

Exploring the Role of Short Video Platforms in Guiding Public Opinion in the New Media Era

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Abstract:

With the rapid development of short video platforms, they are gradually changing the way information is disseminated and public opinion is guided. To explore the role of short videos in guiding public opinion, this study mainly analyzes data from third-party data platforms and short video media accounts to reveal the mechanism of short videos on the evolution of public opinion. A detailed statistical analysis of the content of relevant videos on the short video platform was conducted, including the number of video views, the number of comments, and their changing trends; An in-depth analysis was conducted on the videos and comments released by self-media and mainstream media. Through content analysis, the study evaluated the communication characteristics of these media in guiding public opinion, including the selective dissemination of information, emotional tendencies, and the shaping of public cognition. The research results show that short video platforms play a significant role in guiding public opinion, and their dissemination characteristics and content selection have a profound impact on the formation and development of public opinion. In particular, self-media and mainstream media play a key role in guiding public opinion. They play a leading role in shaping public opinion through different communication strategies and content presentation.

Keywords: Evolution of public opinion, short video platform, media orientation.

1. Introduction

This study focuses on the impact of short video platforms on public opinion in the new media era and further understands how short video platforms guide public opinion in events. With the increasing development of the new media era, the emergence of various social media platforms such as Douyin and Kuaishou has brought fundamental changes to people's interaction mode, information-sharing mode, and expression of opinions [1]. This study is of great significance for analyzing the impact of social public opinion and providing effective suggestions for public opinion management. Given the reversal of online public opinion in recent years, understanding the specific role of short video platforms in guiding public opinion will help analyze the impact of social public opinion and provide a reference for public opinion management. Using these public opinion data can help understand the emotional behavior patterns of the public, provide support for the analysis of public opinion reversal phenomena and the formulation of response strategies, and effectively monitor the dynamic changes of cyberspace activities and the real environment [2]. It is also of great significance to correctly guide public opinion and strengthen the guiding role of news [3].

This study mainly focuses on two aspects: data analysis of short video platforms and the evolution of public opinion. How did the short video platform guide public opinion in this incident and explore the specific guidance methods and effects. Obtain short video platform data related to the incident through a third-party data platform, including video data, video content, playback volume, number of comments, comment content, etc. Review the discussion of the incident on the short video platform at different time points, collect the views of the public, self-media, and mainstream media at different times, and analyze the role played by the public, self-media, and mainstream media in the development of the incident. The literature analysis method was used to search and read relevant materials and documents [4]. The advantage of this method is that it can systematically summarize existing research results and conduct comprehensive analysis in combination with actual data. This method helps to fully understand the role of short video platforms in guiding public opinion and how different information sources influence each other, thus providing a solid foundation for in-depth research. The ultimate research goal of this study is to reveal the specific methods and effects of short video platforms in guiding public opinion and to provide data support and

theoretical basis for public opinion management and policy making. To achieve this goal, the study conducted data collection and analysis, compared the changes in content on short video platforms and their impact on public opinion, and summarized the role and influence of self-media and mainstream media in the development of events.

2. Research Methods

This study obtains short video platform data related to the incident through a third-party data platform, including the video date, collects the release time of videos related to the incident, and uses this to analyze the nodes of public opinion change. Classify and analyze relevant video content to understand the different impacts of various types of videos released by mainstream media and self-media on the direction of public opinion. Count the number of views of relevant videos to assess their reach and audience size. Count the number of comments under relevant videos as an indicator of public participation and attention.

In order to comprehensively analyze public opinion on hot events at different time points on major short video platforms, this study will first collect opinions from the public, self-media and mainstream media at different stages of the events. Use keyword search method to select user comments related to hot events from the short video platform. Filter out videos with high interaction volume from related videos for content analysis, and extract opinions from popular comments under the videos. Analyze public opinion on events in stages in order to observe the changing trends of opinions.

Among the self-media accounts that publish relevant content, media with high activity are selected for analysis to ensure that the account has considerable dissemination of the event and plays a guiding role in public opinion. Analyze the videos released at different stages by self-media accounts involved in hot events, and extract opinions from the comments at different stages under the videos released by the accounts. According to the stage of development of the event, the opinions released by major self-media are analyzed and sorted out. Conduct content analysis on relevant videos and comments released by officially certified

mainstream media on short video platforms to ensure that the collected samples cover different stages of the development of events in order to analyze the dissemination characteristics of mainstream media and their impact on public opinion guidance.

3. Case Analysis

3.1 Event Overview

On February 16, 2024, a fashion designer posted a video on multiple short video platforms, saying that he received two winter vacation homework books for first graders in a restaurant in Country F and decided to take them back to Country C to find the owner. The video quickly sparked discussion and became a hot topic on multiple platforms. On February 17, a netizen who claimed to be the uncle of the owner of the phone said on Douyin that his nephew was attending a primary school in J, but later many schools with the same name denied having such a student. On February 19, a fashion designer released another video, saying that he had contacted the owner's mother, but the other party was unwilling to disclose more information. Afterward, the account claiming to be the uncle of the owner was investigated and shut down, and the account operator was given an administrative penalty. On April 12, the Public Security Bureau announced that the incident was fabricated, imposed administrative penalties on the fashion designer and the company involved, and demanded a public apology. Multiple platforms subsequently banned the fashion designer's account. Investigations confirmed that there was no record of the primary school student leaving the country, confirming that the video was suspected of being a fabrication.

3.2 Analysis of Public Opinion Orientation

Figure 1 shows the keyword search index of the "F Country Lost Homework" incident. The keyword search volume of the short video platform is used to show the changes in online public opinion about the incident, and the development of online public opinion is divided into stages based on the changes in the broken line of the chart.

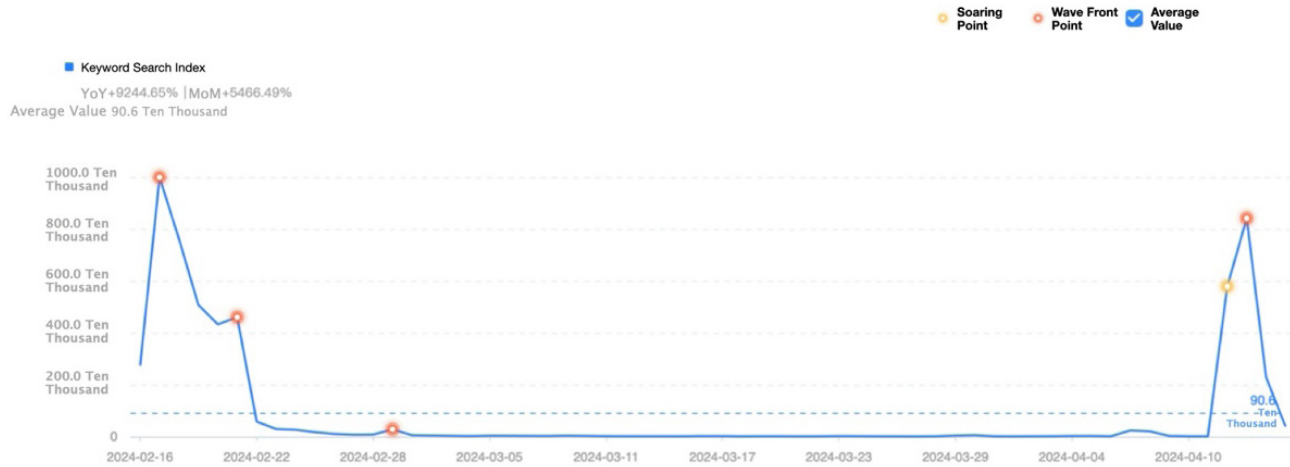


Fig. 1 Keyword search index.

According to the table and in combination with actual conditions, the development of online public opinion from February 16 to April 14 is divided into four stages, namely February 16 as the first stage, February 17-February 18 as the second stage, February 19-April 11 as the third stage, and April 12-April 14 as the fourth stage.

The first stage was the fermentation of public opinion. A fashion designer quickly attracted widespread attention by releasing a video, making the incident a hot topic on major short video platforms. Due to the bizarre nature of the incident and its reposting by some mainstream media, it attracted a lot of attention and discussion from the public. At this stage, public opinion focused on curiosity about the incident, and the initial fermentation of public opinion began.

The second stage was the peak of public opinion. A netizen who claimed to be the uncle of the owner posted a video, which caused the incident to attract more attention and discussion, thereby giving rise to more accounts

claiming to be relatives of the owner to post related videos and information. With the denials from many schools, public opinion reached its peak.

The third stage was the decline of public opinion. A fashion designer released the video again and said that the mother of the owner was unwilling to disclose more information to end the incident. Although this response aroused doubts from some people, as the account of the person claiming to be the uncle of the owner was shut down, the public opinion on the incident began to gradually subside. The fourth stage was the second wave of the craze. The Public Security Bureau announced that the incident was artificially fabricated and imposed administrative penalties on the fashion designer and company involved. Multiple short video platforms banned the fashion designer's account. The news once again sparked widespread discussion on the Internet, and public opinion reached a peak again. People's focus shifted from the incident itself to the discussion and condemnation of online rumors.

Table 1. Keywords at different stages of the event

| Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 | Phase 4 |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Vacation homework | Circle of friends | Vacation homework | Vacation homework |
| Friend circle | Vacation homework | Denied | Staged photo |
| Return to home | Fashion designer | Staged | Punishment |
| Have you found it | Uncle | Internet celebrity | The person involved |
| Children | Response | Uncle | Apology |
| Fashion designer | Denial | Incident | Police report |
| Brought back | Class teacher | Response | Uncle |

According to the changes in the keywords in Table 1, it can be found that public opinion is constantly changing with the development of events, and the questioning views are also increasing as the events progress. The key-

words in the first phase were mainly neutral words such as "vacation homework", "circle of friends", and "have you found it?" Public opinion mainly focuses on curiosity about the event itself and expectations about the direction

of the event. At this stage, public opinion on the event is generally positive. The keywords in the second phase are still mainly neutral words such as “circle of friends”, “uncle”, “fashion designer”, etc., but there are also many questioning and negative words such as “denial”. The focus of public opinion has shifted to the authenticity of accounts such as uncles who claim to be relatives of the owner. Some netizens have also begun to question the truth of the incident, for example, questioning whether the accounts of uncles and other relatives are using this as a means of hype. At this stage, public opinion was generally negative, and the public’s attitude towards the incident had changed at this stage. In the third stage, the keywords have shifted to “denial”, “staged”, “response”, etc., and the public’s focus is on the revelation and clarification of new information, such as the blocking of the accounts of relatives such as uncles, and the subsequent response of fashion designers. During this phase, new information is constantly disclosed, and people’s attitudes towards public opinion are constantly changing as a result. The keywords in the fourth stage are concentrated on words such as “staged”, “punishment” and “apology”, and the public focuses on the subsequent handling of the incident, such as paying attention to the handling results of the people involved. At this stage, public opinion on the incident also changes with the development of the incident.

3.3 The Influence of Public Opinion

Combining Figure 1 and Table 1, the fashion designer responded to the first, third, and fourth stages of the incident, and his response can be divided into three parts according to the date of the incident. In the first part, the fashion designer released a video to find the owner, which led to the initial public opinion fermentation. At this moment, the public had a positive attitude towards the video and eagerly looked forward to the subsequent development of the incident; In the second part, the account claimed that the incident was over, and as the account claimed to be the uncle of the owner was investigated and shut down, some people began to question the incident, while there were still people who believed in the authenticity of the incident and gave corresponding support; In the third part, the account released an apology video, confirming that the video was suspected of fabricating rumors, and the public’s doubts and condemnations gradually became dominant.

Combined with Figure 1 and Table 1 as well as the collected mainstream media and self-media reports on the incident, one continues to explore the impact of the content released by mainstream media and self-media on public opinion guidance. In the first stage, a fashion designer quickly attracted widespread attention by releasing a vid-

eo, making the incident a hot topic on major short video platforms. Some mainstream media reported the incident as light-hearted social news. At this stage, public opinion on the incident was positive; In the second stage, a netizen who claimed to be the uncle of the owner posted a video, which attracted more attention and discussion to the incident, and more self-media also released relevant information about the incident. During this stage, the public receives information from multiple sources and begins to question some self-media; In the third stage, a fashion designer released the video again and said that the owner’s mother was unwilling to disclose more information to end the incident. The account of the person claiming to be the owner’s uncle was also shut down. During this phase, new information is constantly being disclosed, and as a result, public opinion on the incident is constantly changing, with the majority of public opinion on the incident being negative. In the fourth stage, the Public Security Bureau announced that the incident was fabricated and banned the fashion designer’s account through multiple short videos. The mainstream media quickly followed up and reported the official investigation results, and conducted comprehensive reflection and commentary on the incident. The self-media dug deep into the truth behind the incident and exposed the fraudulent behavior of the designer and related personnel. During this stage, the public’s attitude towards the incident was negative.

Mainstream media are more cautious in their dissemination, focusing on objective descriptions of events, maintaining an objective public opinion stance, and with little change in emotional attitudes [5]. When people watch this media, they shift from an “entertainment” mentality to an “information” mentality [6]. However, some mainstream media still lack professionalism, which will increase the authority and credibility of the incident in terms of its influence on public opinion. Self-media responds more quickly in communication and has diverse content forms, but the authenticity and accuracy of information are difficult to guarantee and can easily cause excessive emotionality and misleading.

4. Discussion

Based on the above analysis of the “F Country Lost Homework” incident, user-generated content (UGC) encouraged on short video platforms plays a significant role in guiding public opinion [7]. Self-media and mainstream media have different influences on public opinion, and each has its advantages in information dissemination and public opinion guidance. We-media quickly ignites public opinion through fast and emotional reporting, while mainstream media effectively guides public sentiment through

authoritative and objective reporting. Based on the above analysis, the following suggestions are given.

First of all, relevant departments need to improve the supervision mechanism of short video platforms, and it is essential to establish an indicator system for early warning of online public opinion on major emergencies composed of relevant indicators [8]. Major short video platforms should make full use of big data and artificial intelligence technology to analyze public opinion events, actively update relevant technologies, and improve the regulatory mechanisms of their platforms [9]. When hot events occur, it is necessary to promptly discover and curb the spread of false information and prevent and eliminate the spread of public opinion guided by false information.

Secondly, improve the media literacy of the public [10]. Promote online quality education. The rapid transmission of massive amounts of information is a characteristic of the new media era. How to efficiently obtain information and distinguish the authenticity of information is a compulsory course in the new media era. Use the currently popular short video platform to carry out social publicity on media literacy among the whole nation and popularize the basic knowledge on the correct use of media and distinguishing the authenticity of information. During hot events, official media should follow developments promptly and provide correct guidance to help the public view changes in public opinion rationally.

Finally, improve the professionalism of mainstream media and self-media. Establish an online training mechanism for self-media to improve the professional quality and professional ethics of self-media creators and reduce the situation of self-media collectively spreading false information. Mainstream media should regularly carry out professional training for operational personnel within their systems. Based on improving their professional qualities and professional ethics, they should cultivate the ability to make keen news judgments, be able to quickly identify potential public opinion risks in hot events and exert the influence of mainstream media themselves to correctly guide the public. Formulate relevant media industry standards, improve the content review mechanism of short video platforms, and ensure the authenticity and accuracy of information released by various media.

5. Conclusion

The result of this study is that short video platforms play a significant role in guiding public opinion. By analyzing the data, it is found that these platforms can have a profound impact on public opinion through content selection, communication strategies and interactive mechanisms. Specifically, the topic setting, emotional tendency and

information dissemination frequency of short video platforms in specific events play a key role in the formation and evolution of public opinion. Analysis shows that short video platforms can not only quickly amplify specific viewpoints, but also further strengthen public opinion guidance through interactions in the comment area. The research further concluded that short video platforms can effectively guide public opinion and play an important role in the evolution of public opinion through precise content recommendations and user interaction mechanisms. We-media and mainstream media also played a key role in this process. We-media provided multiple information through quick response and diverse perspectives, while mainstream media influenced public cognition and emotions through authority and stability. The interactions and content selections on these platforms jointly shape the public's understanding and attitude toward events. This study provides many valuable references for future research in this direction, mainly affecting the cognition of the role of short video platforms in guiding public opinion, especially their characteristics in terms of information dissemination speed and influence. The research results provide empirical support and a theoretical basis for how to use short video platforms for effective public opinion management and information dissemination. Future research should focus more on the specific mechanisms of short video platform content recommendation algorithms and their profound impact on public opinion guidance, explore the performance differences of short video platforms in different types of events, and how to optimize the public opinion management strategies of short video platforms to promote the positive development of information dissemination.

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