Haotian Zhao

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EDUCATION	**Huazhong University of Science and Technology**, Wuhan, China

M.A. in Journalism and Communication, GPA: 3.9/4.0   Sep. 2022 - Jun. 2025 (Expected)

Hunan University, Changsha, China

B.A. in Journalism and Communication, GPA: 3.8/4.0   Sep. 2018 - Jun. 2022

- Thesis Topic: *A Study on How Social Media Use Shapes Youth Political Knowledge Learning* (Outstanding Thesis Award)

JOURNAL

Zhao, H., Zhang, M. (Under Review). Can Disagreement Balance Bias? Pathways from Incidental and Selective Exposure to Affective Polarization via Cross-cutting and Like-minded Discussion. *New Media & Society.*

Zhang, M., **Zhao, H.** (Under Review). "Artificial Intelligent and Communication as an Academic Field: Evolution, Research Agenda, and China's Approach". *Journalism & Communication. (in Chinese)*

CONFERENCE

Zhao, H. (Under Review). Does Country Context Matter? A Cross-National Multilevel Analysis of Political Polarizing Effect of Social Media. *The 75th International Communication Association (ICA) Conference.*

Zhao, H. (June, 2024). Harmony-In-Diversity? Examining How Social Media Use Influences Affective Polarization through the Mediating Effects of Cross-Cutting and Like-Minded Discussions. *The 74th International Communication Association (ICA) Conference*, Gold Coast, Australia.
n.b. Sole master's student in the research escalator session, acceptance rate 28%

Zhao, H., Liu, Y (July, 2024). Pathways from Incidental and Selective Exposure to Affective Polarization. *International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) Conference*, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Zhao, H. (November, 2023). "How Social Media Influences the Content and Structure of Youth Political Knowledge: the Moderating Effect of Need for Orientation". *The 10th Forum on Political Communication and Social Development*. Beijing, China. *(in Chinese)*
n.b. Top Student Paper Award

NEWSPAPER

Zhang, M., **Zhao, H.** (2023). "Understanding the Diffusion of ChatGPT". *Chinese Social Sciences Today*. A07. *(in Chinese)*

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

ICA 2024 Hackathon, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Research Team Member   June 2024

Interdisciplinary Research Project: *Classifying Dream Diaries: An LLM-Based Approach*

- Prompt engineering for dream classification tasks, using Ollama in RStudio environment
- Developed a word embedding-based method for calculating dream feature values

Cross-National Multilevel Analysis of Political Polarizing Effect of Social Media., Wuhan

Granted by *Lab of Big Data and National Communication Strategy*

Researcher   June 2024 - Present

- Conducted multilevel analysis examining the relationship between social media usage and political polarization across 53 countries, integrating datasets from WVS, V-Dem, WIID, and Hofstede Cultural Dimensions
- Performed more than 90 cross-level interaction analyses investigating how country-level cultural, political, economic, and ICT factors moderate social media's polarizing effects in R
- Authored and submitted a research paper to ICA 2025

Exploring Audience Perceptions of Artificial Intelligence News Anchor, Wuhan & Online

Research Assistant   June 2024 - Present

Assisted Dr. Linwan Wu and Dr. Jingjing Zhang in investigating how AI news anchors reshape user perceptions

- Conducted literature review on AI in journalism, human-AI interaction, and media psychology
- Developed and refined research questions focusing on emotional and cognitive responses to AI news anchors
- Designed semi-structured interview protocols and conducted pilot tests to refine the research methodology

ByteDance Public Relations Department (♪TikTok) & School of Journalism and Information Communication, HUST, Wuhan

Research Fellow   May - October 2023

Co-authored a research report: *Knowledge Landscape: The Impact of Short Videos and Live Streaming on Knowledge Dissemination*

- Proposed the core conceptual framework of the report
- Authored chapter on the impact of short videos and live streaming on understanding and learning

Master Thesis, Wuhan   October 2023 - Present

How Social Media Influences Affective Polarization: The Mediating Role of Cross-cutting and Like-minded Discussion (Advised by Prof. Mingxin Zhang)

- Examining how incidental and selective exposure influence affective polarization through the mediating role of cross-cutting and like-minded discussion in Chinese social media context
- Received valuable feedback from Dr. Ingrid Bachmann and other leading scholars at ICA 2024 Political Division Research Escalator, and presented the improved research at IAMCR 2024
- Conducted a large-scale survey (N=1,173) using quota sampling method

Lab of Big Data and National Communication Strategy, Wuhan

Research Assistant   March - June 2023

Assisted Prof. Mingxin Zhang with *The Blue Book of National Image: Annual Report on National Image Communication of China (2022-2023)*

- Analyzed the Lab's cross-national survey data on public attitudes toward China, domestic development and major global affairs across 22 countries
- Authored two country-specific reports examining Poland's and Mexico's perceptions of China's national image

Key Project Supported by the National Social Science Foundation of China, Wuhan

Research Assistant   September 2022 - November 2023

Assisted Prof. Mingxin Zhang (PI) with the project: *Social Media Usage and Political Socialization of Chinese Youth* (19AXW010)

- Conducted research on the impact of social media use on youth political knowledge
- Presented findings at The 10th Forum on Political Communication and Social Development, receiving Top Student Paper Award

Project Supported by the National Social Science Foundation of China, Changsha

Research Assistant   December 2020 - September 2021

Assisted Prof. Meifeng Mo (PI) with the project: *Impact and Governance of Cyberbullying on Minors in Social Networks* (20BXW12)

- Produced VR short films aimed at cyberbullying prevention
- Conducted research using VR experiences to prevent cyberbullying (Mixed-method approach, including in-depth interviews and experimental design)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

School of Journalism and Information Communication, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan

Teaching Assistant
- Introduction to Media Convergence (2024 Spring), Prof. Mingxin Zhang
- Media Psychology (2024 Spring), Prof. Mingxin Zhang

SERVICE

- ICA 2024, 2025 reviewer

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Travel Award   2024
  ICA Political Communication Division
- First Prize   2024
  9th China Data Journalism Competition, Hubei Division
- Graduate Student Travel Award   2024
  Huazhong University of Science and Technology
- Top Student Paper Award   2023
  The 10th Forum on Political Communication and Social Development
- First Prize Academic Scholarship   2022, 2023
  Huazhong University of Science and Technology
- Outstanding Thesis Award   2022
  Hunan University
- First Prize Academic Scholarship   2019, 2020
  Hunan University

SKILLS

- Tools: Python (`NumPy`, `Pandas`, `Gensim`, `scikit-learn`, `Transformers`), Jupyter Notebook, Google Colab, R/RStudio (`tidyverse`, `ggplot2`, `glmmTMB`), SPSS, PROCESS, Amos, Mplus, Ollama, LaTeX
- Language: TOEFL: 112/120