-19. Тож мета нашого дослідження – визначити особливості розповсюдження чуток на платформах Facebook і WeChat і порівняти механізми протидії поширенню неправдивої інформації.

Методологія. Для проведення дослідження використовувався комплекс загальнонаукових і спеціальних методів. Ми вдалися до критичного аналізу наукової літератури та аналізу даних із відкритих джерел. Також провели моніторинг контенту соціальних медіаплатформ Facebook і WeChat та здійснили порівняльний аналіз шляхів поширення чуток і засобів протидії, що реалізуються зазначеними соціальними мережами.

Результати. Під час проведення дослідження встановлені деякі особливості поширення чуток у зазначених соціальних мережах, зокрема, пов'язані з роботою алгоритмів платформ. Ми розглянули заходи, вжиті двома основними платформами соціальних мереж, WeChat і Facebook, для боротьби з чутками під час пандемії COVID-19. Визначено, що обидві платформи використовують комплекс заходів для протидії поширенню дезінформації та фейків. Також у період поширення COVID-19 Facebook і WeChat активно співпрацювали із всесвітніми організаціями у сфері охорони здоров'я, що сприяло не лише протидії поширенню чуток про хворобу, але й наданню оперативної інформації та підтримці населення.

Висновки. Не зважаючи на те, що обидва світові гіганти серед соціальних мереж активно впроваджували заходи щодо протидії розповсюдженню чуток у період пандемії COVID-19, проблема поширення неправдивої інформації в соціальних мережах все ще є актуальною. Враховуючи результати дослідження ми запропонували власний комплекс заходів, спрямований на перевірку фактів та протидію поширенню чуток у соціальних мережах.

Ключові слова: *соціальні мережі, Facebook, WeChat, чутки, перевірка даних, COVID-19.*

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