

Professionalism in Short Video News Reporting Practice from a Constructive Perspective

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Abstract: With the accelerated pace of media digitalization and mobile transformation, communication media at all levels have actively transformed into new media channels in recent years. As a brand-new mobile Internet trend, short videos have become one of the main modes of news content production. However, the production of short video news presents the phenomenon of emotional value highlighting and news value weakening. This study critically interprets the causality of emotional communication in short video news represented by Douyin and reflects on the current value of short video news, calling for the return of news professionalism.

Keywords: Short Video News; Emotional Communication; Journalism Professionalism; Constructive News

Introduction

According to the Statistical Report on Internet Development in China released by CNNIC, as of June 2019, the number of short video users in China has reached 648 million. Short videos have surpassed TV and online videos, becoming the most widely used and sticky video form. In the rapidly developing society, short videos have become the main way for audiences to obtain information. Traditional mainstream media is adapting to the transformation of the Internet, accelerating socialization and mobility to save lost audiences. The “short, flat, and fast” dissemination characteristics of short videos fully meet the fragmented and mobile viewing needs of audiences in the mobile Internet era and have become an important development strategy for mainstream media to transform and break through. Short videos will become the main way for news release in the future(Li, 2018).

The narrative structure and logical framework of short videos are diverse, which can enrich and supplement the reporting mode. However, at the same time, short video news innovates the communication paradigm of news, making emotion an important index in news communication. This study attempts to explore how emotion is applied in short video news and how it affects the results of communication. Does the current short video news production model violate news professionalism and turn to the path of sensationalism? Based on these issues, the author analyzes the communication characteristics of mainstream media in the field of short videos and proposes improvement measures.

1. The Highlighting of Emotional Value and the Weakening of News Value

Scholar Peng Lan pointed out that the popularity of short videos originated from the grassroots level, and from the beginning had a different cultural background and cultural genes than traditional video content(Peng, 2019). Short videos are not copies or transmissions of television culture, and traditional media should adapt to the production rules of short videos and draw nourishment from folk culture while transforming into the short video battlefield, as well as adapting to platform dissemination laws. By promoting narrative modes that are in line with folk culture and undergoing “transgenic” production, media can only complete their narrative intentions in this way.

Taking People's Daily Douyin account as an example, researchers found that in addition to international and diplomatic information, domestic reports on the People's Daily Douyin account generally use emotional expression(Ren & Xiao, 2020). Videos naturally have the function of “emotional arousal,” and compared with text, visual impact can quickly and directly evoke emotions. Short videos are better than long videos in this regard, and fragmented scenes and highly infectious music can greatly promote dissemination. Emotional dissemination is the fundamental driving force behind the development and evolution of public opinion, and based on specific prototypes, narrative surface value is formed, making it influential and inspiring(Jiang & He, 2017). The social

mechanism of short video platforms emphasizes the driving force of interpersonal relationships in dissemination, and the algorithm mechanism further reinforces the law of traffic, both of which jointly reinforce the dominance of emotions in dissemination.

Objectivity, truthfulness, and neutrality are the principles of journalistic professionalism. In traditional journalistic professionalism, emotionally charged treatment of news disrespects or distorts facts, and emotional expression needs to be strictly controlled. However, in short video news, storytelling needs to pursue direct emotional expression, highlighting emotional value while weakening the news value. Currently, many mainstream media's Douyin accounts follow the principle of “content release” and “information release” in operation, rather than a strict news publishing style. Their selection strategies pay more attention to “promotional” rather than “news” content.

From the perspective of content creation, short video news has a small volume and can only bear the function of information and entertainment-oriented content. It is difficult to present deep informational content. Short video news reconstructs the channel system, discourse form, and practical style of news production, transforming audience media experience. Value, interest, and emotion serve as the three elements of social media sharing news, affecting the content creation of short video news(Lan, 2021). Currently, short videos have become one of the main ways for the audience to obtain news, reflecting the successful effect of media transformation. However, news media should pay attention to whether they weaken news value while meeting the needs of socialization, mobility, and fragmentation, attaching importance to the value of selection topics, and taking seriously the important role that news media reporting plays in constructing a perceptual environment. The significance of short video news content is becoming increasingly important, and journalists should be vigilant about whether emotions under the production mode of short video news have surpassed truthfulness and whether form has overtaken content, so that news can play a more important role in information governance, public opinion guidance, and emotional connection(Zhang & Wang, 2021).

2. Rethinking News Professionalism

McLuhan believes that the medium is the message, and the medium not only reconstructs the way information is communicated, but also reconstructs the information itself. Different medium characteristics correspond to different information characteristics. Short video news cannot bear all of the “idealism” of news, but short video is becoming a dominant information medium, and may even become a monopolistic information medium. When the development of media technology exceeds controllable expectations, its public responsibilities become more significant. Scholar Wu Fei believes that the root of news is democracy, and the stubborn demand for precise, in-depth, and comprehensive news information is because humans have always pursued autonomous social life. Although new technology has changed the process of news production and dissemination, it has not changed society’s basic demands for news. As long as there is news production, news professionalism is still an effective analytical concept(Wu, 2013).

Under the trend of short video, the return of traditional mainstream media is due to its mastery and adaptation to the communication characteristics of new media, but it also confirms that the authority and credibility of traditional media itself have not declined. Even in this age where “everyone has a microphone” and everyone can be a producer, the professional threshold of news still exists, and people still have unchanged expectations for news dissemination activities. Media workers in China have dual identities, both as gatekeepers for the public to receive information and as propaganda workers for the party. The dual roles should not be separated on any media platform, and excessive emotional mobilization of information will inevitably cause sensory fatigue in the audience.

The call for the return of news professionalism refers, on the one hand, to the need for the entire short video news industry to establish a more complete information dissemination system, clarify the division of labor characteristics of different media carriers, make good use of cross-media inflow to supplement the integrity of news information, and fight against the “selectivity” and subjectivity of algorithms. On the other hand, short video news practitioners should regain their professionalism and stand firmly on the “lookout” position, actively assuming social responsibilities. Pan Zhongdang believes that Chinese literati have a historical mission of “worrying about the world before worrying about themselves,” and this “literary background” makes them show strong in-world feelings, patriotism, and elite consciousness in their understanding of professionalism. As the “fourth power,” news media still has communication power, credibility, and influence in the new media era. The return of audience attention is precisely the expectation of news professionalism by the audience.

3. Conclusion and Reflections

Hartmut Rosa proposed three dimensions of social acceleration: technological acceleration, acceleration of social change, and acceleration of the pace of life. Nowadays, acceleration has become increasingly evident, and the development of technology has greatly compressed the time required for video shooting, editing, and publishing. Fragmentation has become one of the most prominent signs of the information society, and when news content production also caters to the needs of fragmentation, the reading and entertainment that people come into contact with daily all show “fragmented” characteristics. Audiences consume news and obtain information in fragmentation while satisfying their emotional needs. Short videos not only meet contemporary needs in terms of compressing time and space but also satisfy the emotional needs of audiences. As long as they follow the public's simple “moral emotions” and “emotional climax”, even a large number of story fragments can easily evoke emotional resonance and bring continuous traffic. Short video media makes it easy for us to access information and deliver emotions, and what it brings to the public is not only massive, fragmented knowledge and information, but also an immersive and anesthetic acquiring experience. Under fragmentation, how to convey news values and demonstrate news professionalism is a proposition that professional journalists need to re-examine and think about in the context of technological trends.

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