

Open
AccessCheck for
updates

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section: *Philosophy & Religion***Legal basis of the civil liability for harms caused by misleading content on social media under UAE legislation**Nadia Yas¹, Wided Dafri², Hayssam Hammad³, Nagwa Abouhaiba³ & Doaa Mahmoud³¹College of Law, Umm Al Quwain University, Umm Al Quwain, United Arab Emirates²College of Media and Public Relations, Institutional and Government Communication, Liwa University, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates³College of Law, Abu Dhabi University, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates*Correspondence: drnadia.a@uaqu.ac.ae**ABSTRACT**

The current study examines the legal basis for civil liability for harms arising from misleading content on social media under UAE law. We have adopted an inductive approach to analyze legal texts, revealing that these laws do strive to protect society from the risks of misinformation while ensuring responsible freedom of expression and combining legal deterrence with public education. In light of the challenges imposed by the rapid spread of false and misleading information in the digital environment, the UAE, like other countries, has witnessed a dramatic expansion in the use of social media as a primary source of news and information, necessitating a comprehensive legal framework to regulate this digital world. This framework, however, is based on Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021 to combat Rumors & Cybercrimes, Decree-Law No. 55 of 2023 on Media Regulation, Federal Law No. 5 of 1985 regarding civil transactions, as well as the Federal Law No. (15) of 2020 on consumer protection, which together constitute the Legislative System for Criminal and Civil Accountability. Moreover, the study clarifies that the UAE Legislation is comprehensive and stringent, criminalizing the publication or republication of false or misleading news, regardless of the motive. It places responsibility on both individuals and digital platforms, allowing those harmed to seek civil compensation for material or moral damages arising from such content. The findings reveal that the UAE has adopted a preventive and proactive approach by criminalizing the dissemination of paid disinformation and the use of artificial intelligence techniques to spread misleading content, making it one of the leading countries in confronting modern digital crimes. Finally, our research has produced a set of recommendations, the most prominent of which are strengthening courts' capacity to handle digital evidence, establishing a national database to monitor misleading content, and raising users' legal and media awareness and enhancing international cooperation to combat cross-border disinformation and updating laws to keep pace with rapid developments in artificial intelligence and embedding digital justice within national digital transformation policies.

KEYWORDS: misleading content, civil liability, UAE legislation, Social Media**Research Journal in Advanced Humanities**

Volume 6, Issue 4, 2025

ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: 18 September 2025

Accepted: 30 October 2025

Published: 17 November 2025

HOW TO CITE

Yas, N., Dafri, W., Hammad, H., Abouhaiba, N., & Mahmoud, D. (2025). Legal basis of the civil liability for harms caused by misleading content on social media under UAE legislation. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 6(4). <https://doi.org/10.58256/aj1hn550>



Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global, an imprint of Royallite Publishers Limited

© 2025 The Author(s). This is an open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

1. Introduction

In recent years, Digital World has witnessed a revolution in communication, with Social Media Platforms becoming a primary forum for spreading news and information, including, of course, misleading content that can influence public opinion and social stability. In the United Arab Emirates, as in other countries, the need has emerged for strict legal frameworks to regulate this rapidly evolving and rapidly spreading sphere, placing responsibility on social media platforms and individual users to curb the spread of false and misleading information (Al-Mufid, 2025). The UAE adopts an advanced legal approach to counter misleading content on social media, imposing criminal accountability on those who promote false information, especially when it is financially incentivized, as stipulated in Article 55 of the UAE Anti-Rumors and Cybercrimes Law. Under this law, the UAE criminalizes the publication of incorrect or misleading content that poses a threat to social security, with particular focus on individuals who financially benefit from disseminating such information (Al Ali, 2025).

It should be noted that the UAE legislation is featured with explicit provisions, which take into consideration individual responsibility and are not confined to only regulating digital platforms, unlike some Western legislation, such as the European Digital Services Act, which focuses on organizing the platforms' responsibility but entirely fails to criminalize individuals who promote misinformation for financial gain (Al-Ibrahim, 2025). UAE Legislation indeed includes measures for international and regulatory cooperation that aim to strengthen cross-border oversight of electronic content, increase transparency in digital operations, and impose deterrent penalties on violators. Several researchers emphasize the need for greater legal coordination and for the promotion of a digital governance system to address the challenges posed by misleading content, especially in an era of rapid development in artificial intelligence (Al-Qasim, 2024).

The global digital world, particularly in the United Arab Emirates, is witnessing tremendous growth in the use of social media platforms, which have become the primary source of news and information. This rapid technological development has been accompanied by an existential challenge: the uncontrolled, unprecedented spread of misleading and false content. Experts point out that artificial intelligence has been accelerating the spread of such content, even as the human element remains fundamental in its circulation and amplification, whether intentionally or unintentionally. This phenomenon has had dire consequences, including the manipulation of facts, the dissemination of misinformation, and its impact on societal behaviors and decisions.

In response to these growing threats to social stability, national interests, and the economy, the United Arab Emirates has adopted a comprehensive legislative framework to govern the digital sphere. Such a legal framework represents a decisive sovereign step to regulate the shift of media power from traditional institutions to digital platforms, grounded in two main aspects: criminal deterrence after a crime occurs and proactive oversight of media activities. As a matter of fact, the UAE has adopted a dual and effective legislative model for publishers and platforms' accountability. This model does not merely punish perpetrators of cybercrimes (Law 34/2021), but also seeks to proactively create a regulated media environment that imposes compliance with national content standards on all entities engaged in media or advertising activities. This approach aims to ensure that content circulating in the country reflects national values and preserves social principles.

Three main issues have been taken into consideration. Analysis of strict criminal accountability as per the Anti-Rumor and Cybercrimes Law No. 34 of 2021, with particular attention to provisions on corporate liability and criminalization of funded disinformation, as well as artificial intelligence. A review of the framework established through the implementation of Media Regulation Law No. 55 of 2023, supported by the role of the UAE Media Council. A discussion of enforcement mechanisms, including the use of interactive platforms, such as „Amin,“ and the effectiveness of judicial measures in confronting disinformation, taking into account academic debates and international comparisons.

Table 1: dual legislative framework that the state relies on to govern misleading content:

Legal Framework	Main Organizing Authority	Main Objectives	Type of Accountability
Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021 (Combat of Rumors & Cybercrimes)	Public Prosecution and Judicial Bodies	Criminalization of acts related to spreading false news and rumors, in addition to protecting the interests of the state.	Criminal, Civil, and Web-site Closure

We should note, however, that the legal accountability mechanism in the UAE is highly integrated with the concept of social responsibility for both individuals and platforms. The law encourages greater user awareness, educating them about the risks of misleading content and their role in combating the spread of rumours, alongside the supervisory roles of competent authorities. Besides, coordination with social media companies shall be considered to ensure that content standards are enforced while respecting user privacy and protecting digital rights (Al Nuaimi, 2024). We may come up with the fact that the UAE is moving toward establishing an integrated system that combines legal, regulatory, and awareness-raising elements to regulate misleading content on social media platforms, balancing protection of society from the harms caused by misinformation with the guarantee of freedom of expression in the digital environment (Al Hammadi, 2024).

The governance of misleading content on social media platforms is deemed one of the most complicated issues in contemporary digital law, due to the overlap between freedom of expression and legal responsibility. Academic studies have indeed shown that Emirati Law offers an advanced approach in this area, by regulating the digital world and expanding the scope of accountability to include both individuals and legal entities (Al-Mufid, 2025). The UAE legislator addresses misleading content within a broader framework known as „illegal content“ or „false news and rumors.“ According to Article No. 01 of Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021, illegal content is defined as anything that constitutes the subject matter of a punishable crime, or any publication or circulation within the country that could harm its security, interests, public health, or public order (Al-Qasim, 2024). This concept extends to include commercial deception. Under UAE legislation, electronic service providers are required to present advertisements that are accurate and non-misleading. At the same time, the UAE Media Council supervises digital advertisements to ensure they are free from false commercial claims and reflect the legislator's interest in combating political, social, and commercial deception. (Al-Brahim, 2025).

Civil Liability in the UAE Law is based on three main standards: fault, damage, and the causal relationship between them. According to Article No. 282 of the Federal Civil Transactions Law No. 5 of 1985, “Any harm caused to others obliges the perpetrator to compensate for the damage.” Accordingly, publishing or republishing misleading content is considered a fault that entails civil liability, even without intent to harm, so long as damage occurs (Al Ali, 2025). Civil and criminal liabilities run parallel, as stipulated in the Anti-Rumours & Cybercrimes Law No. 34 of 2021. A criminal conviction is conclusive evidence of the existence of a civil fault element, which gives the injured party the right to claim compensation before the Civil Judiciary (Al-Mufid, 2025). They may file an independent civil lawsuit or claim compensation within the same criminal case. Digital evidence shall be accepted to prove the harmful act in accordance with the Federal Decree-Law No. 46 of 2021 regarding Electronic Transactions and Trust Services (Al-Qasim, 2024).

It should be noted that the publisher is liable for any misleading content they post, whether on a personal or institutional page, and their act constitutes a civil error giving rise to damages (AlAli, 2025). The UAE legislator has adopted an expanded approach to accountability in Article No. 53 of the Cybercrimes Law, which imposes liability on a user who republishes illegal content, even if they were not the original creator. Republication is regarded as an independent civil crime because it breaches the legal responsibility not to harm others, as well as the requirement to verify information before publication. However, AlQaisi (2022) argues that this approach creates joint liability among all those who contribute to the spread of misleading content. Article No. 58 of the Cybercrime Law stipulates that a legal entity is deemed accountable for crimes committed in its name or for its benefit, with this liability extended to the de facto directors if it is proved that they are aware of the acts or negligent in their supervision. The court may also close or block the offending website, which is an effective deterrent against institutional disinformation (Al-Qasim, 2024).

Vicarious liability is established under Article No. 313 of the Civil Transactions Law, which stipulates that a principal is responsible for the acts of their subordinate when those acts occur in the course of, or because of, their work. This applies to companies whose employees manage accounts or publish misleading content while performing their duties (Al-Mufid, 2025). UAE law imposes severe penalties for publishing unauthorized information or reports that harm state security or reputation, underscoring the preventive and sovereign character of the legislation (Al-Qasim, 2024). The law punishes with imprisonment and fines (from 50,000 to 200,000 UAE Dirhams) anyone who creates or falsely attributes an account or website to another person; the penalty is doubled if the impersonated account belongs to a government institution (Al-Mufid, 2025). Article No. 55 of Law No. 34 of 2021 represents a qualitative shift, as it criminalizes funded disinformation, i.e., publishing

misleading content for financial motives, and imposes harsh penalties on financiers and promoters (Alkrisheh & Gourari, 2025). UAE legislation uniquely criminalizes the creation or modification of an electronic robot that would spread misleading information, including deepfake technologies, thereby reflecting the modern legal approach in the UAE, which aims to regulate AI use in the digital media environment (Al-Brahim, 2025). Conclusion: It is clear that the UAE legal system has established a dual model of legal accountability, balancing freedom of expression with legal responsibility to achieve digital justice in cyberspace (Al-Qasim, 2024).

2. Literature Review

According to Al-Dallou (2016), *Civil Liability Arising from Unlawful Conduct on Social Media Platforms*. This study has analyzed the legal basis of civil liability arising from unlawful conduct on social media platforms, as well as its adverse impacts on individuals and society. Methodology: The researcher used a descriptive-analytical method, with the study organized into three chapters. The first chapter addresses the nature and importance of social media platforms; The second chapter sets out the rights and obligations of users of these platforms; The third chapter is devoted to the civil liability of users. Findings: The study concluded that social networks have become a vital part of life, yet they are also a fertile ground for unlawful practices that may give rise to civil liability. Recommendations: It is essential to raise users' legal awareness and to enforce the legislation regulating these spaces. The Advertiser's Responsibility for Misleading Content on Websites and E-Markets: According to the UAE Consumer Protection Law No. 15 of 2020." The study aims to clarify the legal protections consumers have against misleading advertisements in the e-commerce environment, which has become more dangerous than in traditional commerce. As for methodology, it has adopted a legal-analytical approach relevant to legislative texts. Conclusions: The study reveals that, in a digital environment, the consumer is the weaker party in the contractual relationship, necessitating special legal protection, particularly during the pre-contractual phase. Recommendations: The study emphasizes the need to strengthen legal oversight mechanisms for electronic advertisements and to enforce penalties for misleading content to protect electronic consumers (Tawalba, 2021).

Criminal Liability for Paid Misinformation in the Digital World: A Comparative Study between UAE Law and the European Digital Services Act (DSA)," published in the Arab Journal of Environmental and Economic Research. The study addresses the phenomenon of publishing paid, misleading content online, compares the UAE legal framework with its European counterpart, and adopts a comparative analytical approach. Conclusions: The study reveals that UAE Law is more precise and stringent in criminalising paid misinformation and imposing criminal penalties on individuals, unlike the European framework, which focuses only on platform responsibility. Recommendations: The study calls for enhancing international cooperation and unifying legal frameworks to combat cross-border digital misinformation (Al-Ali, 2025). According to Othman, Doaa Mohsin (2025), *Cyber Threats and Legal Gaps: A Study of the Laws of Egypt and the United Arab Emirates*. The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of national legislation in combating the increasing incidence of cybercrime. Methodology: The researcher has adopted a comparative analytical approach between Egyptian Law and the UAE Federal Law No. 34 of 2021. Conclusions: The study shows that both legal systems have made progress in criminalisation, but challenges still exist in enforcement and international cooperation. Recommendations: The study emphasizes the need to fully address legislative gaps and enhance institutional capacities to combat digital crime.

The Legislative Framework Governing Digital Media in Jordan and Arab Countries: A Study of Legal Dimensions." The study has aimed to analyze the laws regulating digital media and their position between freedom of expression and individuals' privacy. Methodology: The researcher has adopted a comparative approach between several Arab countries, including Jordan, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon. Conclusions: The study aimed to clarify that the UAE adopts a comprehensive and balanced approach to regulating digital media, in contrast to the restrictive approach followed by other countries. Recommendations: The study calls for rights-based reforms and for promoting regional alignment to achieve sound digital governance (Al-Mashaqbeh, Yasir Arif, 2025). According to (Al-Ashri, Mohammad Sayyid, 2023), Arab authorities use digital surveillance to control press freedom." The study aimed to show the impact of government digital surveillance on press freedom in the Arab world. Methodology: The study has adopted a descriptive-analytical approach to review media legislation and the practices utilized in several Arab countries (Yas, H., Aburayya, A., & Shwede, F., 2024). Conclusions: The study reveals that some Arab countries have amended their media laws in

response to the new political and technological realities, yet censorship continues to limit freedom of expression. Recommendations: The study calls for the establishment of balanced legal frameworks that would protect press freedom while maintaining national security. Arab Culture and the Specificity of Social Media.” It aims to study the impact of Arab culture and religious values on users’ privacy-related behaviour on social media platforms. Methodology: The study has followed a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach. Conclusions: The study concludes that cultural and ethical factors highly influence privacy in the Arab world, and that the absence of clear legislation will increase the likelihood of further violations. Recommendations: The study suggests adopting more comprehensive laws to protect digital privacy while promoting cultural and social awareness among users (Al-Mahameed, Alaa Ali et al., 2024).

A review of previous studies shows that most of them have addressed the issue of legal liability in the digital space from different angles: civil, criminal, or regulatory, though they varied in scope, objectives, and depth of coverage, particularly regarding misleading content. All studies, such as Al-Dallou’s (2016) and Othman’s (2025), have confirmed that social media platforms have become fertile ground for illicit practices that cause material and moral damage, necessitating effective legal intervention. Most studies, especially Al-Ali (2025) and Al-Mashaqbeh (2025), have emphasized that legislative development in Arab countries, led by the UAE, constituted a fundamental aspect for governing digital media and combating misinformation and misleading content. Studies such as Tawalba (2021) and AL Mahameed (2024) agree that protecting users from misleading advertisements or content is a legal and ethical necessity to maintain trust in the electronic environment.

Othman (2025) and Al-Ali (2025) have clarified that cross-border challenges, particularly those related to misleading content, urgently require international legal coordination to ensure the effectiveness of national laws. Despite the diversity and richness of previous studies, there is a noticeable gap in the literature: a scarcity of studies linking misleading content to civil liability, specifically under UAE law. Most research has focused on the criminal or commercial aspects without an in-depth analysis of the civil basis for accountability of digital damages. The absence of an integrated analysis of the relationship between Anti-Rumours and Cybercrimes Law No. 34 of 2021, and the Civil Transactions Law No. 5 of 1985, concerning the characterization of informational damage. There is a lack of studies examining the practical (judicial or operational) aspect of civil liability for digital misinformation in the UAE, despite the novelty and development of legislation in this field (Yas, H., Dafri, W., Sarhan, M. I., Albayati, Y., & Shwede, F., 2024).

The current study represents a scientific attempt to address the identified research gap by providing a comprehensive legal analysis of civil liability for damages arising from misleading content on social media under UAE legislation. It should be noted, however, that the current study differs from the previous in the following: integration of civil and digital laws within a unified framework. Focusing on the role of artificial intelligence and derivative liability in the production and dissemination of misleading content and referring to the analysis of recent UAE legal texts, including Anti-Rumor & Cybercrime Law No. 34 of 2021, Media Regulation Law No. 55 of 2023, and Civil Transactions Law No. 5 of 1985.

3. Methodology

The study has adopted an inductive analytical approach, a scientific method that collects partial data through observation and analyzes them to obtain general conclusions governing the phenomenon under investigation. In general, the inductive method is used to deduce legal rules and principles by studying multiple legislative texts, judicial rulings, and jurisprudential opinions, and by analyzing them interactively to establish the legal basis for civil liability for damages resulting from misleading content on social media under UAE legislation. This method traces the legislative development of civil liability concepts in the UAE Law, analyses how legal texts interact with the requirements of modern digital society, and assesses their adequacy in addressing the phenomenon of electronic media misinformation. An inductive approach has been applied through a detailed analysis of the relevant legal texts, particularly. Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021 on the Combat of Rumours & Cybercrimes. Decree-Law No. 55 of 2023 on Media Regulation. Civil Transactions Law No. 5 of 1985 and Federal Law No. 15 of 2020 on Consumer Protection. Several judicial precedents, public prosecution decisions, and official reports have also been analysed to determine practical trends in the application of these texts. In addition, a comparison has been conducted between these texts to assess the extent of their integration in

building a coherent system of civil accountability and to explore their strengths and legislative and executive shortcomings.

The researcher has utilized a set of methodological tools, the most important of which are. Analysis of legal texts according to an interpretative jurisprudential approach. Comparative analysis of UAE legislation and international legislation, such as the European Digital Services Act, and legal observation to monitor digital and judicial phenomena related to misleading content. The research has relied on secondary data, including. Official legislative texts issued by government entities in the United Arab Emirates; Data published by the Public Prosecution and relevant legal councils; Peer-reviewed research papers and academic studies addressing UAE legislation in the context of cybercrimes and civil liability, such as Alkrisheh & Gourari, 2025; Al Ali, 2025; Othman, 2025; and reports from international and regional legal institutions specialized in digital governance and consumer protection. Within its scope, the study focuses on the legal basis of civil liability, without expanding into criminal liability, except when the subject is close at hand. The study, however, is limited to the UAE legislation with reference to relevant international comparisons for scientific analysis.

4. Discussion

The study concludes that the UAE legislative framework is among the most comprehensive and advanced legal models in the Arab Region for regulating misleading content on social media, covering both criminal and civil liabilities. Our conclusions can be summarized as follows. It is evident from the analysis of the UAE legal texts, particularly Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021 regarding Combating Rumours and Cybercrimes, that legislation has not confined itself to criminalizing the spread of false or misleading content but has also reinforced this criminalization by allowing a claim for civil compensation for any resulting damages. This integration reflects a comprehensive perspective that combines general deterrence with the protection of private rights, ensuring the achievement of digital justice and the preservation of societal trust in the electronic environment.

The study demonstrates that the UAE legislator has adopted an advanced approach in expanding the circle of legal accountability to include not only the creator of misleading content but also anyone who republishes or promotes it. This development represents a qualitative shift in the digital legal landscape, as it holds individuals responsible for verifying information before resharing it and limits the culture of “publishing without verification,” a primary driver of the spread of electronic misinformation. The study emphasizes that legislative deterrence in the UAE is characterized by strictness and clarity, especially regarding content that affects national security, public reputation, or sovereign interests. Besides, criminalizing paid misinformation constituted a pioneering legislative step, given the practices that exploit digital platforms to profit from spreading false news, while some Western legislations, such as the European Digital Services Act (DSA), focus only on platform responsibility without holding individuals accountable.

The results confirmed that the UAE is among the first countries to address the use of artificial intelligence in digital misinformation within the scope of legal criminalization. UAE legislation criminalizes the creation or modification of electronic robots or automated accounts intended to spread misleading information, reflecting advanced legislative awareness of the digital age’s requirements, especially in light of the challenges posed by “deepfake” and machine-generated content. The results indicate that legislation’s effectiveness is enhanced by its integration with users’ digital legal awareness. Therefore, the UAE has adopted an approach that combines legal deterrence with community education through initiatives such as the “Aman” platform, which allows interactive reporting of false news, thereby reinforcing the principle of “shared digital responsibility” among the state, individuals, and digital platforms. The comparison showed that the Emirati model is more precise and comprehensive in addressing the criminal and civil aspects of misleading content. In contrast, Western models, such as European or American legislation, focus more on regulatory controls and governance, without imposing explicit criminal penalties on individuals. This dual approach (criminal and civil) confirms that the Emirati legal system is a pioneering model for confronting misinformation, especially in multilingual, multicultural digital environments.

5. Recommendations

Based on the study’s findings regarding civil liability for damages resulting from misleading content on social media, a set of recommendations has been developed to enhance the effectiveness of the legal framework

and achieve a balance between freedom of expression and digital responsibility. These recommendations are summarized as follows: Efforts should be made to strengthen the UAE courts' capabilities to handle digital evidence by establishing specialized judicial units to analyze electronic content and employ artificial intelligence tools to verify the sources of posts and digital messages. Such procedures shall facilitate proof of fault and causal relationship in cases involving misleading content, thereby increasing the efficiency of judicial rulings in technical civil disputes. The study recommends creating a comprehensive national platform to monitor, document, and analyze patterns of misleading content dissemination, to support decision-makers and regulatory bodies with the data needed to identify misinformation hotspots and take early preventive measures before damage worsens or spreads.

The study recommends launching national programs to raise legal and media awareness among the public, influencers, and media workers, and to inform them of the legal responsibilities associated with irresponsible publishing or republishing. These programs can be implemented in cooperation between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Culture. They can also be included in school curricula and training centres to promote a culture of "verification before sharing." The study has also recommended the development of bilateral and multilateral agreements between the UAE and other countries to exchange information on evidence in digital misinformation cases. Establishing effective legal mechanisms for international judicial cooperation is a necessary step to ensure the enforcement of rulings and the prosecution of perpetrators of misinformation crimes beyond national borders.

Although UAE legislation criminalizes the use of robots and automated systems for the dissemination of misinformation, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence and deepfake technologies necessitates periodic updates to legal texts. The study proposes establishing a permanent legislative committee to monitor technological developments and continuously propose amendments to anticipate future risks. The study recommends adopting shared accountability between individuals and digital platforms by obligating social media companies to implement effective monitoring systems and to report accounts that publish misleading content. Fines should also be imposed on companies that neglect to correct or report, thereby promoting digital transparency and public trust in the online environment. The study calls for incorporating the principle of digital justice within the state's digital transformation strategies, ensuring a balance between protecting individual rights and safeguarding the public interest from the risks of misinformation. It is also advisable to include this concept in training programs for judges and lawyers to enhance legal awareness of modern digital challenges and to ensure the sustainability of justice in cyberspace.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research shows that the UAE legislator has adopted an advanced legal approach to address the phenomenon of misleading content on social media by integrating criminal and civil liability to ensure comprehensive protection for both society and individuals. The study revealed that the UAE legislation, particularly Federal Decree-Law No. (34) of 2021 on Combating Rumours and Cybercrimes, has established clear foundations for criminalizing the publication of false or misleading content, while allowing the affected party to claim civil compensation according to the provisions of Civil Transactions Law No. (5) of 1985. Through a systematic analysis of relevant legal texts and regulations, it has been noted that the legal basis for civil liability rests on three main elements: fault, damage, and causation, which are flexibly applied in the digital environment through modern evidentiary tools and electronic mechanisms adopted in the UAE judicial system. The study also revealed a qualitative legislative development: the expansion of liability to include individuals, influencers, platforms, and even legal entities that contribute to publishing or republishing misleading content, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of legal deterrence and limiting the exacerbation of digital harms.

On the other hand, the results showed that the UAE approach differs from many comparative systems, such as the European legislation (DSA), by being clearer in defining individual responsibility and stricter in the penal aspect, which consolidates the UAE's position as one of the leading countries in digital space governance and combating electronic misinformation. The study also indicated that legislation alone is insufficient to address such a complex phenomenon; it must be accompanied by societal awareness and a digital legal culture that promotes responsible behavior in publishing and on social platforms. Therefore, enhancing legal awareness, developing mechanisms for digital evidence, and updating legislation to keep pace with artificial intelligence

technologies are all necessary steps to ensure sustainable digital justice.

Based on the above, the study confirms that the UAE model for holding misleading content accountable represents a pioneering experience in the Arab region in terms of the comprehensiveness and integration of the legal framework and its ability to protect individuals, institutions, and society from the risks of misinformation, while simultaneously maintaining the principle of freedom of expression within the limits of legal responsibility. The rapid development of digital technology necessitates ongoing legislative, judicial, and institutional efforts to keep pace with new developments, fostering safe and responsible digital transformation and achieving a balance between freedom and accountability in the open information space.

References

1. Acharjee, M., & Bhattacharjee, N. (2025). Countering 'Information Disorder': A Comparative Study of Social Media Regulation with Special Reference to India. *Bennett Journal of Legal Studies*, 6(1), 145–167.
2. Afridi & Angell. (2025). UAE increases regulation of influencers and finfluencers: New rules for violations and penalties of media content. Retrieved from <https://afridi-angell.com/uae-increases-regulation-of-influencers-and-finfluencers-new-rules-for-violations-and-penalties-of-media-content/>
3. Al-Ajmi, Bayan bint Mohammed, & Al-Kindi, Salem bin Saeed. (2024). Tools and procedures for dealing with misinformation during crises in the Sultanate of Oman: A case study of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. *Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 14(3), Article 5.
4. Al-Ali, N. M. (2025). Legal Protection Against Fake News in UAE Legislation. *Emirates Journal of Legal Studies*, 18(1), 102–128.
5. Al-Ali, R. (2025). Criminal Liability for Paid Misinformation in the Digital World: A Comparative Study Between UAE Law and the European Digital Services Act (DSA). *Arab Journal of Environmental and Economic Research*, 12(2).
6. Al-Ashri, M. S. (2023). Arab authorities use digital surveillance to control press freedom. *Digital Policy, Regulation and Governance*.
7. Albrahim, K. Y. (2025). Governance of Digital Platforms and User Responsibility in Gulf Legislation. *Journal of Law and Technology*, 9(1), 77–101.
8. Al-Dalou, K. (2016). Civil liability arising from unlawful practices on social media sites. University of Tripoli, Libya.
9. Al-Kriesha, F. G. (2025). Cybercrimes and the role of UAE law in combating misleading news. *Journal of Law and Technology*, 15(3), 101–120. Link
10. Alkrisheh, M. A., & Gourari, F. M. (2025). Criminal liability for paid disinformation in the digital world: A comparative study between UAE law and the European Digital Services Act (DSA). *Arab Journal of Excellence in Education*, 8(2), 341–364.
11. Alkrisheh, M., & Gourari, S. (2025). Legal accountability for paid disinformation in the UAE cybercrime law. *Arab Journal of Digital Law and Policy*, 11(1), 55–80.
12. Al-Mahameed, A. A., Arias-Oliva, M., Lima Rua, O., & Souto-Romero, M. (2024). Arab culture and privacy on social media platforms: Ethical and legal perspectives. *Journal of Arab Social Studies*, 11(4), 299–324.
13. Al-Mashaqbeh, Y. A. (2025). Legislative framework regulating digital media in Jordan and Arab countries: A study of legal dimensions. *Arab Journal of Media and Law Studies*, 6(3), 101–132.
14. Al-Mufid, A. A. (2025). Civil Liability for Electronic Publishing on Social Media: A Comparative Study. *Journal of Law and Digital Governance*, 12(2), 45–72.
15. Al-Qaisi, A. Abdul J. (2022). Civil Liability for Republishing Content on Social Media. *Arab Law Journal*, 14(4), 88–112.
16. Al-Qasim, L. A. R. (2024). The Legal Framework for Combating Misleading Content in the UAE Digital Environment. *Arab Journal of Media Policies*, 6(3), 201–238.
17. Al-Sharqawi, I., et al. (2022). Social media and privacy in the UAE: Survey research. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Studies, University of Sharjah*.
18. Calò, A., Longo, A., & Zappatore, M. (2023). Comparative analysis of disinformation regulations: A preliminary analysis. *Proceedings of the International Conference*.
19. Crowley, R. M., et al. (2025). Misinformation regulations: Early evidence on corporate social media strategy. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.
20. Denniss, E., & Lindberg, R. (2025). Social media and the spread of misinformation. *Health Promotion International*, 40(2).
21. Elhais, H. M. (2024). Spreading false information on social media and its penalties. Retrieved from
22. Golunova, V. (2024). Silenced by default: Algorithmic content moderation and freedom of expression (Doctoral dissertation). Maastricht University.
23. Khairallah Legal. (2024). Understanding UAE social media regulations: Navigating legal guidelines. Retrieved from <https://www.khairallahlegal.com/social-media-law/understanding-uae-social-media-regulations-navigating-legal-guidelines/>

24. LY Lawyers. (2025). Media law in the UAE - Dubai. Retrieved from <https://lylawyers.com/media-law-in-the-uae/>
25. Olakoyenikan, O. (2024). Legal and ethical implications of misinformation: A comparative study of regulatory approaches in the European Union and the United States. *International Journal of Advanced Mass Communication and Journalism*, 5(2), 21–26.
26. Othman, D. M. (2025). Cyber threats and legal gaps: A comparative study between Egyptian and UAE laws. *Journal of Digital Law and Policy*, 8(1), 55–78.
27. Rozgonyi, K., et al. (2023). Accountability and platforms' governance: The case of public service media. *Internet Policy Review*, 12(4).
28. Santos, A., et al. (2024). Holding platforms accountable in the fight against misinformation. *New Media & Society*.
29. Shahbazi, M., et al. (2024). Social media trust: Fighting misinformation in the time of crisis—*International Journal of Information Management*, 74.
30. Tawalba, A. (2021). Liability of the advertiser for misleading advertisements on websites and electronic markets according to the UAE Consumer Protection Law No. 15 of 2020. *Legal Studies Journal*, Mutah University, Jordan.
31. Yas, H., Aburayya, A., & Shwede, F. (2024). Education Quality and Standards in the Public School and the Private School: A Case Study in Saudi Arabia. In *Artificial Intelligence in Education: The Power and Dangers of ChatGPT in the Classroom* (pp. 563–572). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
32. Yas, H., Dafri, W., Sarhan, M. I., Albayati, Y., & Shwede, F. (2024). Universities' Faculty Perception of E-learning Tools: Filling the Gaps for Enhanced Effectiveness. In *Artificial Intelligence in Education: The Power and Dangers of ChatGPT in the Classroom* (pp. 573–588). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.