

# Vlog Characteristics Analysis in the Special Period: Take “Wuhan Vlog” as an Example

Jinxuan, Zhao

Department of Journalism and communication, Northwestern University, Xi'an, 710075, China

2904758145@qq.com

## ABSTRACT

In order to curb the spread of New Coronary Pneumonia (COVID-19), Wuhan, China announced the closure of the city on January 23, 2020. With the continuous efforts of the people throughout the country, the epidemic situation gradually improved, Wuhan announced the lifting of the closure of the city on April 8, 2020. During the 76-day closure, citizens who stayed in Wuhan learned about Wuhan from their perspective through a vlog. The researchers searched for “Wuhan vlog” on the video website bilibili (hereinafter referred to as “station B”) as a keyword, and classified and analyzed the top 100 views, so as to clarify the classification and characteristics of vlog in this special period. In this special environment, vlog gives people more choices, perspectives and channels of expression. Traditional media supplements and updates relevant information in Wuhan in a timely manner through cooperation with new media bloggers. vlog is displayed through the perspective of ordinary people rather than official discourse, which is more easily accepted by the audience.

**Keywords:** Vlog, Wuhan, COVID-19, Opinion Leader, Empathy Comfort

## 1. Introduction

Due to the severe impact of the epidemic, Wuhan, China announced that city bus, subway, ferry, and long-distance passenger transportation in Wuhan would be suspended from 10:00 on January 23; citizens should not leave Wuhan without special reasons; airports and railway stations and other passes leaving Wuhan were closed; the recovery time would be announced separately. [1] After the situation in Wuhan improved significantly, Wuhan announced the lifting of the closure of the city on April 8, 2020. From January 23 to April 8, in the 76-day closure of the city, some people in Wuhan used vlogs to record their lives after the closure.

### 1.1. Concept of COVID-19

New coronavirus pneumonia is a disease caused by a new type of coronavirus infection, which is highly contagious and generally susceptible to the population. The clinical symptoms are mainly fever, dry cough, and fatigue, and severe cases are complicated by acute respiratory distress syndrome. On January 20, 2020, China included it as a Class B infectious disease and managed it as a Class A infectious disease. [2] Most of the early admission cases have a history of exposure to the South China Seafood Market in Wuhan. According to the epidemiological survey of the patients with the disease, it has been confirmed that the disease can be passed from person to person and is highly contagious. The disease is mainly manifested by fever, fatigue, and dry cough, and a few patients are accompanied by nasal congestion, runny nose, and diarrhea.

### 1.2. Concepts and characteristics of vlog

vlog is short for video blog. It is a video form, which refers to a video diary that integrates text, images, and audio, and can be personalized and show the daily life of the creator after beautification through editing. With the continuous development of the Internet, people's daily life has evolved from a diary form using paper and pen to a form using text pictures on social networks. In recent years, with the popularity of short video, the form of video diary has gradually become popular. Since 2016, Vlog's search index has risen rapidly, rising from 158 searches per week in April 2016 to more than 17.26 million queries in the whole year of 2019.

Unlike the general form of diary, vlog emphasizes personalization. Through the lens of communicators and the mobile screens of receivers, the two realize a virtual “face-to-face communication” in the co-built social space. [3] In addition, vlog has a certain uniqueness. The form of vlog recorded by each recorder has a strong personal style, which can be more intuitive. At the same time, vlog is also younger. Because the production of a vlog requires relatively novel products such as shooting software and editing software, the recorder usually tends to be young, making the overall style of vlog more lively and energetic.

In previous related research, The Characteristics and Development Trends of Vlog-From the Perspective of Visual Persuasion elaborated on the characteristics of vlog; Representation and Value: Short Video Production Based on Visual Logic-Taking Vlog as an Example 4 explained and deepened the value significance of vlog. Therefore, the problem studied in this paper is to explore the unique classification and characteristics of vlog presented in the

special period of the closure of Wuhan based on the existing research.

## **2. Classification of videos with “Wuhan vlog” as the key words in Wuhan closure**

As a distribution platform for the trend and culture of the young people in the mobile Internet era, Station B has a dedicated “vlog” channel. During the closure of Wuhan, the content of vlog presented by Station B was rich and colorful. This paper summarizes the videos published in Station B from January 23 to April 8 with “Wuhan vlog” as the keyword, and selects the top 100 videos for analysis. Videos can be divided into the following categories:

### ***2.1. Share the daily life of Wuhan people during the closure period***

During the closure of Wuhan, by searching for the “Wuhan vlog” keyword, the most frequent video appeared was the Wuhan people's sharing of daily life, occupying 58 of the top 100 videos ranked by the number of broadcasts. Since the closure of Wuhan was just the day before the Chinese New Year's Eve, many outlanders working in Wuhan were stranded in Wuhan and could not return home, so they had a “special year” in Wuhan. They recorded their experience of the Chinese New Year alone in the vlog. Unlike the loneliness brought by the imaginary closure of the city, the tone of most vlogs is positive and optimistic, and more conveys the blessing of “Wuhan Fighting”. At the same time, the issue of Wuhan people's supermarket purchases during the closure of the city was also one of the focuses of much attention. After the closure of the city, whether the supply of vegetables and fruits in Wuhan is sufficient, whether the prices have increased significantly, and whether there are service personnel on duty or not have been answered in the vlog shot by Wuhan citizens. In the vlog during the closure of Wuhan, “CCTV News” and “Shipindao” jointly filmed the vlog to specifically answer the external doubts and concerns about the living conditions of Wuhan citizens.

### ***2.2. Construction situation of Huoshenshan / Leishenshan Hospital***

The Huoshenshan/Leishenshan Hospitals, which began construction on January 23, have attracted much attention, and the relevant videos accounted for 17 of the collected samples. Wuhan citizens took advantage of their geographic location to photograph the construction site and record this historic event. Since the hospital did not have enough beds, on January 23, the Wuhan Municipal Government decided to build a hospital dedicated to the treatment of patients with new coronavirus pneumonia, the Huoshenshan Mountain Hospital, following the model of Beijing Xiaotangshan Hospital. In the afternoon of January 2[5], the Wuhan Municipal Government decided to build another

“Xiaotangshan Hospital”-Wuhan Leishenshan Hospital within half a month. Wuhan citizens tracked the construction of the two major hospitals. The video also included some interviews and questions prepared by the citizens themselves, thus showing the construction process of the two major hospitals from the perspective of ordinary Wuhan people, and excavating the stories of the constructors through a special perspective. The people of Wuhan personally expressed their admiration and gratitude as Wuhan people for the constructors of the two major hospitals.

### ***2.3. Assistance of Wuhan residents to medical staffs***

During the closure of Wuhan, the people of Wuhan could not get out, and people from other places could not get in. Every medical worker who is struggling on the front line is the person most admired by the people throughout the country. At the same time, their food guarantee has become a concern of the people of the country. The vlogs of these topics occupy 11 of the top 100 in playback volume. The recorder recorded these heartwarming moments in the form of vlogs, cheered Wuhan, and spread positive energy, giving a sense of security to the people of the country. In addition, vlog also showed that some private shop owners in the catering industry took the initiative to take over food in several hospitals, or there were warm-hearted things such as Wuhan citizens giving away takeaways for hospital doctors and nurses for free ... These important or trivial things all reflect the concern of Wuhan people to medical staffs.

### ***2.4. An exploration to the protective materials of medical staffs***

During the closure of Wuhan, some vlogs documented key hospitals in Wuhan for the treatment of new coronavirus pneumonia. From the perspective of ordinary citizens, the vlog showing the protection of Wuhan medical personnel provides a first-line and effective message to people outside Wuhan. There are 6 such vlogs in the collected samples. During the closure of Wuhan, due to the large number of people diagnosed with new coronavirus pneumonia in Wuhan, other provinces and cities in China sent medical personnel to Wuhan to support Wuhan; ordinary people throughout China also actively donated materials to help Wuhan. The people of Wuhan visited the Wuhan Red Cross, Hubei Provincial Red Cross and other places that received material donations from the perspective of ordinary citizens, and showed their own situation of receiving materials and supporting the designated hospitals through these observations. Most of the vlog content is combined with the explanation of the video blogger himself, so as to effectively exert the supervision power as a citizen. This type of vlog has played a good role in supervising the Wuhan government and has improved the efficiency of government affairs to a certain extent.

## **2.5. Share the process from getting infected to being cured**

During the closure of Wuhan, the video diary at Station B with “Wuhan vlog” as the key word also contained some new coronavirus pneumonia patients who described their entire process from being confirmed to being cured. Such vlogs take 6 seats of the top 100 vlogs sorted by playback volume. As a severely affected area of the new coronavirus pneumonia in the early stage, the number of newly infected people in Wuhan, China, was about 3,000 each day. People with weaker resistance, including the elderly and children, are all susceptible. The content of the Vlog includes early symptoms, diagnosis process (experienced several nucleic acid tests), treatment process and experience after being cured. Such vlogs allow viewers to better understand the experience of patients with new coronavirus pneumonia, find confidence in their successful treatment, and eliminate the fear of new coronavirus pneumonia.

## **2.6. Encourage Wuhan by its citizens**

At the same time, there is another type of vlog that has high traffic on the Internet, and that is a video about cheering and encouraging Wuhan. These videos are sometimes more exciting than the official publicity. Although these videos are relatively rough in editing, they are often more touching through the reality, occupying 2 seats of the samples collected. A representative vlog is that in a certain night in the early days of Wuhan's closure, Wuhan citizens collectively opened their windows and yelled “Wuhan Fighting” to cheer themselves and Wuhan people in the same situation. Netizens recorded this historic scene in the form of vlog.

## **3. Characteristics of videos with “Wuhan vlog” as the key words during the closure period**

### **3.1. Participation of official medias**

In the vlog about the closure of Wuhan, if we sort it in the order of reading from high to low, we can find that 7 of the top 10 vlogs with the most reads are vlogs published by the official media. Most of the vlogs with higher reading volume are published by the official media (CCTV News). Unlike previous vlogs, which are usually sent by ordinary users to record their lives, the officially released vlogs recording the situation of Wuhan during the closure of the city play a more role of “news report”. This type of vlog “dispels rumors” against the online questioning of the living conditions of the Wuhan people during the closure of Wuhan. The official media uses vlog as a means of disseminating information. Compared with simple news

reports, vlog is closer to the daily life of Wuhan people and gives viewers a more real feeling. This is a new form of information dissemination by the official media and a new direction of development.

### **3.2. Leading role of opinion leader**

Opinion leaders are people who actively provide information to people and make subjective judgments, and they are “active members” who often publish information in interpersonal communication and have an impact on the recipient. Opinion leaders exist in the social networks of people's lives and are distributed in various groups. In addition to the vlogs produced by official professionals, some vlog bloggers in Wuhan, which have fan bases in Wuhan, also follow the heat, and use their own unique perspective to film the sealed Wuhan, so that they have more new fans. In the meanwhile, these vlog bloggers play the leading role and express their viewpoints through vlog. For instance, the vlog blogger “Student Lin Chen” who has already millions of fans at Station b is in the first batch of vlog bloggers filming the sealed Wuhan. His vlog Wuhan UP Real Image, 24 Hours After Closure, The Price, Transportation and Living Status of Wuhan “Empty” City shows a hero city of Wuhan, great Wuhan people and so on. Under the role of the opinion leaders, there are many comments such as “Wuhan Fighting”, “Wuhan is a hero city”, and “great Wuhan people” on the vlog. Video bloggers who have many fans themselves like “Wuhan vlog” also played the same role, so that under the keyword search of the keyword “Wuhan vlog”, positive energy videos occupy an absolute dominant position.

### **3.3. Transmit positive energy**

In the research sample, there are 98 videos that convey the “positive energy” viewpoint. Although the content of vlog expressions in different categories is different, the central idea is to have full confidence in Wuhan. For instance, “Student Lin Chen” mentioned in his vlog: Wuhan UP Real Image, 2[4] Hours After Closure, The Price, Transportation and Living Status of Wuhan “Empty” City: “Everyone wants to make the city better. Special thanks to those who are still holding their posts to allow the city to function properly, especially the most frontline doctors. Waiting for everyone to get better, see you in spring and Happy New Year!” Although what is recorded in the vlog is daily life, there is no straightforward expression of confidence in Wuhan, but every shot shows that there is hope everywhere. Despite being in a state of closure, Wuhan is developing in every direction. From the national government's emphasis on the new coronavirus pneumonia, to the efforts of every ordinary person, these are the capital that makes vlog optimistic. At the same time, in the vlog, the positive energy views conveyed by the video bloggers also lead the audience to view the closure of Wuhan with a positive attitude, which is conducive to actively fighting the new coronavirus

pneumonia across the country.

### **3.4. Empathy comfort role is displayed**

The resonance effect indicates that the closer the media content is to the actual life experience of the audience, or the closer it is to personal thoughts or cognition, the stronger the effect of culture. What vlog shows is daily life scenes such as opening the box for evaluation, sharing of useful things, teaching the makeup process, cooking and traveling. This kind of display can let the audience walk between the real and the virtual, with a high degree of “performance of the performance” nature. When watching videos, the time and space of the audience are unified and integrated. This sense of synchronization of the scene allows the audience to obtain “absent presence” companionship, “friend-like experience”, but also allows the audience to enter the real life space of others, peep into the real life of others, and expand the imagination of the scene of others : “imagine what would happen if you also had the lifestyle like them.” During the closure of Wuhan, even if people outside Wuhan could not experience the Wuhan people’s feelings during the closure, vlog could achieve a certain amount of “empathy”, so that the audience can better understand the strong and optimistic spirit of the Wuhan people.

### **3.5. Hegemonic interpretation dominates**

Hegemonic interpretation means that the audience interprets the information according to the preset meaning of the coder. The meaning of encoding is exactly the same as the meaning obtained during decoding. [6]For the vlog filmed during the closure of Wuhan, judging from the comments of the audience and the content of the barrage released by the audience, the emotions of the audience basically reflect the main purpose of vlog. In any type of vlog in the above classification, since the vlog during the closure of Wuhan is mainly based on positive energy content, the topics of comments and barrage are mainly refueling and cheering, the most common is “Wuhan Fighting”. The consistency of the barrage and comments with the vlog theme is a typical hegemonic interpretation, and it also reflects the audience's recognition of the content of the vlog filmed by the Wuhan people during the closure of the city.

## **4. Conclusion**

From January 23 to April 8, 2020, Wuhan was in an unprecedented closed state since the founding of New China, but through analysis of the samples, it can be found that the classification and characteristics of vlogs shot by Wuhan citizens during this period are full of positive energy And can bring people hope. Unlike the previous vlogs, opinion leaders played a great role in the vlogs during the closure of Wuhan. At the same time, the intervention of the official media kept the overall vlog tone in a category that can bring

positive energy to people. The types of vlogs filmed during the closure of Wuhan are rich and diverse, which more attracts viewers to understand the life of ordinary citizens in Wuhan during the closure of the city, thus turning their attention to the epidemic from a single form of news to a form of video diary. The empathy effect is even stronger. In this special state and environment, vlog gives people more choices, perspectives and channels of expression, and will supplement and update relevant information of Wuhan in a timely manner through the cooperation of traditional media with new media bloggers. From the perspective of ordinary people rather than official discourse, vlog is easier for audiences to accept.

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