

Analysis of the Framework of Short Video News Reporting on Crisis Events - Take People's Daily's Tiktok Coverage of the COVID-19 Outbreak as an Example

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Abstract. With the continuous advancement of the information age, all kinds of short videos have exploded and gained an extremely large audience. Short video news has become an important way of news reporting because of its characteristics of easy production, fragmentation and fast transmission. As a representative of China's mainstream new media, Tiktok account of People Daily has the credibility of traditional media and the flexibility and diversity of new media. Among the short video reports on the COVID-19 outbreak in 2019, its attention and influence ranked first. Based on the theory of crisis communication and framework, this study uses content analysis method to analyze the "three-level" framework of People's Daily's Tik Tok news coverage of the COVID-19s outbreak, and analyzes the framework of People's Daily Tik Tok short video news coverage of the COVID-19s outbreak, providing useful references for other mainstream media when reporting similar crisis events.

Key words. Mainstream media; Short video news; People's Daily Douyin; COVID-19; Crisis event; Media frame

1. Introduction

The In recent years, crises have occurred frequently. Such as SARS in 2003, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome in 2012, Ebola virus in 2014, COVID-19 in 2019. The COVID-19 is the world's largest emergency public health event in the past decade and another representative global public health emergency after SARS [1]. As an early outbreak of the epidemic in China, mainstream media played an important role in news coverage. People pay a lot of attention to the reporting of such incidents, which brings great challenges to the reporting of news media. The public's perception and acceptance of crisis events is often based on the information they receive through the media, especially the news. An irresponsible media can easily create a moral panic through their coverage. Media coverage during the SARS outbreak has been extensively studied in the past. On the whole, during the critical period when the SARS crisis was transformed from latent to outbreak, the media in general lacked functions and were responsible for the spread of the epidemic [2]. With the development of communication technology, China's media

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ecology has changed. As a new way of content production, short video is favored by users and concerned by mainstream media news producers. According to the Research Report on China's Online Audiovisual Development in 2023, the number of online audiovisual users in China has reached 1.04 billion, of which the number of short video users has reached 1.012 billion, of which 79% of Internet users obtain news information through short videos, indicating that short video news has become the main way to obtain news information. The spread of the COVID-19 on the Tiktok account of People's Daily, which this article will discuss, is a typical example of the public health crisis spread through short video news.

2. Reality Construction and Media Framework

This study uses the theory of reality construction and frame, and takes the short video of People's Daily's Tik Tok report on the COVID-19 epidemic as the research object to analyse its media frame.

2.1. Reality Construction

The media constructs reality by selecting and highlighting certain aspects [3]. As Lippmann said, news reporting is not a mirror reflection of reality, but a selection and processing based on news stance and value standards. News reporting reflects the aspirations of stakeholders, government policies, and the gatekeeping process by which reporters and editors inform, educate, persuade, and entertain the public, as well as construct reality. Especially in the face of sudden crisis events, people generally get information from the news. When the media provides people with the right public health information, people's perceptions can mitigate threats and risks. The failure of the media to disseminate this information creates uncertainty and panic for news consumers [4].

2.2. Media Framework

The term "frame" was first proposed by Bateson, who believed that frame refers to the mutually agreed rules of interpretation on how to understand each other's symbols [5]. Goffman believes that frames enable people to locate, perceive, understand, and summarize a wide range of specific information [6]. According to Kitling, framing is selection, emphasis and exclusion [7]. According to Entman, the framework contains two functions: selection and prominence [8]. Pan and Kosicki focus on conceptualizing news texts as experientially operable syntactic, scripted, thematic, and rhetorical dimensions [9]. In 1999, Taiwan scholar Zang Guo-ren proposed the famous "three-level framework structure", which divides news into three parts: social reality, symbolic reality and subjective reality, and defines each part as having three levels: high (theme), middle (structure of the entire news event) and low (language use). Based on Zang Guoren's three-level framework theory, this study explores what kind of news framework was constructed by People's Daily Tiktok News to make choices, emphasize or exclude the coverage of the COVID-19s outbreak. Thus, it can provide useful reference for other mainstream media's new media practice. Over the past few decades, many scholars from various countries have conducted extensive research on news discourse and media frameworks, and have achieved guiding results [10-12].

3. Methodology

In crisis events, how do mainstream media short video news reports "present" or "reproduce" this compelling public health issue of COVID-19? This paper takes the short video news about the COVID-19s pneumonia of People's Daily Tiktok as an example.

3.1. Research Questions

The following questions guide this study.

Q1: How did Tiktok account of People's Daily frame the issue of COVID-19?

Q2: How does Tiktok account of People's Daily construct a high-level framework for reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic?

Q3: How does Tiktok account of People's Daily construct a mid-level framework for reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic?

Q3: How does Tiktok account of People's Daily construct a low-level framework for reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic?

3.2. Research Method

Through the content analysis method [13-15], this study applied Zang Guiren's three-level framework theory to construct a high, medium and low-level framework for the epidemic news samples of People's Daily Tik Yin. By using quantitative content analysis method and qualitative method in category construction and research analysis, we can not only carry out objective coding analysis of short video news text data of the epidemic situation, but also carry out qualitative in-depth analysis of coding results, so as to objectively, systematically and qualitatively describe the framework of People's Daily Tik Yin's COVID-19 epidemic report.

3.3. Sampling

This study chooses People's Daily Tiktok number as the research object. Through horizontal and vertical data analysis of the four major mainstream media on the Tiktok platform, People's Daily, Xinhuanet, News broadcast and CCTV News, it is found that the Tiktok account of People Daily has the highest number of fans and likes and ranks first in the influence of short videos related to the epidemic. The time frame is limited to December 31, 2020 to April 28, 2020. On December 31, 2019, the People's Daily Tiktok published the first news about the COVID-19s. On April 28, 2020, Wuhan announced the lifting of the lockdown, and the national epidemic entered normal management. The sample covers the incubation period, outbreak period, spread period and resolution period of the epidemic. Finally, 450 short video news about the new pneumonia epidemic were captured as analysis samples.

3.4. Frame Category Construction

Based on Zangguoren's three-level framework theory, this study constructs three dimensions and nine categories of indicators.

1) High-level framework: includes three first-level indicators: release time, number of reports, and category of reports. Published from December 31, 2019 to April 8, 2020, the number of stories refers to the daily number of stories during this period, as well as the total number of stories. Report categories refer to attributes of information.

2) Middle-level framework: including three first-level indicators: report theme, report object and report tone.

3) Low-level framework: Including expression tone, presentation of three first-level indicators. The tone of the report is positive, neutral and negative. The expression tone includes statement, imperative and question. The presentation mode includes text, pictures, video, soundtrack and dubbing.

4.Results

4.1. Number and types of reports under the high-level framework

1) Large number and long duration of reports.

It can be found from Figure 1 that from December 31, 2019 to April 28, 2020, 450 messages were posted, an average of five messages per day. It peaked at 16 on January 30. It peaked at 26.03 million likes. In general, continuous follow-up, without interruption. However, since the first epidemic information was released on the Tiktok account of People’s Daily on December 31, 2019, it was not followed up until January 20, during which no news about the epidemic was reported, and there were problems of lagging information release in the early stage and media aphasia.

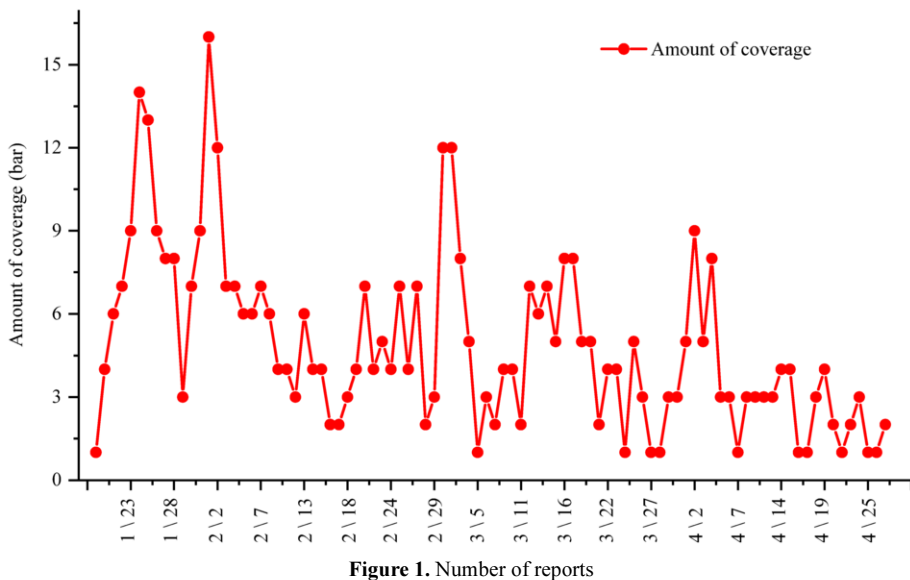


Figure 1. Number of reports

2) The categories of coverage are diverse.

Emotional interaction and epidemic news accounted for 37% and 25%, respectively, see Figure 2. This shows that in its coverage of the COVID-19, Tiktok account of People Daily continues the values of mainstream media and insists on positive guidance and public opinion guidance by publicizing touching stories. The international epidemic

situation and national image accounted for 13% and 12% respectively, which was reflected in the middle and later stages of the epidemic. People Daily increased its attention to the international epidemic situation and the national image.

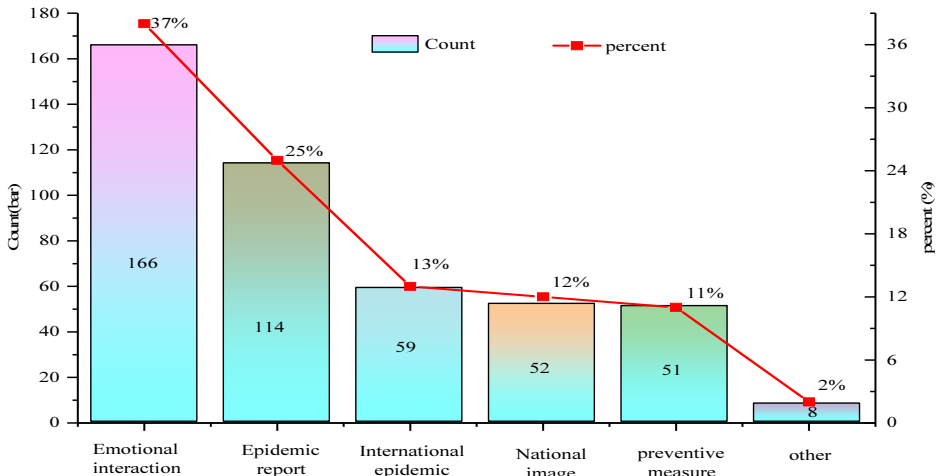


Figure 2. Categories of reports

4.2. Report Theme, Object and Tone Under the Framework of Middle Level

1) focus on touching stories, pay attention to emotional publicity

In this study, the topics of coverage are divided into 9 categories. But the bias in reporting is clear, shown in Figure 3. Touching stories topped the list, accounting for 28%.

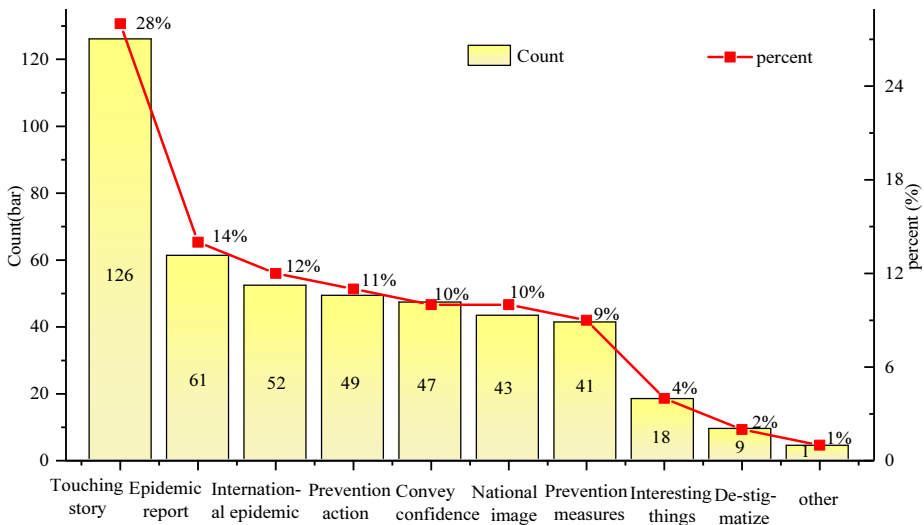


Figure 3. Report topics

This highlights the role of mainstream media in guiding public opinion and strengthening the emotional infection of the audience through touching stories.

2) Subject diversification and building interworking space

Among the 450 short video news, 139 mainly reported on the government, accounting for 30.89%. 98 cases were mainly reported on the anti-epidemic support, accounting for 21.78%. The Figure 4 shows that People's Daily, as a mainstream media, actively speaks for the Party and the government and pays attention to shaping the image of the government. At the same time, the overall target of the report is rich and diverse, indicating that People's Daily pays attention to building dialogue space among different groups and contributing media power to epidemic prevention and control.

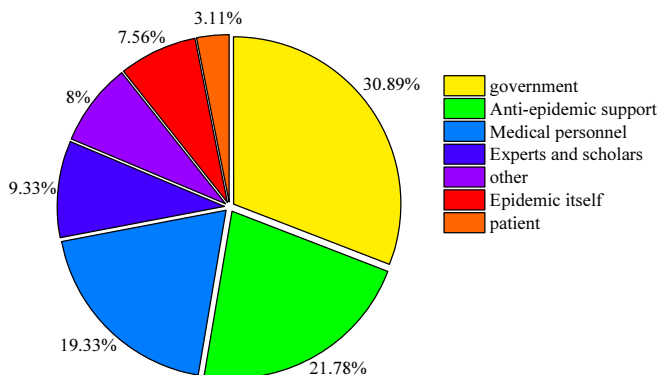


Figure 4. Report objects

3) Give priority to positive guidance and focus on social stability

In the 450 stories, 201 were positive, accounting for nearly 45 %. With touching stories, national image as the main features, it promoted the high attention of the government, the selfless dedication of supporters, positively affirming the actions of the government, presented in Figure 5. A total of 193 neutral reports, accounting for nearly 43%, are mainly reflected in the international epidemic, de-stigmatization, prevention and control knowledge . On the surface, People's Daily Douyin, as the authority and credibility of mainstream new media, adheres to an objective and fair reporting attitude.

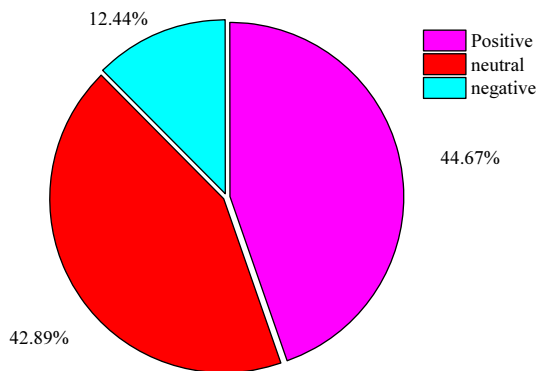


Figure 5. Reporting tone

4.3 Expression tone and presentation in the low-level framework

1) Use more imperative tone to strengthen emotional infection. In the study sample, there are 225 reports of imperative mood, accounting for 50%, which mostly contain positive words such as positive, praise, affirmation, imperative, exclamation and so on, which are

shown in Figure 6. For example: regardless of life and death! Seven doctors in Wuhan pressed the red handprint on the petition, let's pay tribute to the hero! Good news! The first case in Hubei! Wuhan University Central South Hospital successfully treated pneumonia patients with ECMO technology.

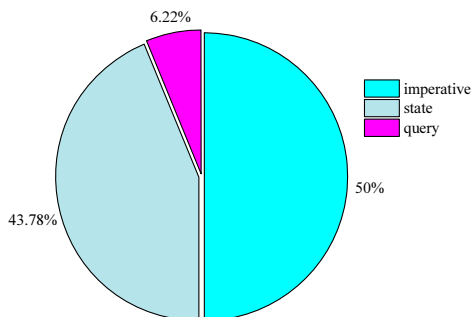


Figure 6. Expressing tone

2) Audio-visual dual effect to create a sense of scene. There are 291 subtitle + video + soundtrack articles, accounting for nearly 65%, which are mainly reflected in the reports of touching stories; It is clearly presented in Figure 7 that a total of 129 videos, pictures and music were included, accounting for 29%, mainly in epidemic notification. which reflects its active use of the characteristics of new media to strengthen the communication effect on the basis of retaining traditional communication methods. This kind of detailed display through text and pictures, combined with video and music, brings emotional rendering, making the report more shocking.

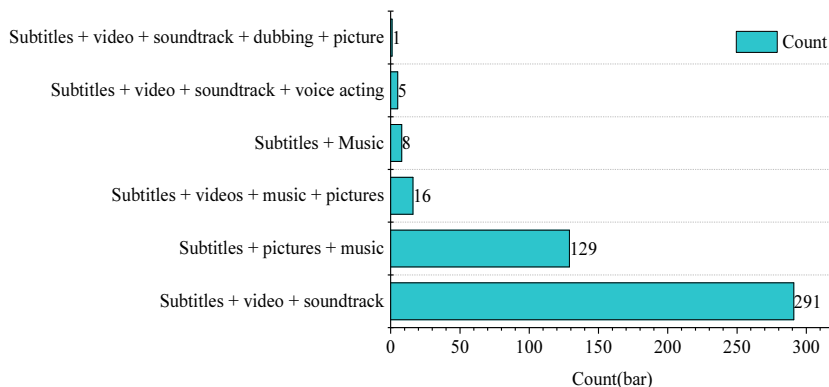


Figure 7. Reporting method

5. Conclusion

Through the analysis of the three-level framework of People's Daily's Tiktok epidemic report, it was found that it continued to pay attention to and report the COVID-19, and paid attention to public opinion guidance and agenda setting, reflecting the authority and influence of mainstream media. The categories of information reports are rich, the themes of reports are diverse, and most of them are emotional renderings of touching stories, highlighting the human touch framework. The diversification of the reporting

objects, with the government and the anti-epidemic support as the main body, reflects the government leadership of the media. The tone of the report is positive, and the tone of the report is more imperative, focusing on the positive guidance of the audience. In addition, the combination of "subtitles + soundtrack + video" strengthened the audio-visual effect and enhanced the appeal of the news. In the four stages of the development incubation period, outbreak period, shock period and solution period of the epidemic, it successively experienced the "framework absence", "human interest framework", "emotional framework" and "national image framework". In general, in the reporting of the epidemic, People's Daily Douyin, as a typical representative of the mainstream new media, has outstanding performance since then, with great influence and appeal, despite the problem of delayed reporting in the early stage, and has played a good anti-epidemic effect.

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