MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
BELARUSIAN STATE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF JOURNALISM
Department of International Journalism

WU JIAZHENG

**SOCIAL NETWORKS IN CHINA AND BELARUS:
DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT
(THE CASE STUDY OF RED AND VK)**

Master's Thesis
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Scientific supervisor
Y.V. Ilyushenka
Senior Lecturer

Approved to defense
«__» _____2024
Deputy Dean
_____
E.R. Khmel
PhD in Philology, Associate Professor

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INTRODUCTION

Social media in China and Belarus have grown rapidly over the past few decades and have gradually become a part of people's lives. Social networks have created a brand new form of social interaction, strongly changed the way of we communicate and our lifestyles as well. Thus, we can assume that they have had a profound impact on our lives, on the media industry, business and economy, politics and culture and so on. Since social media have penetrated into all areas of our society and deeply affected us, learning and researching the directions of development of social networks both in China and Belarus can be of great importance. In this regard, **the topicality of the research** is obvious.

Of particular relevance for the research are the two largest and fast-growing social networks in China and Belarus, RED and VK. Being the typical representative social media in their countries they managed to preserve their characteristic features and encompass a wide range of techniques to attract the audiences and influence their attitudes and behaviours. To reveal the features of the development potential of RED and VK, as well as existing similarities and differences between them, would be of special **significance** for mass media studies in general, and for the development of social networks in particular. Besides, it would be useful in terms of conducting comparative media and culture studies.

The research topic of this thesis focuses on the study of the development potential of social networks in China and Belarus. To conduct case studies, this research takes two most representative social networks in their countries, RED and VK, as specific examples to reveal their features, similarities and differences in their realization. The thesis also examines the role of RED and VK in promoting social media in their countries, by considering positive aspects of their media activities, existing challenges, and by giving some suggestions on their effective development.

The main problem under discussion in this thesis is the following. Chinese and Belarusian social networks possess specific features and employ a wide range of resources to make their content highly diversified and attractive for target audiences. If we make full use of social networks for their development potential, it would be possible to provide some constructive suggestions for their sustainable development. Since time requires making quick decisions, social networks of Belarus and China must be ready quickly adapt to changing conditions and needs of their users.

The main research methods used in the dissertation include literature research analysis, case study method, content analysis, and comparative analysis.

The research results can be implemented in practical activities of editors and content developers of social networks; in mass media studies, related communication

and culture studies, public relations.

OVERVIEW

Keywords: SOCIAL NETWORK, CHINESE SOCIAL MEDIA, BELARUSIAN MEDIA, RED, VK, MEDIA DEVELOPMENT.

The **research purpose** is to analyze the social networks RED and VK, reveal their features, similarities and differences, and their role in promoting social media in the country.

This purpose is implemented within the framework of the following **research tasks:**

1) to define the concepts of social network and social media;

2) to examine the types, characteristic features, and current development trends of social media in China and Belarus;

3) to reveal the features of development potential of RED and VK by conducting case studies;

4) to find out similarities and differences in functioning and development of RED and VK;

5) to identify the role of RED and VK in promoting social media in their countries;

6) to give suggestions for the effective development of RED and VK.

The **research object** is the social networks RED and VK.

The **research subject** is the features, similarities and differences between RED and VK, and their role in promoting social media in the country.

The **research results** are as follows: To examine the development potential of social media in China and Belarus, this study takes specific social networks, RED and VK, as examples to reveal their peculiar development features, similarities and differences in their functioning; identifies the positive trends in the development of these social media, as well existing challenges, what enables us to formulate some constructive suggestions for the effective development of social networks in China and Belarus.

The master's **thesis structure** includes three main chapters with implicated topics as follows: (1) "Theoretical bases for studying social networks in China and Belarus" that is literature review on the topic under the research, (2) "Development potential of the social networks RED and VK" that presents case studies and deep content analysis of the social networks RED and VK, and (3) "The role of RED and VK in promoting social media in the country" contains analysis of the positive effects of RED's and VK's media activities, existing development problems and possible solutions to them.

The length of the theses is 62 pages. It contains 9 tables, 2 figures, 50 sources, and 3 appendices.

ОБЩАЯ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА РАБОТЫ

Ключевые слова: СОЦИАЛЬНАЯ СЕТЬ, КИТАЙСКИЕ СОЦИАЛЬНЫЕ МЕДИА, БЕЛОРУССКИЕ МЕДИА, RED, VK, МЕДИА РАЗВИТИЕ.

Цель исследования – проанализировать социальные сети RED и VK, выявить их особенности, сходства и различия, а также их роль в продвижении социальных медиа в стране.

Данная цель реализуется в рамках следующих исследовательских **задач**:

1) дать определение понятиям социальной сети и социальных медиа;

2) изучить типы, характерные черты и текущие тенденции развития социальных сетей в Китае и Беларуси;

3) выявить особенности потенциала развития RED и VK;

4) выявить сходства и различия в функционировании и развитии RED и VK;

 5) определить роль RED и VK в продвижении социальных медиа в своих странах;

6) дать предложения по эффективному развитию RED и VK.

Объектом исследования являются социальные сети RED и VK.

Предметом исследования выступают особенности, сходства и различия между RED и VK, а также их роль в продвижении социальных медиа в стране.

Результаты исследования заключаются в следующем: Для изучения потенциала развития социальных сетей в Китае и Беларуси в данном исследовании в качестве примеров используются конкретные социальные сети RED и VK, чтобы выявить особенности их развития, сходства и различия в их функционировании; определяются также положительные тенденции в развитии этих социальных сетей, а также существующие проблемы, которые позволяют нам сформулировать ряд конструктивных предложений по эффективному развитию социальных сетей в Китае и Беларуси.

Структура магистерской диссертации включает три основные главы: (1) "Теоретические основы изучения социальных сетей в Китае и Беларуси", представляющая собой обзор литературы по теме исследования, (2) "Потенциал развития социальных сетей RED и VK", в которой проводятся конкретные тематические исследования и контент-анализ социальных сетей RED и VK, и (3) "Роль RED и VK в продвижении социальных медиа в стране" содержит анализ положительных эффектов медиа-активности RED и VK, существующих проблем развития и возможных путей их решения.

Объем магистерской диссертации составляет 62 страницы. Работа содержит 9 таблиц, 2 рисунка, 50 источников и 3 приложения.