

Research on Network Public Opinion Guidance Mechanism of Mainstream Media MicroBlog

—Take CCTV News as an example

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Abstract: In major public health emergencies such as COVID-19, the response and guidance of public opinion by the government and the media is the top priority in the fight against COVID-19. "CCTV News" actively uses new platforms and new technologies to innovate communication methods in its reporting on the fight against COVID-19, and transmits accurate information to the public promptly and blocks the spread of false information through the Chinese biggest microblog--Sina Weibo. It demonstrates that the public service value and public opinion guidance ability of mainstream media. Taking "CCTV News" Sina Weibo as an example, this paper explores the public opinion guidance mechanism and effect of its Sina Weibo from two aspects of content and form through content analysis, and further discusses how mainstream media can do a good job of public opinion guidance in the era of social media, which can provide a reference for future media. The study found that "CCTV News" Sina Weibo won the battle of public opinion on the epidemic by releasing authoritative news in the content and closely adhering to users' media usage habits in form. Therefore, when the media needs to deal with major emergencies, they should release real information in time to be close to the perspective of the masses and be people-oriented.

1. Introduction

Sina Weibo is the largest microblog platform in China and the rapid rise of social media represented by Sina Weibo has changed people's way of life and the way of receiving information, and it has become one of the most important public information platforms. As a public information platform with 521 million monthly active users, Sina Weibo has a huge impact on the mode of news dissemination and public opinion guidance. The ecology of information dissemination during the COVID-19 epidemic has fully verified the irreplaceability of Sina Weibo in information dissemination and online public opinion guidance. At the beginning of the outbreak of COVID-19, mainstream media represented by CCTV News responded quickly, releasing authoritative news through Sina Weibo, and adjusting agenda setting on time according to the development of public opinion, to firmly grasp the right of mainstream media to guide public opinion and win the "tough battle of public opinion".

2. The Content Analyses of CCTV NEWS Weibo

2.1. Characteristics of Online Public Opinion during the COVID-19 Outbreak

The public opinion refers to the aggregate of feelings, wishes, attitudes and opinions held by the general public about public affairs with media as the carrier.^[1] COVID-19 broke out in an information society with the rapid development and popularization of the Internet and social media.

Public opinion governance in cyberspace has become a top priority in the prevention and control of the epidemic. According to the 47th Statistical Report on Internet Development in China released by China Internet Network Information Center, by December 2020, the number of Internet users in China had reached 989 million, and the Internet penetration rate had reached 70.4%^[2]. China's online discussion platform is an important source for understanding the public opinion dynamics of specific issues and policies.^[3] In nowadays, the online public opinion index is becoming into an important reason which is crucial to the country's stability and development of people's livelihood. ^[4]The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 and the lack of public awareness of the COVID-19 at the early stage of the outbreak led to some public feeling anxious and uneasy. Under this background, the network public opinion presents the characteristics of noisy, emotional and fragmented.

2.2. A Three-dimensional Interpretation of the Public Opinion Guidance of CCTV News Weibo

2.2.1. Topic Focus, the Strength of "CCTV News" Weibo's Public Opinion Guidance

According to the statistical analysis of CCTV News' Weibo from January 20 to January 26, 2020, the total number of posts was 651, of which 489 were related to the epidemic, accounting for 75%. As can be seen from Figure 1, with the development of COVID-19 and the rapid fermentation of related public opinions, the Weibo of "CCTV News" has continuously increased its attention to epidemic related topics, which is reflected in the increase of the update frequency of its Weibo and the proportion of the epidemic related topics. This reflects that "CCTV News" as the representative of the mainstream media has not lost its voice in responding to the sudden outbreak of COVID-19, and has taken the initiative to undertake social responsibilities, actively update the situation of the epidemic, and provide the public with an open and transparent information environment.

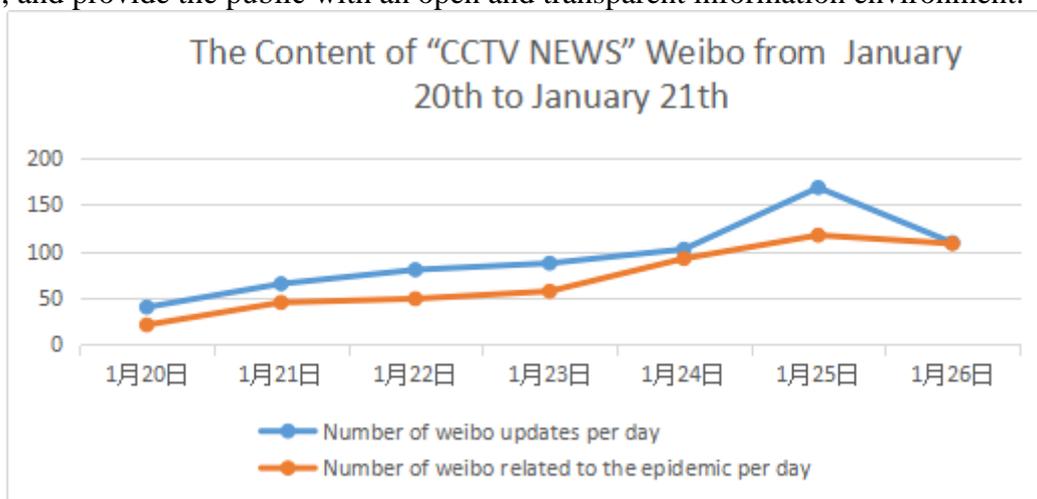


Figure 1 The number and content of CCTV News microblog.

2.2.2. Discourse Analysis, the Way of "CCTV News" Weibo's Public Opinion Guidance

The study focuses on the analysis of the discourse expression mode, content and effects of the Weibo of "CCTV News" from January 20 to 26, as shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1 The Discourse Expression Mode Analysis of CCTV News Weibo.

Category of Weibo Form	Quantity
Graphics	372
Short videos	81
live broadcasts	21
Slow lives	7
VLOG	8

Table 2 The discourse Expression Content Analysis of CCTV News Weibo.

Category of Weibo Content	Quantity
Epidemic information notification	346
Call for resistance to the COVID-19	32
Refute rumours	12
Experts interpret the epidemic	8
Key leaders and government policy news	18
Touching events in the fight against COVID-19	43
The situation of Wuhan	16
Reviews	5

According to the characteristics of Weibo content, its public opinion guidance can be classified into four aspects: technical innovation, topic guidance, timely rumor refuting and real-time information updating.

In order to meet users' diversified, personalized and convenient information needs, the Weibo of "CCTV News" combines text, pictures, videos and links to enrich the expression of information. At present, with the fragmentation of content and diversified expression, visual expressions such as pictures, charts, videos and so on have become the mainstream, which is also the most widely accepted way of information receiving by network users. For the same Weibo's content of epidemic news notification, compared with the graphic reporting method, the short video reporting method can get more quantity of reading, forwarding and comment. In addition, there are endless forms of video expression in Weibo, from fast pace short video to personification and slow pace VLOG, and from live broadcast to slow broadcast. "CCTV News" Weibo constantly attracts young people's attention with new ways of expression, which meets young people's content needs and reading habits. Among them, on January 20, "News 1+1", when Zhong Nanshan talked about the epidemic on Weibo, the number of views reached 89.68 million, and the number of retweets, comments and likes reached 1.609 million, which not only helped users accurately understand novel Coronavirus, but also improved the influence of the program itself. In order to adapt to the trend of fragmented reading on Weibo, "CCTV News" made Zhong Nanshan's interpretation of the virus into five short videos with a theme of about two minutes: "Zhong Nanshan confirms the transmission of COVID-19 from person to person" and so on. Short videos with distinct themes and short content can meet the information reading needs of current users and prevent important content from being submerged in the torrent of information on Weibo.

A Weibo topic is a special page based on a sustainable discussion topic initiated by a Weibo user based on the content of various channels such as Weibo hot spots, personal interests and netizens' discussions. With "#" as the logo, any user with a hashtag can directly participate in the topic discussion, and the topic page will automatically include the Weibo containing the topic. For example, if the reading and discussion amount of a topic are high enough, it can be listed on the real-time hot search topic list of Weibo, which can further improve the propagation power and influence of the topic and attract more users' attention. CCTV News Weibo makes good use of the topic mechanism of Weibo to produce relevant epidemic news and epidemic prevention and control topics. From January 20 to 26, topics related to the COVID-19 epidemic hosted by "CCTV News" appeared in the daily Weibo hot search list. Table 3 shows the topics with the highest reading and discussion volume hosted by "CCTV News" Weibo every day.

The hot search list of Weibo can play a role in strengthening the setting of public agenda for the public, allowing the audience to pay attention to the hot trends of the outside world in a timely manner, and participate in public issues, to avoid entering the "information cocoon".

Table 3 The Weibo Topic Hosted by “CCTV NEWS” Weibo.

Date	The name of the topic	Topic Reading volume	Topic discussion volume	Length of time in the topic list
January 20th	#Wuhan Health Commission issued precautions for high incidence of viral pneumonia#	1.03 billion	217,000	22 hours and 34 minutes
January 21th	#Fifteen medical workers in Wuhan have contracted the novel coronavirus#	1.84 billion	304,000	11 hours and 16 minutes
January 22th	#Epidemic prevention and control has been upgraded in Wuhan#	350 million	36,000	09 hours and 50 minutes
January 23th	#The conditions of 17 new pneumonia deaths have been announced#	650 million	100,000	21 hours and 34 minutes
January 24th	#830 cases of the new pneumonia have been confirmed across the country#	1.09 billion	219,000	07 hours and 46 minutes
January 25th	#A total of 57 cases have been confirmed in Chongqing#	370 million	33,000	06 hours and 20 minutes
January 26th	#Epidemiologists said there is no time to delay#	1.64 billion	295,000	08 hours and 26 minutes

Dr. Sylvie Briand, WHO's Director of Global Infectious Disease Preparedness, noted that the COVID-19 outbreak has been accompanied by an outbreak of an "infodemic". Infodemic is a condition in which too much information (some right, some wrong) makes it difficult to find trustworthy sources of information, reliable guidance, and potentially harmful to people's health.^[5]Mainstream media should shoulder the responsibility of controlling the "information epidemic" in the COVID-19 outbreak, especially for the large number of rumors appearing on the Internet, and should dispel the rumors in time to provide accurate information to the public in a timely manner. According to the COVID-19 Search Big Data Report jointly released by the Research Institute of People's Daily Online and Baidu App on February 1, "The frequent occurrence of various rumors has also caused considerable interference to people in Wuhan, where people's attention to rumor-refuting content has increased 190 times in the past week."^[6] "CCTV News" took timely and effective measures to dispel rumors in the early stage of the epidemic. For example, on January 21, the Weibo topic # about novel Coronavirus rumor # was launched to popularize COVID-19 to the public and clarify previous rumors about COVID-19 and SARS through pictures and pictures, and actively guided tens of thousands of Weibo users to forward them. In addition, for some major rumors such as "Zhong Nanshan diagnosed COVID-19" and "Deputy director of Wuhan Health Commission has been quarantined", "CCTV News" timely refuted the rumors and educated the majority of netizens not to believe the rumors and not to spread the rumors by means of topic guidance and encouraging and calling for forwarding.

2.2.3. User Feedback, the Public Opinion Guidance Effect of CCTV News Weibo

In order to explore the public opinion guidance effect of "CCTV News" during the period of COVID-19 prevention and control, the number of Weibo users' participation, "number of retweets + number of comments + number of likes", is taken as the standard, and the highest number of Weibo comments with daily participation from January 20 to 26, 2020 is selected to analyze the attitudes of users when forwarding and commenting. In this way, this information affects the attitudes of users and other media can be explored. As for the feedback analysis of Weibo users, the user attitude analysis is carried out on the top five popular forwardings and comments in the forwarding and comment areas, which are divided into positive attitude, negative attitude and neutral attitude. The

statistical analysis of user attitudes in the comment and forwarding areas of Weibo is shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Statistical analysis of user attitudes in the comment area and the forwarding area of "CCTV News" Weibo.

Date	The theme of Weibo	The number of users participating (unit: million)	User feedback in forwarding area	User feedback in the comments section
January 20th	“Zhong Nanshan confirmed novel coronavirus pneumonia from person-to-person”	1.75	All positive	All positive
January 21th	“291 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in China”	1.42	4 positive, 1 neutral	3 positive, 2 neutral
January 22th	“Children and young adults are not susceptible to the virus”	2.20	All positive	All positive
January 23th	“A new pneumonia patient in Wuhan has been successfully treated”	1.63	All positive	All positive
January 24th	“Urgent notice! Attention please passengers of train NO.G1278 No.2 on 23rd! Turn expansion!”	1.55	All positive	2 positive, 2 neutral, 1 negative
January 25th	“Infectious disease experts said there is no time to delay”	2.15	1 positive, 1 neutral	4 positive, 1 negative
January 26th	“Japan donated 1 million masks to aid Wuhan”	2.31	All positive	All positive

The feedback of Weibo users of CCTV News is mainly positive, which fully demonstrates its remarkable ability to guide public opinion in the COVID-19 epidemic, especially the positive reports on the anti-epidemic events, which can play a role in stimulating positive energy and rallying people.

3. Conclusion

The practice of information dissemination in the COVID-19 has proved that only by spreading the voice of the Party and the government in a way that the public is willing to accept can the guiding role of public opinion be better played. From the perspective of the public opinion guidance method of "CCTV News" Weibo in the early stage of the outbreak, the public opinion guidance mechanism that can be used for reference can be summed up to the following two points: in terms of content, the instant release of authoritative information; in the form of content, close to the user's media use habits. The rapid development of network technology has reconstructed a new ecological environment of public opinion, but no matter how it changes, the importance of mainstream media to guide news and public opinion will never change. The practice of "CCTV News" Weibo in the public opinion guidance during the COVID-19 shows that when facing the current network public opinion pattern, the mainstream media should actively explore the rules of network news communication and public opinion guidance, and improve their public opinion guidance working mechanism from the communication content and form. In the new media environment of "all voices shouting", the mainstream media should be the main force of public opinion guidance and defend the main position of public opinion guidance. In the future, the updated iteration of media technology may be faster and more complex. Mainstream media need to pay more attention to the construction and innovation of communication means to create a new mainstream media and do a good job of public opinion guidance.

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