



Research on the Communication Effect of News Media Current Affairs Commentary on WeChat Official Account of *the Paper*

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Abstract. The quantitative study mainly researches the impact of news and current affairs comments reported in the WeChat official account of *The Paper* on the communication effect of audience groups. Interviews with the followers who had focused on the online community of *The Paper* were conducted for collecting rich data. The production of questionnaires needed for the study was used to analyze the relevant data and to investigate the value and influence that the audience obtains from *The Paper* news. According to results and discussion, this research found that there are still many problems and challenges in the new media industry. In the change of traditional media thinking and the development of new media, the communication effect of news media is still unattractive in terms of content language and form, the establishment of user thinking between the news industry and the audience is blocked, and the comprehensive of media are biased, and the innovation of the news industry is insufficient. In this regard, this study puts forward improvement ideas and measures for the advantages and weaknesses of *The Paper* news communication effect. To strengthen the basic quality of the news media as the fundamental, the research emphasizes to close the distance between the public and the media and promote the reform and innovation of news and current affairs commentary so as to further enhance the publicity and influence of the news media industry.

Keywords: News commentary · New media dissemination · The Paper

1 Introduction

WeChat is the most commonly used and popular social application in China, whose the total number of users is more than 900 million people until 2022. As an essential part of the WeChat ecosystem, the WeChat public account has even attracted more than 80% of WeChat users to subscribe. With the we-media activity platform subordinated to WeChat application launched by Tencent enterprise in 2012, WeChat public account has realized all-round communication and interaction between developers and specific groups by means of text, pictures, voice and video. In the terms of function, WeChat

public account not only forms a mainstream online and offline WeChat interactive marketing way by launching cooperative promotion business for celebrities, governments, media, enterprises and other institutions, but also a good platform to focus on in-depth content and discuss opinions and public opinions. Additionally, WeChat public platform is mainly divided into two types about subscription account and service account that help users convenient and efficiently consult related news events and differentiated push news media accounts according to the diversified habits and preferences of users. Therefore, in the process of significant development and sustainable innovation of WeChat public platform, it has become one of the new channels to gather Internet mainstream emerging media.

As the new media industry gradually becomes the dominant in the new era, Shanghai Press Group launched new media products such as The Paper in 2013 and was officially established in 2014. At the same time, it entered the WeChat public account platform as well. The Paper is an all-media news and information platform based on original news combining with Internet technology innovation and news value inheritance. To be a model and pioneer in the new media environment, it has more than 400 journalists and editors who mainly report news through new all-media communication methods such as text, video, VR and animation. Compared with other news media, The Paper not only adopts trenchant and sarcasm writing language and style, but also insists on creating original works instead of the integration of content. Besides, The Paper takes advantage of its own exclusive news clues and authoritative data resources to attach importance to the in-depth excavation behind the events, because of which produces popular and high-quality works to occupy a place in the news new media market. The news WeChat public platform of The Paper still carries out its unique “The Paper” style, resulting in its public account in the field of news also plays an important role. According to the 2018 ranking of China’s Top 500 WeChat public accounts, the WeChat public account of The Paper ranked 16th with 2.6 billion views and 1.44 million likes. In addition, the WeChat official account of The Paper ranked 18th among the Top 30 accounts that read the most 10w + articles in 2021, which the number of 10w + articles reached 1,399 and the number of published articles reached 6,720 every month.

2 Literature Review

With the Internet developing rapidly, new media has stepped into the public horizon. As one of the representatives of new media, WeChat public platform has greatly changed people’s way of life and the way of information dissemination. Additionally, as one of the most popular social information platforms at present, WeChat public platform is also evolving into a major business platform, which has brought subversive changes to the behavior of marketing. According to Dao Xin’s research, he emphasized that traditional media require to take breakthrough innovation to realize the transformation of news products by learning from paper news of The Paper innovation policy, and integrated development to achieve a broad market and customer groups [1]. Jian Cao and both of Jianu Bi and Yan Mei also proposed that only aggregation communication, digital transformation can promote the positive development of political news media [2, 3].

Instead of highlighting the advantages and influence of new media in technology, Yang Lei analyzed that the establishment of good user thinking played a vital role in

the dissemination of current political news. Only by exploring innovative news content and communication mode according to the diverse and personalized requirements of different groups in the society can the political news media gain a higher recognition of the audience [4]. As Xijin Han and Zhenkun Hao pointed out, the society in the new era focus on the authenticity and critical thinking of news content reports, because of which is necessary to improve the media quality of media staff to satisfy the communication effect of new media news [5].

However, through the study of We-media platform of the same type on WeChat public platform, it is found that although new media is a phenomenon product influenced by cultural communication power, it still has inevitable and non-negligible defects to be remedied [6, 7]. Therefore, organically combining traditional media with new media and making good use of modern network technology and information platforms are the most effective ways to rapidly adapt to and develop the We-media [8–10].

Even though these studies and theories above help people learn about some details and background information about the WeChat public account, there are still some research gaps. In the meanwhile, the research find that few scholars have paid close attention on the field of the communication effect of news media commentary on current affairs. Therefore, the purpose is to analyze the value and influence of social news comments on the society by studying the communication effect of the WeChat official account of The Paper. Besides, the research also guides the authors and developers of WeChat public accounts comprehensively and profoundly understand the concern direction and interest types of the masses on social news, so as to promote the long-term development of WeChat public accounts. In order to achieve the expected purpose of this study and put the significance of this study into practice, the research will conduct a questionnaire survey on the communication effect of articles published on the WeChat public account of The Paper to the audience and will make a specific analysis of the obtained data.

3 Methodology

The main purpose of the study is the extent and effect of media opinions and comments on news events in the content reported by news media. Taking The Paper as the research example, it adopts the methodology of quantitative research based on the investigation of the effects exerted by the media on the audience. The study uses online survey and research to obtain data through mathematical tools and conduct a large number of data analysis.

During the whole process of quantitative research, in order to acquire more intuitive and objective data and results, the researcher chooses to make a questionnaire for all ages and all classes of people to conduct a survey as the primary data of this social research. First of all, the research objects are selected for users in the WeChat public platform The Paper community. As the followers or users of The Paper, such people have paid attention to the news media in the short or long term. They not only possess a certain degree of understanding of the author and writing style of the news media account, but also can offer convincing evaluation and suggestions on the research. Secondly, in aspects of the instruments for making the questionnaire, the researcher used the questionnaire

Star platform to complete and improve four steps of question setting: answer order arrangement, format determination and typesetting, and drafting. Before making the specific questions of the questionnaire, the researcher collected relevant information in advance, especially for a large number of reader comments and feedback information from The Paper news section of major websites and platforms. As a consequence, starting from the background of the audience and the problems commonly faced, the framework of the questionnaire is ought to be well grasped and even control the orientation trend of the survey results. After the communication and negotiation with the developers and staff of The Paper community, the questionnaire was eventually released and placed in The Paper community platform for the audience to complete. The questionnaires were released for seven days from July 29 to August 3. Moreover, a total of 193 questionnaires were collected from each user, two of which showed obvious regular answers, and one of which only chose the same option for all answers. Therefore, there are 190 valid questionnaires for this study, and the remaining three are invalid questionnaires.

4 Results

According to a survey of The Paper's impact value and significance on audience groups, there were 190 participants, among whom the gender ratio was quite different, with females accounting for about 63%. It also can be seen from the age group of the participants in this research that the age group who follow the official WeChat account of The Paper mainly focus on the young people between 18 and 25 years old, occupying nearly 70%. The figure is more than 7 times that of the people aged 35–45 and over 45 years old, both of which have the number of 19 people. Those aged under 18 and 25 to 35 had the lowest numbers, with 3 and 16, respectively. In the question whether the use and reading of The Paper increased attention to the news, approvers and opponents were equally divided. The statistics showed that about 50% of people said there was no significant change in the effect of the use of The Paper on news attention. In the remaining 50% of the population, the percentage of people who take a negative attitude was only about 4% higher than others. In terms of the credibility of The Paper, approximately 73% of its reports are trusted and recognized by the public. Statistics illustrated that the vast majority of people appreciate the timeliness of The Paper, making up 54%, which was followed by authenticity and objectivity. The number of authenticity is similar to that of objectivity, at 15%. Next came the depth of news, exploring the wealth of exclusive content, which represented 10%. The factor people least chose was the comprehensiveness of the information as low as just 6%. By contrast, of the only 51 people who believed The Paper was unreliable and untrustworthy, the lack of comprehensiveness was the crucial reason, with about 30 people supporting. There is not a great deal of difference in the number of favours for other reasons, such as falsity, subjective one-sidedness and superficial content. According to The Paper survey of diversified news types and the interests of audience groups, social news ranked first, accounting for 40% of the total. Entertainment news ranked second with less than 25%, three times as many as financial and political news. Of the remaining two types of news, military news and sports news are very different, and more people are interested in sports events. Ultimately, the effect of the content produced in The Paper on the audience starts from four questions. First,

whether people have access to the information, data and opinions they need. About 50% of them chose a neutral attitude, and nearly 40% of them gained positive influence from The Paper news. Moreover, whether people's personal judgment will be affected by it. The most majority of people still retain their judgment, occupying 70%. And the similarity between the affected and the unaffected comes from the fact that they are the same. Then, whether people can get thinking and value. In addition to the 30% people who still did not comment, two out of five people supported this view. In the end, whether people can act or respond to their call or call. The number of people who are neutral is the same as the number who are in favour. Only 10% disagreed.

5 Discussion

Firstly, the results indicate that although the reports of The Paper WeChat public account provide certain information value for the audience, especially in terms of social news resources, they do not greatly help to increase people's attention to news. With the continuous increase of traditional news information acquisition channels, the new media which is based on network communication and information technology have fundamentally changed the way of information dissemination. The expression form of news reports has also evolved from text to combination of text and picture to video and even to short video. The breaking down of temporal and spatial boundaries of information sharing and dissemination has enabled the public to have access to news updates at any time and place. Nowadays, the popular algorithmic recommendation streaming media and algorithmic reading habit recommendation provide the masses with extensive and personalized resources and needs in the enormous era. However, at the same time, the most original and unique sense of weight of news is also being carved up and eroded by "we media" appearing into the public vision, which leads to the great reduction of people's attention to news in all aspects of society. On the one hand, despite the current global wave of scientific and technological new media, the expression system in the actual news gathering and editing and reporting has not completed the transformation and innovation. As creators of news reports, the vast majority of new media, especially for "we media" practitioners, do not systematically and officially express their views and contents clearly. Even in style creation and form of propaganda, the traditional media thinking has not been really implemented and improved. Taking political news content as a typical example, its blunt language and backward and vulgar propaganda methods seriously lack appeal to the social masses. On the other hand, journalists have not established good user thinking in the process of news dissemination, which generates the lag in the connection and interaction between communicators and audiences. In this society where people have the opportunity to speak out, anyone has the right to express their opinion and comment on the information posted. The people have not only become the receivers of news information, but also the selectors and disseminators of news information. It is through the discussion of the masses that journalists can more accurately grasp the thinking and demand direction of the masses in the current society. Therefore, how to communicate peacefully and efficiently with the masses has become an important condition and key factor to improve the effect of news communication. In addition to establishing a good communication bridge with the audience and triggering

the resonance of the audience, strengthening the interaction with the masses and audience adhesion is conducive to narrowing and close the distance between news and people. While constantly encouraging and promoting mass participation and recognition, it is more conducive to enhancing the influence and credibility of positive news and public opinion to maximize the effect of news communication.

In addition, it can be concluded from the results of audience's credibility in the news content of The Paper that The Paper's WeChat public platform, as a major platform for news media to comment on current affairs, has obvious timeliness advantage in the dissemination effect of news reports. The rapid development of technology not only drives the rise of the Internet, but also plays a huge role in instantaneous communication in the news industry. Timeliness requires the news media to react immediately after the occurrence of news events and make them public before the public knows the contents of the events. Therefore, news timeliness is as vital as life for the news media industry and society. However, excessive pursuit of timeliness tends to ignore the impact of other important factors that make up news. According to the research results, the lack of comprehensive information is a major reason for people's lack of confidence in the content of The Paper. The apparent manifestation of insufficient comprehensive news information lies in information fragmentation. In the field of news, information fragmentation is mainly divided into two aspects: the fragmentation of reporting forms and the fragmentation of news events. Journalists are not able to sort out and integrate all kinds of resources obtained in the first time, nor can they complete the report from an objective and holistic perspective, making it short and shallow. Under this negative development trend for a long time, the news industry seriously leads to the repeated reversal of news events and the continuous deconstruction of news authority. With the loss of authenticity and credibility of news, both the public and the news media have fallen deeply into the trap of information cocoon. In order to avoid the disadvantages caused by excessive pursuit of news timeliness, the joint society and the news industry can jointly take the following two measures. First, close and promote the contact and interaction between media platforms. Due to the diversification of the communication channels of news media, exchanges and learning on various platforms can be promoted, and mutual supervision can be achieved to ensure a certain value of news reports. Second, improve the quality of news media practitioners and cultivate interdisciplinary talents in journalism and communication. As a journalist, it is not only required to have comprehensive quality in professional skills, such as writing, interview, photography, editing, video production and other communication skills in one, but also need to have a full sense of social responsibility and high ideological understanding. Therefore, in the preparation and process of disseminating news, journalists have the ability to make full use of resources while ensuring timeliness, so as to not only implement the authenticity and accuracy of events, but also complete in-depth and dialectical commentary on current affairs.

Eventually, the current affairs commentary content of The Paper news has a certain degree of social guidance and influence on the audience. News is an effective medium of communication between human beings and society. In news communication, it is not only an important channel and source for the masses to obtain event information, but also can subtly share social values to guide people's way of thinking and even behavior.

The following mainly elaborates the reasons and effects of news content on people from two aspects. From the perspective of the form of news reports, news media use reports to objectively and justly present social events to the public and serve as a window to understand the society and the world. However, with the development of human society and interpersonal relations complicated, subjective news content, ambiguous language to gain traffic, invasion of social public privacy and other cases of untrue news have emerged in endlessly, leading to the gradual loss of realistic value and social efficacy of news reports, it is no longer completely positive. From the perspective of the educational significance of news content, under the development of the modern network, news communication uses the network to play its educational function and expand its propaganda to improve the overall quality of the masses, especially for the youth group. However, because of the long-term influence of exam-oriented education and the long-term imprisonment of traditional thinking, people are lack of the ability of critical and innovative learning, unable to judge and absorb the positive content of news comments, and finally form the current wave of radical and biased negative public opinion. Therefore, in order to improve the effect of news communication, it is the long-term key to improve the industry standards and norms of network news media. In the meanwhile, journalists are supposed to always make breakthroughs and innovations to drive people's thinking on the right track.

6 Conclusion

The main purpose of the present study was to determine the impact of new media news and current affairs comments on the social masses, taking The Paper WeChat public account as a typical instance of the communication effect research. Based on these results of the survey, the main conclusion can be summarized as follows. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this research is that news media provide the masses with abundantly social information resources but do not enhance the news attention. The second major finding is that timeliness is an essential factor to make people believe and trust the content of news reports. At last, thinking and behavior of the masses are influenced by the content and opinions in the current news commentary. In general, the study suggests that the We-media news industry still need to improve professional skills and quality of the journalist and cultivate a broad vision to actively build a solid bridge with the audience. Externally, it is required to grasp the wind vane of the overall development of the industry and give full play to mainstream values and positive communication effects. Only in this way can more authentic, objective and interesting news products be created to attract the masses, which enhance the dissemination effect and influence value of the current news.

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