



Mediated Communication, Public Opinion and Society Section

Abstracts of papers presented at the 2024 conference of the
International Association for Media and Communication Research
IAMCR 2024 – Ōtautahi Christchurch – 30 June to 4 July

christchurch2024.iamcr.org
June/July 2024

This abstract book includes original abstracts of papers presented at IAMCR 2024 in Ōtautahi Christchurch, Aotearoa New Zealand¹

Version: 28/07/24

¹ We have endeavoured to ensure that these are the abstracts of the papers actually presented at the conference. Nevertheless, due to cancellations, additions and other factors, abstracts may be included here that were not presented and abstracts that were presented may not be included.

Table of Contents

A Moderated Mediation Model Linking Mobile Social Media Channels, Availability Pressure, and Media Habits	5
Perceived misinformation exposure and news personalization among online news users	7
Demystifying “Grey Actors” in Online Public Opinion: Tracing Back the Production and Circulation of “Internet Water Armies”	9
Understanding inadvertent sharing of deepfakes: A study on socialization, self-presentation, and subjective norms.....	11
Online Mourning and Collective Memory: The Nanjing Massacre in WeChat Moments.....	13
Fear of Childbirth in Contemporary China: A Qualitative Analysis Unveiling Discourse Dynamics and Empowering Women's Voices on the digital platform	15
Power reshaping and emotional massage: a qualitative study on the causes of short-video addiction among rural Chinese older adults	17
Study on Social Media Construction of Collective Memory about Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage ——Take Douyin "Nadam" as an example	18
Online Mobilization in the Comments Section: Users' Attempts to Address Inequality in "Algorithmic Games" - Based on Data from China's Major Social Media Platforms (2023) .	20
Examining Women’s Support for Fertility Encouragement Policy in China: An Extension of the Influence of Presumed Media Influence Model	22
Characteristics and dynamic evolution of group polarization in social media—an analysis based on the Guangzhou subway “secret photography” incident	24
Echoes in Silence: Navigating the Visibility Paradox of Deaf Creators on China's UGC Platforms	26
Agenda-setting on Chinese Social Media: A Case Study of Chinese Youth's Political Discussion on the Three-child Policy	27
Online Serendipity on Xiaohongshu: Unexpected Encounters with Real-Life Acquaintances on Social Media.....	29
An integrated model for examining news media effects on public perceptions of autonomous delivery drones	31
How Moral Outrage Spreads in the Digital Age: An Empirical Study of College Students in Shanghai	33
Grassroots grievances in the mediated environment: How Chinese netizens engage in counter-meritocracy public discourse.....	35
Online human-robot interaction: an information ecology perspective on the public opinion impact of social bots in reversal news.....	37
Overloaded closeness: the role of social media as a reverse mediator in the maintenance of intimacy in long-distance relationships.....	38
Speaking Out for Reactance?: Examining Hong Kong Residents’ Ordinance-related Expression through Social Media	40

The “Deserted” Social Media: Impression Management, Social Exchange, and Context Collapse in Chinese Youth	42
Double Tap for Friendship: Exploring the Social Capital of Dual Instagram Accounts Among Japanese Youth	44
‘Opinion tree’: Mapping opinion evolution in user talk with the help of three AI-based methods	46
From Darwinism to Dataism: The Mechanisms of AIGC-Driven Cultural Evolution	48
Positive Emojis Are Better?: Examining the Semantical, Emotional, and Relational Functions of Emojis.....	50
Blaming of minorities on Twitter: Public opinion discourse during the COVID-19 public health crisis	52
Political Debates in Third Spaces? Football Fan Communities and the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar	54
‘If you don’t know, vote no’: Symptoms of Destructive Polarisation in the 2023 Voice to Parliament Referendum in Australia	56
Implications of 3D representation for narrowing disparities across identities: missing children, recall and social media sharing	58
From “Tales of Bliss” to “Myths of Miss”: The Impact of SNS on Marriage Perceptions within Chinese Culture—A Qualitative Inquiry into the Life Narratives of 14 Marriage-Free Women	60
Digital Ark: Mediatization and Memory Reproduction of Shanghai Jewish Refugees Memorial Space under the Influence of Digital Media.....	62
Social media as counterhegemonic site: Reimagining 'Mahabali' with images on Facebook and Instagram.....	64
Biracial Couples and Mixed-Race Families in U.S. Television Advertising: Media Flashpoint in the Culture Wars.....	65
Affective Contemplation: A Study of Shidu parents' Social Media Mourning Behaviors.....	66
Has Facial Expression Changed? The Interaction Between Avatar-mediated Humans Based on Empirical Research	68
Unstoppable scrolling: Exploring the semiotic mechanism, unconventional media use and collective effect of "doomscrolling" on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic in China	70
From Ritual to Memory: A Study on the Digital Mourning of Chinese Netizens on Social Media —Evidence from Sina Weibo.....	71
Covert Tug-of-War: How Does Social Exclusion Form in WeChat Moments.....	73
Bystander Reactions to Cyberbullying Against Internet Celebrities in China: A Comparative Study of Cognitive, Emotional, and Behavioral Differences	74
Affective Media and Affective Publics: A Case Study of Online Public Mourning in the Crash of China Eastern Airlines Flight MU5735.....	76
The Power of Elite Narratives: Evidence from the Tweets of the 2020 US Presidential Election	78

Public Opinion Mirror: An Empirical Study on the Completeness and Sustainability of Campus Violence News.....	79
War in Ukraine and Decolonization in Kazakhstan: Communicating Crisis Through Facebook.....	80
Examining the Role of Authenticity in Computer-Mediated Interpersonal Perception	81
Social Media Platform Vitality and the Effect of Censorship: An ABM Approach.....	83
Global Mediated Memory in Wikipedia -- As with the case of Article Climate Change.....	85
Crossing Digital Frontiers: Third-Person Effect and Cyberbullying in China's Social Media Landscape.....	87
Anonymity in Chinese Social Media: Strain Theory Analysis of Douban's 'Momo' Phenomenon	88
SNS Accounts as Tombstones: Online Social Support and Emotional Transformation in Online Mourning Behavior of Bereaved People	90
Convenience or burden: The impact of social media usage time on users' social stress and social anxiety.	92
Aao, Jagah Banaye!: Voicing and Listening to Stories of Vending, Mending, and Reclaiming the City	94

A Moderated Mediation Model Linking Mobile Social Media Channels, Availability Pressure, and Media Habits

Authors

Prof. Xueqing Li - China - Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Ms. Baoying Fu - China - Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Ms. Irem Cifci - China - Shanghai Jiaotong University

Abstract

In an era where mobile phone use is ubiquitous, being constantly available has become a prevalent norm. Grounded in the Socio-Cognitive Model of Connectedness (SMC) (Bayer et al., 2016), this study examines how the connection norm of availability pressure influences users' habitual checking of mobile social media, while probing the moderating role of social media notifications in accentuating their relationship. More importantly, instead of focusing solely on the mobile phone as a device, our study extends the SMC framework by investigating the impacts of different mobile social media channels, including text messages, voice messages, voice calls, and video calls on availability pressure and habitual checking of mobile social media.

Focused specifically on the role of mobile social media in sustaining friendships among young adults in China, this study employed a questionnaire survey. The research involved the random distribution of questionnaires in six Chinese universities, ultimately yielding 879 valid responses. The analysis was carried out using the PROCESS macro (version 3.3) for SPSS (Hayes, 2013). Model 4 and Model 14 was utilized to test the hypotheses and research questions.

The findings reveal a positive relationship between availability pressure and habitual mobile social media checking, confirming that availability pressure can be internalized by individuals to activate phone checking habit. Meanwhile, availability pressure positively mediates the effects of voice calls and text messages on habitual checking of mobile social media, suggesting that high synchronicity and the constant flow of text messages intensifies the perceived pressure to be available. The moderated mediation model also reveals that the mediating effect of availability pressure is strengthened by an increase in social media notifications when individuals use voice calls and text messages to interact with friends on mobile social media. This research underscores the complex interplay between mobile social media channels, availability pressure, and social media notifications in shaping habitual media behaviors.

This study makes three contributions: Firstly, it provides an empirical examination of the SMC by exploring the relationship between availability pressure and habitual media behaviors. Secondly, the study expands the SMC framework by incorporating mobile social media channels. The exploration of different sources of availability pressure challenges the traditional view of the mobile phone as a singular entity and underscores the need to study different technological features and their impacts on availability norm and media behaviors. Thirdly, this study examines the moderating role of social media notifications, shedding light on how the connection norm becomes cognitively salient

and influences media behaviours. The establishment of a moderated mediation model that interweaves the relationships among mobile social media channels, availability pressure, social media notifications, and habitual media checking offers a more detailed mapping of the SMC framework, and enriches our understanding of the dynamics at play.

Keywords

availability pressure, habitual checking, social media channels, social media notifications

Perceived misinformation exposure and news personalization among online news users

Authors

Prof. Michael Chan - Hong Kong - Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract

Research Gaps and Questions

Online misinformation, or fake news, is a global problem that can lead to democratic erosion and backsliding. Therefore, much literature has sought to understand why people believe in and share misinformation (Vaccari et al., 2022). Equally important, though much less examined, are citizens' *perceptions* of the prevalence of misinformation in the information environment, which can also have substantive societal implications (Matthes et al., 2022). This study addresses this under-researched area by examining potential positive *and* negative outcomes related to users' strategies for dealing with perceived misinformation exposure (PME). The first comprises consumptive news feed curation (Lee et al., 2019) whereby users of social media actively shape what they come across online by adjusting relevant settings in the platforms they use to influence the respective algorithms that determine what content is shown. Users may also curate their news sources by paying or subscribing to online news sources that they trust. The second strategy entails active avoidance of the news, which may be less desirable from a normative perspective since functioning democracies require informed citizens (Toff & Kalogeropoulos, 2020). Therefore, it is important to examine whether PME and other pertinent variables predict individuals' news consumption behavior in the contemporary media and information environment, which can have possible consequences for democracy. Thus, we ask:

RQ: Is PME related to increased (a) personalization of online platforms, (b) likelihood of paying for news, and (c) frequency of news avoidance?

Methodology

Data for the study was obtained from the 2023 Reuters Institute Digital News Report (DNR) (Newman et al., 2023). The DNR seeks to understand news consumption behaviors among citizens around the world, and surveys were disseminated to respondents who are representative of the respective country's online population from January to February 2023. The final sample of $N = 12447$ was obtained from respondents from six countries (USA, UK, Netherlands, Belgium, South Korea, Japan) as only these countries had the available measures for this study. Key outcome measures included (1) whether respondents paid for online news, (2) number of online news subscriptions, (3) whether they adjusted the settings of their social media platforms, and (4) frequency of avoiding the news. Perceived information exposure was an index based on a respondent's perceived exposure to different types of misinformation (e.g., political, environment, health etc.). Control variables such as demographics, news use frequency and trust, and others were included.

Preliminary Findings

Using a mixture of logistic and Poisson regression models, the initial findings showed that PME was positively related to respondents' paying of news, number of online news subscriptions, and frequency of adjustments to their social media accounts to influence what news and information they receive. They were also more likely to avoid the news. The findings suggest that while PME may have a normatively undesirable outcome in terms of news avoidance, they also showed demonstrated some possible benefits as citizens are more willing to pay for online news from trusted sources and be more vigilant in controlling their social media information environments.

Keywords

misinformation, social media, news avoidance, news personalization, paid news

Demystifying “Grey Actors” in Online Public Opinion: Tracing Back the Production and Circulation of “Internet Water Armies”

Authors

Ms. Hong Li - China - Fudan University

Prof. Baohua Zhou - China - Fudan University

Abstract

Digital platforms are infiltrated by a group of actors known as the “Internet water army.” They can be understood as “grey actors” in online public opinion. These actors engage in the underground “grey industry” of opinion manipulation, distorting or amplifying opinion distributions among various social interest groups and thus influencing public attention and policy making. They range from organized or manipulated human actors to (semi-) automated computer programs. Though identifying true identities of “water armies” is challenging for general social media users, current research usually presupposes their detectability, and then analyzes their characteristics, behaviors, political effects (e.g., spreading misinformation and misleading public opinion) as well as governance. However, it is too simple and problematic to claim that such “grey actors” could be clearly detected with technical tools, as studies have shown that existing techniques are not sufficiently precise in distinguishing social bots from real human actors (Grimme et al., 2018). More importantly, the “detection-governance” framework represents just one approach for analyzing the “grey actors”; alternative approaches must be further developed beyond this paradigm. This study goes beyond the “detection-governance” approach, aiming to explore the largely uncharted production and circulation ecology of different types of “water armies” across various platforms.

The production and circulation ecology of “water armies” is organized into distinct stages, including roles such as technical staff, card sellers, and code-receiving platforms, together creating a structured, hierarchical system. This ecological structure can be analyzed across five dimensions (TAUPA model): (1) Targeted context: marketing campaigns vs. political vs. social vs. fandom events; (2) Automation and Intelligence: manual operations vs. automated programs; (3) User availability; (4) Potential capabilities: fake amplification vs. account hijacking vs. deleting posts, etc.; (5) Affiliated Platform: public discussion media (ideological market) vs. acquaintance social media (relational market) vs. vertical communication media (attention market). Research into the production and circulation ecology of “water armies” has generally been limited, with a primary focus on social media platforms, particularly Twitter, within Western contexts (Assenmacher et al., 2020). This study pioneers the investigation of water armies’ production and circulation ecology across multiple platforms within the Chinese online opinion landscape, utilizing the five-dimensional TAUPA model. The principal research questions are as follows: RQ1: Who is behind the creation or organization of these “water armies”? What methods and strategies are employed in their creation or organization? RQ2: How is the trade or circulation of “water armies” conducted?

What kinds of programs or products are accessible to users with average internet literacy? RQ3: What variations exist in the profile features and module configurations associated with “water armies” across different platforms?

We applied mixed methods to study the internal ecology of “water armies,” collecting and analyzing data from open-access code repositories on GitHub and CSDN (China’s largest network for software developers), alongside Taobao and Pinduoduo (two of China’s leading online marketplaces), from 2010 to 2022. Content analysis and topic modeling were conducted to assess the capabilities, operational scenarios, and implementation strategies of various “grey actors.” Additionally, multilevel network analysis was employed to examine the connections between “grey actors” and different platforms they targeted.

Findings reveal that the key “ecosystem-builders” of “water armies” are marketing agencies collaborating closely with platforms. Social bots constitute 90% of “water armies,” overshadowing more expensive human-operated accounts. Platforms’ technical accessibility influences whether related services are offered as open-source software or paid offerings. The used programming languages are significantly related to the infrastructure of the platforms: Python is the predominant language, with JavaScript following due to its ability to interface with web platforms that have restricted APIs. Much of shared code is obfuscated, creating barriers to user access. Most relevant products provide simple amplification functions designed to sway online public opinion, such as generating likes or shares (52%), followed by creating artificial social connections such as fake followers (24%), while only 16% claim to offer comment generation capabilities. Typically, a developer or merchant operates across multiple platforms. Platform-specific products targeted to ideological or attention-driven platforms, particularly Weibo and TikTok (compared to those aimed at relational markets like WeChat), occupy the central positions in the network of “water armies.”

This study contributes to the field of mediated communication, public opinion, and society by theoretically focusing on the production and circulation ecology of “water armies” —the “grey actors” in the arena of online public opinion—through the TAUPA model. It also offers an empirical analysis of software and related products associated with these actors across China's social media platforms, marking a pioneering exploration of this digital phenomenon.

Keywords

“Internet water army”, social bots, public opinion, platforms

Understanding inadvertent sharing of deepfakes: A study on socialization, self-presentation, and subjective norms

Authors

Dr. Jeffry Oktavianus - Hong Kong - The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Prof. Trisha T. C. Lin - Taiwan - National Chengchi University, Taiwan

Abstract

Deepfakes, the artificial intelligence (AI)-generated synthesized videos that swap faces and alter actions to mislead people's perceptions, have been increasingly utilized for political disinformation campaigns, 'deeporn' (or deepfake porn), and identity theft. The rapid spread of deepfakes is exacerbated by deceived users who unknowingly share the manipulated content. While past studies have underscored the role of cognitive factors, it is crucial to examine social factors contributing to inadvertent sharing of deepfakes, which remain underexplored in the literature.

Research has identified several motivations for disseminating online content, including socialization, self-presentation, and subjective norms (e.g., Apuke & Omar, 2021; Lee & Ma, 2012; Ma et al., 2011). According to the Uses and Gratification theory, individuals disseminate information for social interaction gratifications. However, individuals may share interesting content without scrutinizing its authenticity, resulting in the unintentional spread of deepfakes. Moreover, individuals disseminate information to present a positive self-image, even if the information may be inaccurate. Subjective norms, the perceived social pressures to perform certain behaviors, can also lead people to unknowingly share deepfakes. However, these motivations operate differently, with subjective norms often arising from socialization and self-presentation.

Additionally, the use of social networking sites facilitates socialization and self-presentation by providing connectivity and communication, and allowing users to craft their online image. However, social network size could also affect the relationships between social networking site use and socialization as well as self-presentation. A larger social network often enhances socialization by increasing interaction and communication opportunities, fostering engagement and the exchange of various ideas and experiences. The sizeable network also influences self-presentation, as it encourages individuals to present themselves in ways that resonate with a broader audience.

This study aims to investigate social factors contributing to inadvertent deepfake content sharing, particularly social networking site use, socialization, self-presentation, and subjective norms. It also examines the moderating role of social network size. This study utilized web survey data from 750 Taiwanese adults who had been exposed to deepfakes, collected in October 2023, and fitting the demographic quota (i.e., age, gender, and education) of Taiwanese online video users. A moderated serial mediation analysis was conducted using PROCESS Macro by customizing the syntax of model 80 to include moderation paths for social network size.

The results showed that socialization and subjective norms exhibited significant positive associations with inadvertent deepfake content sharing, while self-presentation did not. Next,

socialization and self-presentation were significantly related to subjective norms. Social networking site use was also positively associated with socialization and self-presentation. Finally, the associations between social networking site use and socialization as well as self-presentation were moderated by social network size.

As for contributions, this study enriches the literature on deepfakes by unveiling social factors contributing to inadvertent sharing that remain understudied. These findings also have practical implications for policymakers and advocacy groups to develop strategies to prevent the public from unknowingly spreading deepfakes.

Keywords

deepfakes, socialization, self-presentation, subjective norm, social network site

Online Mourning and Collective Memory: The Nanjing Massacre in WeChat Moments

Authors

Ms. ZITONG GAO - China - +86 18353516999

Mr. LANGGE MO - China - Nanjing Normal University

Abstract

Introduction

Online mourning, the practice of engaging in mourning activities through the internet, has evolved from sharing condolence messages in forums and personal online spaces to creating dedicated virtual spaces such as online memorial halls and virtual cemeteries. This evolution allows for eulogies to be shared and commemorated beyond the constraints of physical presence, offering solace to those unable to attend memorial services in person (Zhou Yuqiong & Zhang Mengyuan, 2022). The rise of social media further democratizes participation in mourning, removing barriers of privacy, presence, and hierarchy, enabling anyone with access to these platforms to partake in collective grieving processes (Wu Hairong, Zhao Tianzhao & Wu Yitao, 2022).

In China, research has delved into various facets of online mourning. Shi Jichao (2023) analyzed public sentiment surrounding the digital memorializing of the ninth batch of Korean War martyrs using microblog discussions. Zhou Baohua and Zhong Yuan (2021) examined Dr. Li Wenliang's microblog comments to understand how digital spaces extend emotional connections and contribute to collective memory construction. Shan Ling (2023) investigated user interactions with memorialized accounts on social media platforms and their influence on the platforms' technical developments.

Online mourning represents a significant shift in how societies engage with grief and remembrance in the digital age, offering new avenues for identity formation, emotional solidarity, and social unity. While existing research often focuses on mourning for public figures or on platforms fostering weak social ties, there's a gap in understanding mourning practices within networks of strong social ties, such as WeChat. This study addresses this gap by examining the commemoration of the Nanjing Massacre within WeChat Moments. It aims to uncover the motivations behind users' participation in online mourning and its role in shaping collective memory through participatory observation and in-depth interviews, maintaining the integrity and references of the original work.

Methodology

The study employs a qualitative methodology to scrutinize the behaviors of active participants in online mourning practices. It will conduct in-depth interviews with individuals across the three identified categories—active participants, bystanders, and quasi-participants—to thoroughly explore their motivations and experiences. This approach captures a broad spectrum of user engagement and perspectives on online mourning.

Preliminary Findings

Preliminary findings reveal diverse motivations for participation, including emotional resonance, self-satisfying "face" mourning, and passive mourning under surveillance pressure. While most participants are driven by emotional resonance, bystanders typically refrain due to lacking social media engagement or need to express sentiments online. Quasi participants feel emotional resonance but abstain due to content appropriateness concerns. Online mourning is a contemporary alternative to traditional mourning, fostering a memorial atmosphere and positive emotional value transfer. It allows individuals across different times and spaces to express and resonate emotionally, fostering "consensus and identity," constructing and maintaining collective memory, and enhancing social cohesion.

Keywords

Online Mourning, Strong Relational Social Platforms, Collective Memory

Fear of Childbirth in Contemporary China: A Qualitative Analysis Unveiling Discourse Dynamics and Empowering Women's Voices on the digital platform

Authors

Dr. Christina Zhang - China - Zhejiang International Studies University

Abstract

The phenomenon of fear of childbirth is universal, extending beyond geographical boundaries and cultural contexts, and presenting itself in various forms across diverse societies. In contemporary China, against the backdrop of shifting demographic trends, socio-cultural transformations, and the increasing prominence of digital platforms for social interaction and discourse, the younger generation exhibits pronounced "fear of childbirth" sentiments in online forums. Within these platforms, childbirth is frequently associated with negative linguistic symbols such as disease, pain, and anxiety, thereby serving as a basis for mutual reproach between genders and fueling gender oppositional conflicts.

Existing research on childbirth culture often adopts a "family-centric" perspective rooted in macro-ethical systems and social norms, which inadequately addresses the emergence of "childbearing anxiety." This approach directs childbirth discourse towards collective outcomes rather than individual perspectives, thereby failing to reflect the individualistic and atomized characteristics of modern society. Consequently, there is an urgent need for research on childbirth anxiety from a female-centric perspective.

This study examines the discourse surrounding fear of childbirth among Chinese women on the Zhihu platform, a popular online forum for knowledge-sharing and discussion. Through in-depth interviews with 25 participants, participatory observation in six online communities, and analysis of online textual materials, the study explores the presentation of childbirth anxiety discourse and the self-construction of women within this discourse. Additionally, the study proposes corresponding strategies for real-world dialogue based on women's self-linguistic logic. The findings reveal that under the mechanisms of emotionalization and selective presentation, the subjectivity and self-construction of young, unmarried, and childless women constitute the core logic of discourse construction. Moreover, the professionalism and dialogical nature of the Zhihu platform encourage men to enter the discourse of women's childbirth, gradually forming a discourse construction subject primarily led by women and supplemented by men. Narratives of suffering related to women's health and bodily practices, in conjunction with the contexts of modern individualism and consumerism, jointly construct a complex discourse of childbirth anxiety. This discourse inherently reflects the construction of women's self-linguistic order, based on their primal understanding of their bodies and social identities, engaging in symbolic dialogue with the broader social, cultural, and economic systems underpinning the childbirth culture ecosystem. Women's childbirth anxiety is further manifested through resistance to traditional childbirth discourse, emphasis on bodily shaping, and promotion of economic autonomy, leading to the construction of the self-identity of

modern single women who resist childbirth. The shifting away from the family-centric approach and the gendered division of bodies and consumption indicate a new direction in women's childbirth culture. Drawing from women's self-linguistic logic, the study also proposes corresponding real-world dialogue strategies across three dimensions: topic selection, dialogue logic, and value orientation, to facilitate communication on childbirth issues between society and individuals within the evolving landscape of childbirth culture.

Keywords

Fear of childbirth, Digital platforms, Gender discourse, Qualitative research

Power reshaping and emotional massage: a qualitative study on the causes of short-video addiction among rural Chinese older adults

Authors

Dr. Linna Kong - China - Shanghai University

Dr. SanJiu Yan - China - Shanghai University

Dr. Qijun He - China - Shanghai University

Abstract

[Research background] Short videos have emerged as a highly popular form of entertainment among older adults, becoming an integral part of their lives. However, this phenomenon also raises concerns regarding meaningful engagement and addiction in the elderly population when using short video apps. Existing research on the overuse of short video apps focuses on adolescents and young adults, with very few studies about older adults, and most of them, if any, analyzing addiction phenotypes through psychological factors or algorithmic techniques.¹ **[Research methods]** This study integrates relational empowerment theory² and media massage concept³, and focuses on the elderly population in Yuhuan City, Zhejiang Province, China, which has a high degree of aging, and collects and organizes primary data through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and grounded theory⁴ in order to explore the influencing factors behind the elderly's addiction to short-video. In this study, a total of 23 elderly short-video addicted users, including 12 females and 10 males, with an age range of 60-83 years old, who swiped short-video for more than 6 hours a day on average, were interviewed in strict accordance with the United Nations WHO's definition of the age of the elderly as 60 years old or above in 2023 and the per capita cell phone usage time of 350 minutes in China in 2023. **[Research results]** Through grounded theory research, it is found that among the 12 influences on short video addiction in the elderly, power reshaping and emotional massage are two of the most important and yet undiscussed contributing factors to the formation of short video addiction in the elderly. The study goes on to construct a theoretical model of power reshaping, emotional massage, and senior short video addiction. The results of the study further reveal that the authority of elders, which was originally eliminated by the new media, is reshaped through the active participation of elderly users in watching, sharing and communicating with short videos, and that the enhancement of the discourse power at the level of family and social relations is an important reason for elderly people's prolonged involvement in short video apps. In addition, mobile short video live broadcasting and interactive functions allow the elderly to create a sense of co-presence and participation in the process of using, which enhances the immersive psychological experience and intimacy of the users. Lastly, this study focuses on short-video addiction in small-town communities with a high degree of aging, correcting the prevailing limitation that rural or small-town older adults have lower levels of digital access and to some extent filling the gaps that exist in related research.

Keywords

Short video addiction, the Elderly, Power reshaping, Emotional massage

Study on Social Media Construction of Collective Memory about Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage ——Take Douyin "Nadam" as an example

Authors

Ms. yiran Ba - China - Communication University of China

Ms. Jinxia Shen - China - Communication University of China

Abstract

Intangible cultural heritage is an indispensable part of excellent traditional Chinese culture, which involves not only material existence, but also the collective memory, including the normal experience, historical traditions and social practice (Huang, Yu, 2022). On the basis of Durkheim's theory "collective consciousness", Maurice Halbwachs creatively proposed the "collective memory", which has been summarized by the academics as "the process and results of specific social group sharing past events" (Wang Yujue, Wang Qianyan, 2024; Wu, 2023). Collective memory is the core of intangible cultural heritage, which is significant for its protection.

The "Nadam" was included in the first batch of Chinese intangible cultural heritage list by the State Council in 2006, which is a grand event held by grassland people to celebrate the harvest. By 2023, Nadam videos on Douyin have gathered more than 1 billion views. We take "Nadam" as the key word and collect relevant videos on Douyin from August 2018 to August 2023. Sorted by uploading time, the systematic sampling method is used to select 25% of the videos for analysis. Initially, there were 518 videos obtained. Removing meaningless, repetitive and unrelated videos, 465 videos were retained. Based on the standard of online comments collected by scholars Zou Yu (Zou, Wei, 2021), the first 100 comments and their secondary comments were collected for each sample video according to the number of likes. If the number of comments was less than 100, all would be collected. 20% of the comments were selected as the total samples for comment analysis, which contained 5437 comments after data cleaning.

From the perspective of collective memory, using content analysis and visual rhetorical analysis, this study focuses on the construction and dissemination of social media collective memory about Chinese intangible cultural heritage. The following questions are researched: Firstly, in the initial construction process, what collective memory content is created by users? How do they construct the embryonic form of collective memory? Secondly, how is the collective memory content disseminated on social media? What are the new connotations appearing in this communication process?

Through the content analysis of short videos, collective memory representation include cultural performances around events, rituals and landscape framework; personal experiences reflected by tourists and business frameworks, as well as the cultural connotation memory. Based on the memory representation, the following images are formed: the archetypal image of male hormone, unity and prosperity; the conceptual image of modernization and natural ecology; the code image of

national image, spiritual quality and cultural inheritance. The collective memory is constructed as a “double process”, that is, it experiences the process of "secularization" from abstract to concrete memory and "sanctification" from concrete to abstract memory.

On the basis of the collective memory convergence of short videos, the social media and the unique function of the language system further extend the collective memory of the intangible cultural heritage. The dimension of the collective memory is richer, and the original connotation is further deepened. In the communication and interaction, short video users shape the following five new memory frameworks: regional framework, historical framework, media framework, joking framework and body framework, as well as the two memory images of network "diode" and multiple integration. The "radiation" dissemination of collective memory framework and the "convergence" dissemination of image are presented in social media. The essence of intangible cultural heritage is accumulated in the collective and continuously integrated with modern society. While excellent intangible cultural heritage nourishes society, it also promotes its own modernization.

Keywords

Intangible Cultural Heritage, Construction of Collective Memory, Social Media

Online Mobilization in the Comments Section: Users' Attempts to Address Inequality in "Algorithmic Games" - Based on Data from China's Major Social Media Platforms (2023)

Authors

Mr. Yifan Wang - China - Television School, Communication University of China

Abstract

This paper explores the close relationship between algorithms and inequality based on data from Chinese social media. Users mobilize online in the comment section to amplify the impact of social public events. This gives the "algorithmic game" commonweal character, and it is also an action that produces equality in the midst of unequal rules.

In China, users of social media platforms such as Weibo, B-station, and Red are using the comment section to engage in two particular forms of online mobilization. One type is to send a large amount of irrelevant and entertaining content in the comment section of a social public event post, and the other is to post comments about the social public event in the comment section of an entertaining event post, both of which call on users to engage in behaviors such as retweeting, liking, and bookmarking, in order to expand the influence of the social public event. Some users believe that the algorithm of social media platforms makes certain social public events not get the visibility they deserve, resulting in the relevant events not being properly resolved. Therefore these users came forward to fight for more pushes on social public events by algorithmic platforms.

Algorithmic resistance evolves in conjunction with the properties and logics of technologies that channel media power (Williams, 1974). Algorithmic visibility is one of the main purposes of algorithmic resistance; algorithmic visibility means that users are weighted and selected through algorithms, and are given influence and legitimacy in the platform (O' Meara, 2019). Content producers "play with the algorithm" in order to increase algorithmic visibility, such as brushing up positive reviews, inducing users to share, and other behaviors, which may interfere with the algorithm's functioning (Cotter, 2019). On this basis, "algorithmic games" use algorithmic visibility as a reward, which is realized by users learning and understanding the rules of the game. Currently, algorithmic games focus more on the interests and roles of platforms, algorithms and users and their power flows (Haapoja, Laaksonen & Lampinen, 2020).

The main research questions are:

1. How do users of Chinese social media platforms construct their own discourse frames for mobilization purposes?
2. How do users of Chinese social media platforms adapt to and utilize the rules of algorithmic games through social media platforms?
3. How does the concept of algorithmic games change when users mobilize online in algorithmic games?

Methodologically speaking, this paper analyze the frames based on 13724 comments from Weibo, Red, Bilibili, and Tiktok. A frame is an "interpreted diagram", and this paper analyzes five framing elements - metaphor, example, aphorism, description, and visual image - with reference to the "media kit" approach(Goffman, 1974; Gamson, 1989). The authors and another coder conducted a reliability check and coding negotiation to classify the frame categories of the data cleaned texts. In addition to this, the software Ucinet and Gephi were used to construct images of the social network of relationships between the users. It also looks for users of nodes in the social network. It is used to understand how users use algorithmic rules for network mobilization.

The study found that:

1. Users utilized emotional, topical, and metaphorical discourse frame construction for mobilization purposes.
2. Users broke the general acquaintance network in Chinese culture and mobilized by using a closer network of strangers in order to get more users to participate. Algorithms recommend and select events that are discussed by more users, and users take advantage of this to participate in the algorithmic game. In this process, the user who first sends a comment becomes a "node" in the social network relationship and the leader of the algorithmic game.
3. User mobilization expands the meaning of the algorithmic game. Participants in algorithmic games are no longer limited to content producers, but include users who may have no personal agenda at all. The mobilization of ordinary users for public events gives algorithmic games commonweal character.

The findings suggest that users try to construct an egalitarian relationship amidst unequal algorithmic rules and unequal social events. Users took positive action to mobilize online, expanding the meaning of algorithmic games as a mechanism.

Keywords

algorithmic games, inequality, online mobilization, comments section,China

Examining Women's Support for Fertility Encouragement Policy in China: An Extension of the Influence of Presumed Media Influence Model

Authors

Ms. Shiyao LI - Singapore - National University of Singapore

Abstract

China is currently facing severe demographic challenges, including aging population and declining birth rate (Ning et al., 2022). In response, the Chinese government has implemented multiple policies to promote fertility (e.g., three-child policy). Despite these efforts, the fertility rate still shows a declining trend. Previous studies have primarily examined various factors (i.e., media usage, social trust, and policies) influencing individuals' fertility intentions (e.g., Ning et al., 2022). However, limited research investigated how media indirectly affect people's support for fertility encouragement policies. Employing the influence of presumed media influence model (IPMI; Gunther & Storey, 2003), this study examined how Chinese women's media attention and interpersonal communication regarding benefits of fertility indirectly influences their support for fertility encouragement policies. We also examined whether this influence is mediated by their assumptions about others' attention to these messages, as well as by their perceived social norms and personal norms regarding support for fertility encouragement policies.

Results from an online survey involving 616 Chinese women of reproductive age indicated that our proposed structural model fits the data well, $\chi^2 = 436.57$, $df = 171$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 2.55$, CFI = .95, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .06). Specifically, individuals' own attention to media content ($\beta = .66$, $p < .001$) and interpersonal communication ($\beta = .30$, $p < .001$) regarding the benefits of fertility are positively related to their presumed media influence of such messages on others. Additionally, presumed media influence on others exhibited positive associations with their perceived descriptive norms ($\beta = .48$, $p < .001$), injunctive norms ($\beta = .53$, $p < .001$) and personal norms ($\beta = .80$, $p < .01$) regarding support for fertility encouragement policies. Furthermore, the correlation between perceived descriptive norms and support for fertility encouragement policies is non-significant ($\beta = -.05$, $p = .73$). However, both perceived injunctive norms ($\beta = .38$, $p = .01$) and personal norms ($\beta = .51$, $p < .001$) are positively related with women's support for policies encouraging fertility.

This study reveals several intriguing findings. First, interpersonal communication about the benefits of fertility is positively associated with perceived influence of media messages regarding fertility benefits on others. Extending the research by Shi et al. (2022), our results reveal that interpersonal communication not only affects behavioral outcomes (e.g., healthy behavioral intentions) but also attitudinal outcomes, including support for policies that encourage fertility. Second, women's presumptions about the influence of messages about fertility benefits on others could elicit their support for policies encouraging fertility by strengthening their perceived injunctive and personal norms. Recognizing the significance of normative perception and the crucial role of interpersonal

communication, this study offers insights for media practitioners on how to optimize media messages to foster discussions and activate a sense of self-obligation towards fertility.

Keywords

IPMI Model; Fertility Encouragement Policies; Interpersonal Communication; Media Attention

Characteristics and dynamic evolution of group polarization in social media—an analysis based on the Guangzhou subway “secret photography” incident

Authors

Mrs. Yunfang Cui - China - cui_yunfang@cuc.edu.cn

Ms. Mengfan Gao - China - gaomengfan@cuc.edu.cn

Ms. Huihui Guo guo - China - 2021213053005@cuc.edu.cn

Abstract

The online anonymity and recommendation algorithm of social media make it easier for online groups to gather, and the expression of netizens tend to be more extreme. Thus the research foundation for online group polarization was born. Current research mainly focuses on the mediating role of online platforms and Internet psychology to study its formation and influencing factors. The changing social media environment have made online group polarization to become more frequent, extreme, and violent. Therefore, the digital characteristics and evolution of online group polarization deserve further exploration. The message and interaction mechanisms of social media platforms provide rich data for studying the dynamic evolution of group polarization.

Sina Weibo, with its immediacy, interactivity and large user base, has become the preferred channel for the Chinese to express opinions, and has thus become a fermentation tank for Chinese online group polarization. The study selected a typical online public opinion case on the Weibo platform—the Guangzhou subway “secret photography” incident. On June 7, 2023, a Weibo female user posted that she suspected that she was secretly photographed by a middle-aged man while travelling on the subway in Guangzhou. She asked the man to show his phone album, but found no secretly photographed content. After the incident was exposed, it aroused huge public attention on Weibo. The content of netizens' discussion shifted from the incident itself to topics of educational equity and gender opposition, forming a typical group polarization phenomenon.

This study applies the Scrapy framework and uses "Guangzhou Subway" and "secret photography" as keywords to collect a total of 9,730 tweets and comments about the incident from Weibo between June 7 and June 23. We use emotional computing, topic models integrating TF-IDF and N-gram, and social network analysis to answer the following research questions:

1. How have the emotions and themes of Weibo netizens regarding the incident changed over time?
2. How did the discussion among Weibo netizens about the incident evolve into group polarization?
3. What are the characteristics of social networks on the Weibo in different periods? How do social networks influence the development of group polarization?

The study found that the group polarization of the Guangzhou subway "secret photography" incident can be divided into four stages: generation, fermentation, outbreak and recession. The dissemination of information on the Weibo platform stimulates the negative emotions of the

audience and triggers group polarization. Netizens' negative emotions gradually rise during the generation and fermentation stages, reach a peak during the outbreak stage, and gradually decrease during the subsidence stage. Netizens form social networks when participating in discussions, and the communication of social networks further spreads group polarization. It can be seen that the formation of group polarization is a complex and systematic dynamic process. The interaction of online groups leads to a gradual homogenisation of information, solidifying the collective consciousness of online groups and stimulating the spread of negative emotions. The formation of social networks strengthens the extremes of groups, thereby enhancing the polarization effect of network groups.

Keywords

group polarization, social network, dynamic evolution

Echoes in Silence: Navigating the Visibility Paradox of Deaf Creators on China's UGC Platforms

Authors

Mr. Pengyun Lu - United Kingdom - University of Warwick

Ms. Zhiling Guo - United Kingdom - University of Warwick

Abstract

User-Generated Content (UGC) platforms are often regarded as a 'regime of visibility' (Bucher, 2012), where creators are compelled to vie for the algorithm's spotlight to reach a wider audience. Despite platform owners' declarations of fostering diverse and inclusive communities, research highlights inherent inequalities within these digital spaces. Platform owners, through their regulatory, curatorial, and moderative practices, exert 'algorithmic editorial power', shaping creators' output to suit their own interests (Poell et al., 2021). Studies have shown a tendency of these platforms to disproportionately apply 'algorithmic punishments' to women, Black individuals, ethnic minorities, the disabled, and LGBTQ+ communities (Glatt, 2021; Duffy et al., 2021), leading to their increased online invisibility and inadvertently perpetuating societal prejudices (Poell et al., 2021). In this context, this paper presents findings from in-depth interviews with 25 Deaf creators on China's Douyin and Xiaohongshu platforms, uncovering the intricacies of visibility dynamics for Deaf creators. It reveals that the issue extends beyond visibility to the manner in which their creative outputs are orchestrated and perceived, significantly affecting diversity and equality in online communities.

Exploring the lived experiences of Deaf content creators, the study reveals how China's UGC platforms manifest an audist-centric culture, resulting in the spectacle-like representation of Deaf creators' content. While these platforms have increased the visibility of Deaf creators and offered potential economic benefits, it comes at a significant cost to genuine self-expression. Deaf creators using sign language often find themselves trapped into producing content that conforms to exaggerated, stereotypical 'deaf' narratives to cater to the hearing audience, sidelining the exploration of a broader range of content. This research delves into the affordances of online platforms for Deaf creators, highlighting how the intersection of technological, economic, and cultural dynamics between creators, platforms, and audiences leads to an alienation of their online presence. The research finds that such alienation is closely tied to algorithmic biases favouring auditory content, the traffic-driven business models of platform owners, the enticement of subsidies for economically disadvantaged Deaf creators, and the public's curiosity culture fuelled by the low visibility of minority groups in contemporary Chinese society. The paper argues that these trends not only undermine the expressive equality of the Deaf community but also reinforce the existing cultural hierarchy between the hearing and Deaf. Consequently, it advocates for a critical examination of digital platforms' affordances for minority groups, emphasising the need to confront the escalating online inequalities and potential digital discrimination in the era of platformization.

Keywords

Platform, Deaf Creator, Visibility, Algorithmic Bias, Digital Affordance, Online Alienation

Agenda-setting on Chinese Social Media: A Case Study of Chinese Youth's Political Discussion on the Three-child Policy

Authors

Ms. Shihan Sun - China - Beijing Normal University

Abstract

China's fertility policy shifts from planned parenthood and the one-child policy to a more relaxed approach to address gender imbalances rooted in patriarchal preferences and the aging problem, sparking broad discussions on official and social media.

This study aims to compare and analyze the agendas of social media users with those of mainstream media, exploring the audience's attitude on Sina Weibo and the reasons behind them. The study proposes the following research questions: (1) What differences exist between social media users and mainstream media agendas? (2) What are the reasons behind these differences? (3) What factors influence the effectiveness of agenda-setting?

Research on social media and fertility intentions concentrates on attitudes toward policies (Ning, 2022) and the effects of discourse on intentions (Liu, 2022); studies targeting Weibo have examined media-public interactions (Deng, 2021), framing (Chen, 2023), and causes of fertility fear (Yang & Wang, 2023). Although existing research notes differences between social and mainstream media agendas, comparative studies are rare.

This study employs the LDA method to analyze the discussions and reports. It selects Sina Weibo as the data source, extracting 149,387 posts from 15 hot topics related to the three-child policy and seven reports with 56,839 comments from the People's Daily Weibo.

The agenda-setting comprises two layers: "themes" and "attributes." This study shows that mainstream media typically set agendas on "theme", focusing objectively on childbirth from the perspective of national policies to alleviate the burden of childbearing. Social media, conversely, more subjectively discusses "attributes", favoring the negative impacts. The differences stem from platform characteristics and media properties. Chinese mainstream media, influenced by the Marxist concept of news, focuses on national interest, thus exhibiting unidirectional characteristics in public topic discussions.

The study reveals factors that impact agenda-setting effectiveness. Firstly, the audience's value affects their reaction. With the rise of feminism in China, women have shifted their focus from "carrying on the family line" to personal happiness, prioritizing their rights. Secondly, social events, such as domestic violence, including "wife murder", alongside professional challenges like sexual harassment and dismissal during maternity leave, enable unmarried women to construct their childbearing identities through the process of "transference", engaging with others' experiences to form "imagined fears". Finally, political and economic challenges, notably education, housing, and eldercare, foster affordability concerns among the youth. This concern conflicts with the fertility policy discourse promoted by mainstream media, leading to "cognitive dissonance." To maintain

cognitive equilibrium, they may block or resist mainstream media information, affecting their interpretation of fertility discourse. These factors collectively influence the agenda-setting dissemination process, impairing its ultimate impact and effectiveness.

This research explains the differences between official and public agendas in shaping fertility discourse. From the theoretical perspective, it provides a framework for analyzing how different media set their agendas and enriches the agenda-setting theory from the perspective of influencing factors. From a practical standpoint, it elucidates the shifting fertility concepts of Chinese youth, accentuating social media's pivotal role in policy discourse and advocating for enhanced gender equality narratives to inform policy communication strategies.

Keywords

agenda-setting, fertility policy, social media

Online Serendipity on Xiaohongshu: Unexpected Encounters with Real-Life Acquaintances on Social Media

Authors

Mr. Yuguo Luo - United Kingdom - London School of Economics and Political Science

Mr. Qianhui Ju - China - Communication University of China

Abstract

This study focuses on the phenomenon of online serendipity on Xiaohongshu. Online serendipity refers to the phenomenon where, due to content relevance on social media, users inadvertently access visibility beyond what their real-life acquaintances have preset, unexpectedly encountering their friends' unknown creative content.

Xiaohongshu, as a Chinese lifestyle sharing platform (Wu, 2021), its users often accidentally come across creative content of their real-life acquaintances that have never been shared between them through content relevance, glimpsing the other unknown side of their real-life acquaintances (Ge, 2023). However, real-life acquaintances have clear visibility control on their self-disclosure, which may be preset to be visible only to strangers and close friends instead of real-life acquaintances unintentionally encountered it (Kennedy, 2018).

Previous related research has mainly focused on access visibility and self-disclosure. Some studies suggest that user behaviors on social media can also be divided into frontstage and backstage activities according to Goffman's (1973) dramaturgical theory, and social media users tend to overshare, exposing backstage activities excessively (Persson, 2012). In addition, self-disclosure on social media may pose privacy leakage and information security risks (Krasnova et al., 2012; Haijli & Lin, 2016), requiring visibility control to accommodate sharing needs across different social relationships (Green et al., 2016; Cheung et al., 2015; Zeng, 2021). However, Xiaohongshu provides multiple functions to recommend potentially known people to users (Wu, 2021), invalidating user visibility control and leading to online serendipity.

Based on the above, this study conducted content analysis on 79 posts on Xiaohongshu sharing online serendipity experiences and semi-structured interviews with 17 Xiaohongshu bloggers, coding and categorizing the major channels, user reactions, phenomenon effects and influencing factors of online serendipity. It also adopted the Brief Histrionic Personality Scale (Ferguson & Negy, 2014) and the Online Oversharing Inventory (Shabahang et al., 2022) to conduct a randomized sampling questionnaire survey of 274 Xiaohongshu users across different regions, measuring respondents' cognition, evaluation and reactions to online serendipity. Based on the content analysis and questionnaire results, this study has drawn the following main conclusions:

- There are four major channels for online serendipity: phone contacts association; WeChat, Weibo, QQ account association; mutual followings association; homepage- content or system-account recommendation.

- Users tend to experience surprise, worry, fear emotions rather than positive feelings after online serendipity encounters, and inclined to adjust their own visibility control.
- Online serendipity enhances the one-sided understanding of the encountered person by the encountering person, but does not necessarily bring positive impacts on their relationship. The influence of online serendipity on their relationship is mainly subject to the content involved and the original acquaintance level.

This study has further explored the impact of access visibility control on private self-disclosure on Xiaohongshu, and discussed measures users can take to avoid online serendipity and strategies for relevant companies to avoid infringing user privacy.

Keywords

Online Serendipity; Visibility Control; Self-disclosure; Xiaohongshu

An integrated model for examining news media effects on public perceptions of autonomous delivery drones

Authors

Prof. Shirley Ho - Singapore - Nanyang Technological University

Mr. Justin Cheung - Singapore - Nanyang Technological University

Ms. Wenqi Tan - Singapore - Nanyang Technological University

Abstract

In the rapidly evolving landscape of artificial intelligence (AI), AI-enabled technologies are slated to play substantial roles in the public's daily lives. Autonomous delivery drones are one such technological advancement that has garnered significant attention for its potential to revolutionize urban mobility systems (Rosen, 2019). Specifically, autonomous delivery drones are expected to enhance the logistical efficiency of delivery systems, provide critical support in disaster relief and crisis management, and transform how resources are allocated and distributed (Ovide, 2022).

However, the integration of new technologies like autonomous delivery drones engenders significant concerns. For example, the pervasive use of cameras for image recognition during flight navigation raises substantial privacy concerns (Khan et al., 2019; Rosenfeld, 2019; West et al., 2019). Furthermore, the potential for mechanical and algorithmic malfunctions presents safety risks that must be meticulously addressed to ensure the reliability of these systems (Rosenfeld, 2019). Finally, the use of drone propellers contributes to noise pollution, an environmental concern that necessitates careful consideration (Schäffer et al., 2021). To foster a comprehensive understanding and successful societal integration of autonomous delivery drones, it is crucial to examine public perceptions of autonomous delivery drone applications.

The main objective of this study is to examine the effects of the public's attention to news media on their perceptions of autonomous delivery drones. Specifically, we seek to understand public intention to use autonomous delivery drones for three distinct purposes: postal delivery, food delivery, and medical supply delivery. This triad of applications encapsulates the most prevalent and differentiated forms of delivery drone applications, each of which embodies unique operational characteristics and societal implications. For example, postal delivery drones primarily serve diverse commercial purposes, whereas food delivery drones cater to daily necessities. In contrast, medical supply drones stand out for their contribution to social good.

To this end, we propose an integration of the communication mediation model—also known as the orientation-stimulus-orientation-response (O-S-O-R) model—with the well-established theory of planned behavior (TPB). Both frameworks provide robust theoretical lenses through which we can scrutinize the antecedents of use intention. It allows for systematic examination of how the public forms attitudinal and perceptual reactions to the media, and subsequently, how these reactions culminate in the outcome response of use intention.

[MODEL:

Orientation (O1): Control variables (Demographics; Prior use of drones etc.)

Stimulus (S): News media attention

Orientation (O2): Attitude; Subjective norms; Perceived behavioral control (TPB constructs)

Response (R): Use intention (Postal delivery; Food delivery; Medical supply delivery)]

Methodologically, we will analyze cross-sectional survey data (N = 1,002) collected in Singapore with structural equation modelling (SEM) using MPlus 8.3. The structural model will include control variables of age, gender, ethnicity, prior drone use, and such demographic variables.

By integrating the TPB and O-S-O-R frameworks, we investigate the role of attention to news media in shaping public perceptions of autonomous delivery drones, thus unveiling the mechanisms of the public perception formation. Theoretically, this study seeks to test the applicability of the integrated model in examining public perceptions of emerging technologies. Practically, this study aims to investigate the antecedents, including news media attention, that influences public perceptions of various types of autonomous delivery drones. The public perception formation trajectories across drone types, which may present different patterns, is of analytical interest as well.

Keywords

Communication mediation model; O-S-O-R model; TPB model; AI; Delivery drones

How Moral Outrage Spreads in the Digital Age: An Empirical Study of College Students in Shanghai

Authors

Ms. Mingyue Zhang - China - School of Journalism and Communication, Shanghai International Studies University

Ms. Qianyue Wang - China - School of Journalism and Communication, Shanghai International Studies University

Abstract

Outrage is an ancient and universal emotion. On social media, information that triggers outrage becomes particularly visible due to the influence of group psychology (moral-emotion expression receive increased amount of positive social feedback) and content algorithms (Crockett, 2017; Brady, McLoughlin, Torres, & Luo, 2023). Outrage in the digital era not only undergoes quantitative changes in intensity, frequency, and scale but also a qualitative transformation in its generation and expression logic, manifesting as altruistic and more justifiable moral outrage (Spring, Cameron, & Cikara, 2019). Whether digital moral outrage can catalyze collective action or limit participation in the public sphere is controversial (Spring, Cameron, & Cikara, 2018; Brady & Crockett, 2019).

This research aims to offer a new perspective into the debate by integrating micro-level personal characteristics (news consumption habits, online expression habits, sense of justice, self-efficacy) and macro-level social contexts into the spreading process of moral outrage online. We focused on a specific regional group, college students in Shanghai, China (N=266). Data were gathered from a questionnaire survey and depth interviews. As “digital natives” with relatively high education and living standards, our respondents are accustomed to staying informed about hot news on social media (Milkman, 2017).

It is found that individuals who actively follow the news and have a strong sense of efficacy, believing that personal attention and involvement can impact event progress, tend to experience moral outrage more frequently. They are more inclined to express their opinions publicly and engage in offline actions, such as mobilization and donation. However, respondents generally exhibit a lower level of efficacy ($M=2.96/5$), suggesting that the translation of online outrage into actions on the ground is challenging.

The paper proposes the need to distinguish between two sources of digital moral outrage: violation of a moral norm by the event itself (Salerno & Peter-Hagene, 2013) and dissatisfaction with the social contexts, especially the media environment (e.g., polarized public opinion, strict censorship). Given the unique public opinion environment in China, the latter source should be taken into account. It is found that the former remains the main cause of moral outrage, while the latter often serves as an emotional accelerant that reinforces and prolongs the efficacy of this emotion online.

Moreover, a potential long-term repercussion of polarized public opinion and mainstream media distrust is the onset of “outrage fatigue”, which prompts individuals to socially disengage by deliberately avoiding relevant information.

The findings emphasize the need to consider both the personal characteristics and social contexts when analyzing the impact of online moral outrage on specific individual. Thus, this study provides ideas on how to harness the positive effects of this strong group-based emotion in the digital age.

Keywords

digital moral outrage, public opinion, digital natives, group polarization

Grassroots grievances in the mediated environment: How Chinese netizens engage in counter-meritocracy public discourse

Authors

Ms. Xinghan WANG - United States - University of California Berkeley

Mr. Ruochen ZHANG - China - University College London

Abstract

While the Internet has ascended as the frontier of public opinion, online communication is heavily mediated by influencers, advertisers, and the black box of algorithms. Weibo, as a pre-eminent Chinese social media network, hosts voices of the state, official media institutions, opinion leaders, news agencies, and ordinary internet users, and presents such an intricate landscape. Criticized for its censorship, commercialization, and entertainment-oriented nature, the Twitter-like microblogging site remains a major channel for public participation and an alternative discursive space in China. In light of contentious social events, Weibo can facilitate quasi-public sphere, where popular sentiments and grassroots discourses are made by the online population against influential figures as well as predominant narratives. How effectively can commercial platforms maintain a role of quasi-public sphere? What kind of public opinion is represented? Through a case study on the recent controversy around Li Jiaqi (Austin Li) in September, 2023, this study aims to investigate how Chinese Internet users engage in the grassroots-oriented public discussion on Weibo.

As one of China's most popular live streamers and beauty influencers, Li lost his temper when a viewer questioned the high price of a domestic eyebrow pencil he endorsed, criticizing his viewers for "not working hard enough" and little self-reflection on their modest income. The original footage of his contemptuous attitude went viral across different platforms, following days of discussions around Li and the implied meritocratic elitism in his words. Taking advantage of online scraped data, 6127 eligible Weibo trending posts between September 10th and September 30th, 2023 with the keyword "Li Jiaqi " immediately following the incident are collected, including content of post, time, number of likes, comments, retweets. After data cleaning and pre-processing steps like tokenization, eleven topics can be identified using latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) topic modeling technique from the 5221 Weibo posts as the refined dataset. Topics are then grouped into eight themes based on keywords in LDA and manual coding on a 5% sample of the dataset. In terms of the empirical and theoretical contribution, the team detects a collective discontent and grassroots public discourse based on the eight themes. In light of the economic downturn after Covid-19, the socio-political arguments in Weibo trending posts centered on the controversy but also extended to broader social issues, showing discontent with the neoliberal meritocracy implied in Li Jiaqi's statements; displeasure against societal inequality of wealth distribution; and reflection upon overpriced domestic brands employing nationalist marketing.

Looking into the overall patterns of the most popular posts in each theme, the constraints of highly commercialized social media sites like Weibo are analyzed as well. In Li Jiaqi's controversy, there

is a high level of coordination, where homogenized content is recurrently distributed by different accounts after minor edits. A considerable number of trending posts are of limited substance, which are either emotion-fused, or highlight engagement-enticing by asking for comments. On account of the traffic-driven platform ecology, the depth of deliberation in grassroots expressions is likely to be held back. In general, this study contributes to the ongoing scholarly inquiry about the public engagement on the Chinese Internet. Under the heavy presence of the state and platform culture, Chinese netizens react to contentious events in an indigenous way, expressing grievances on Chinese social issues on Weibo.

Keywords

public sphere, digital platform, grassroot discourse, user agency, public engagement

Online human-robot interaction: an information ecology perspective on the public opinion impact of social bots in reversal news

Authors

Ms. Wenhui Liang - China - School of Literature and Journalism, Sichuan University

Abstract

As part of the information ecosystem and with the continuous iteration of science and technology, social bots are no longer a fringe phenomenon on social media but are playing an increasingly important role in cyberspace. While social bots are not directly harmful as neutral tools, they are often used maliciously to direct and distort public opinion by automatically generating content and engaging in user interactions. The human-robot hybrid model is changing the basis of public discourse, discussion, and participation in cyberspace.

Although existing studies have explored various aspects of social bots' technology, characteristics, development, and opinion influence, they have found that social bots have a proliferative effect on the spread of disinformation. However, most studies have focused on Twitter, and there are fewer studies on social bots on Chinese social media. To address this gap, this study, based on the theory of information ecology, takes social bots as the object of analysis, takes the case of the student's death by falling in Chengdu No. 49 Middle School as a case study, and incorporates the informant, the information attributes, and the information environment into the analytical model, to comprehensively and deeply examine how social bots directly or indirectly influence the diffusion of information and the dissemination of emotions in the reversal of news.

The study found that social bots exhibit human-like role-playing characteristics in inverse news. Among the 8981 samples captured in the study, 7.2% are social bot accounts, which participate in the dissemination of inverse news by imitating human accounts. The difference is that among the five stages of inverse news, social bots are most active in the first stage and spread false information in large quantities, while human users mostly post false information in the third stage. In terms of information properties, blog posts published by social bots are characterized by mechanical computational narratives. First, the textual characteristics of short text, high originality, and high similarity; second, the thematic characteristics of blog posts that stand in the position of the weak and focus on official initiatives; and third, the emotional tendency characteristics of neutral emotion dominance and negative emotion being higher than positive emotion. In terms of information diffusion ability, unlike the social robots on Twitter, the social robots on Weibo present a weak influence information diffusion effect, and although they have gained a certain degree of blog post dissemination by strongly linking to popular topics, the actual influence of their blog posts is still low. In summary, this study enriches the public opinion research on social bots in the Chinese context on a theoretical level and explores the role of social bots in reversing news. At the same time, the study also provides reflections on the practical level of guiding disordered social bots and realizing the orderly channeling of public opinion on anti-reversal news.

Keywords

Social bots, Information ecology, reversal news, Information diffusion, opinion intervention

Overloaded closeness: the role of social media as a reverse mediator in the maintenance of intimacy in long-distance relationships

Authors

Mr. Haoyu Yang - China - Communication University of China

Abstract

In the process of maintaining long-distance relationships, the popularity of social media has played a huge role in extending human senses and creating partial embodied companionship, so that "strong connection" intimacy does not turn into "weak connection" interactions due to "long-distance". However, taking the Chinese social media *Mars* as an example, the emergence of social media platforms that can provide strong interactivity has also overloaded the maintenance of intimate relationships to a certain extent. In this paper, we try to answer the following questions: What are the ways to maintain long-distance relationships? How important are trust and transparency in maintaining long-distance relationships? What kind of mediating role do the social media, which offer greater interactivity, have in maintaining long-distance relationships?

To answer these questions, we used the walkthrough method to examine the *Mars* through the complete process of registration, use, and logout to analyze the embodied interactions provided by the social media and how it can support the online relationships of long-distance couples. We selected fifteen long-distance couples from college students in China as samples, and conducted in-depth interviews with them to discuss their endeavors and results in intimate relationship maintenance. In addition, we also chose six universities in Beijing to distribute questionnaires to collect young people's views on media platforms in the maintenance of long-distance relationships. This paper analyzed the development trend and specific manifestations of efficient, calculable, predictable and comprehensive control in the exhibition of intimate relationships among young people based on the concept of McDonaldization of intimacy, and updated the theoretical understanding of Triangular Theory of Love in the maintenance of long-distance relationships.

Through the analysis, we find that the anxiety brought about by the factor of long-distance makes couples often want to familiarize themselves with each other's whereabouts through social media, or participate in each other's lives all the time in order to alleviate the uneasiness brought about by the distance; however, this kind of interaction is also prone to produce the sense of "task-drivenness", which narrows down the private space and brings great psychological pressure and even crises of trust to the two sides. The long-distance couples will predict and judge the development of their intimate relationship by the state of their relationship and the response of the other person, and at the same time, they will make analogies with successful or unsuccessful relationships to control their own relationship and make their intimate relationship "calculable", which presents the characteristics of McDonaldization of intimacy. In conclusion, we argue that in the context of social media, trust and transparency are important in maintaining a long-distance relationship. Although it allows the couples to participate in their lives through "anthropomorphic presence", it also lowers

the basic trust of the relationship and increases the pressure of relationship maintenance, showing a reverse mediating effect in the maintenance of long-distance romantic intimacy.

Keywords

Social media, mediator, intimacy, relational maintenance, long-distance relationships

Speaking Out for Reactance?: Examining Hong Kong Residents' Ordinance-related Expression through Social Media

Authors

Dr. Caixie Tu - China - Shanghai University

Prof. Xigen Li - China - Shanghai University

Dr. Fangcao Lu - Hong Kong - The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Abstract

Purpose – Informed by the psychological reactance theory (Dillard & Shen, 2005), this study examines how individuals' social media exposure to news about a policy issue affects their willingness to express opinions on the issue via social media, above and beyond typical mediating factors, such as cognitive elaboration and civic discussion. Specifically, this study investigates how individuals' social media exposure to the issue of Hong Kong National Flag and National Emblem Ordinance, issue involvement (i.e., value-relevant and outcome-relevant involvement), perceptions of behavioral constraint, and cognitive reactance affect their online expression.

Design/methodology – An online survey was administered among 1,253 social media users in Hong Kong in June 2022. A hypothesized serial mediation model was developed to elucidate the direct and indirect influence of social media exposure to Ordinance-related news on users' willingness to express opinions via social media. The hypotheses were tested using PROCESS (Model 6; Hayes, 2022), with social media exposure as the independent variable, issue involvement, perceptions of behavioral constraint, cognitive reactance as three mediators, and willingness to express opinions via social media as the dependent variable. Demographics (i.e., age, gender, and education), party affiliation, traditional media exposure, pre-existing attitudes toward the Ordinance, anger, and perceived opinion climate were included as covariates.

Findings – The results show that only value-relevant involvement, rather than outcome-relevant involvement, mediates the association between social media exposure to Ordinance-related news and willingness to express opinions via social media (i.e., social media news exposure→ value-relevant involvement→ social media expression). Moreover, the results point to the importance of perceptions of behavioral constraint and cognitive reactance in prompting social media opinion expression. The serial mediation model indicates the indirect influence of social media news exposure on willingness to express opinions through outcome-relevant involvement, perceptions of behavioral constraint, and cognitive reactance in sequence (i.e., social media news exposure→ outcome-relevant involvement→ perceived behavioral constraint→ cognitive reactance→ social media expression).

Implications – This study delineates a cognitive process through which social media news exposure to a policy-related issue influences social media opinion expression. Notably, the findings reveal a serial mediation model wherein issue involvement, perceived behavioral constraint, and cognitive reactance sequentially mediate the association between social media news exposure and

opinion expression. Despite the prominence of various cognitive activities, such as information elaboration, political efficacy, perceived media bias, and perceived opinion climate as antecedents to opinion expression in existing communication literature (e.g., Guo et al., 2018; Szóstakowski & Besta, 2023; Weeks et al., 2024), this study extends the psychological reactance theory to the realms of public opinion and political communication and proposes reactance as another crucial motivation for social media activism. The findings may help policymakers and public administrators understand the public's psychological mechanisms of policy-related opinion expression and design more persuasive media intervention strategies for policy promotion campaigns in the digital era.

Keywords

social media expression, psychological reactance, public opinion, Hong Kong

The “Deserted” Social Media: Impression Management, Social Exchange, and Context Collapse in Chinese Youth

Authors

Ms. Qingxuan Wang - China - School of Media and Communication, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Prof. Xiaoying Yan - China - Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Abstract

On October 31, 2023, the hashtag “Why people are disappearing in WeChat Moments” hit the Weibo trending topic list. Moments, a WeChat feature similar to Facebook enabling users to share posts, faced a decline, with reasons like “retaining a sense of boundaries” and “being too lazy to block specific audiences” cited frequently by users. WeChat, China’s largest social media with 1.31 billion users (Statista, 2020), prompts an exploration into the paradox of Moments’ abandonment.

According to Goffman’s impression management theory (2022), people employ corresponding behaviors to maintain positive images in front of others to achieve social approval and control the interaction outcome. In contemporary Chinese society, where interpersonal relationships are highly valued as social resources (Tsai, 2008), impression management serves more utilitarian purposes. Through posting on social media, Chinese people accumulate social capital (Chu & Choi, 2010), build self-identity (Yao et al, 2023), and maintain “mianzi” (reputation) (Au, 2021). Therefore, scholars have argued that social exchange theory could better explain Chinese people’s relationship dynamics (Tsai, 2008). Impression management on social media involves costs but yields benefits (Homans, 1974), consuming users’ time and attention but also providing social resources and emotional support.

In this regard, because of the “mianzi” and “guanxi” (relationship) ties (Au, 2021), context collapse on social media becomes an awkward situation for Chinese users. In recent years, the emergence of new media has triggered changes in people’s interaction patterns (Leary, 2019). The concept of context collapse proposed by Danah Boyd has become a concern for more and more social media users (Boyd, 2014). The complicated audience composition and information environment on social media force users to navigate norms across different contexts carefully (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). Consequently, context collapse becomes an undesired outcome for users who have invested and expect to reap benefits (Zhang & Ma, 2021). Therefore, this study hypothesizes that an increase in users’ perceived costs and perceived benefits of impression management on social media will lead to a corresponding intensification in their perception of context collapse.

Although it has been confirmed that context collapse influences users’ impression management behaviors, how their strategies change remains inconclusive. Complex social media audience composition will lead to a lower willingness to share personal information (Child & Starcher, 2016), but the occurrence of context collapse enhances users’ self-representation in online communities (Vitak, 2012). Scholars have compared “context collapse” with “privacy boundary turbulence” and defined context collapse as a unique form of privacy boundary collision (Davis &

Jurgenson, 2014) that motivates users to actively engage in privacy management behaviors (McNealy & Mullis, 2019). Therefore, this study hypothesizes that users' perception of context collapse in WeChat Moment will also lead to different privacy management behaviors and hopes to know how these behaviors will change.

The scales chosen by this study were derived from previous studies and were all validated. Through quantitative survey, this study aims to contribute to the literature on social media usage in contemporary Chinese society and offer practical implications for the refinement of social media service design.

Keywords

impression management, Mianzi, social exchange, context collapse

Double Tap for Friendship: Exploring the Social Capital of Dual Instagram Accounts Among Japanese Youth

Authors

Ms. Xueqin Huang - Japan - Nagoya University

Mr. Xingjian Gao - Japan - Nagoya University

Abstract

In the digital age, Instagram has emerged as a crucial tool for social interaction and identity formation among Japanese youth, serving as a contemporary “digital business card”. Despite a significant amount of study on social media and social capital focusing on platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, the strategic use of Instagram has been relatively underexplored. This study employs mixed methods to examine Instagram’s evolving role in the lives of Japanese youth. Initially, qualitative interviews were conducted to investigate Instagram usage patterns and how they contribute to social capital accumulation.

The findings reveal the wide range of uses of Instagram: serving as a platform for information gathering, self-expression, sharing daily experiences, and fostering both strong and weak social ties. It serves as a tool for crafting digital identities, with likes and comments from peers acting as markers of social validation. The strategy of having dual accounts for distinct social circles highlights a refined method for managing privacy and targeting specific audiences, facilitating a balance between private sharing and public image management.

The recommendation algorithms of Instagram are essential in converting weak ties into potential strong connections. This process indicates a digital evolution of social capital, where online interactions can lead to more substantial relationships. Nevertheless, concerns over privacy and self-image, demonstrated by the act of selective sharing and private account settings, indicate underlying anxieties about online exposure and personal safety.

This exploratory research raises further questions about how Instagram and other digital platforms shape youth identities across cultural settings, the transformation of casual connections into strong ties in online versus offline contexts, and the influence of privacy and self-presentation anxieties on social interactions and the construction of identity on social interactions and identity development online. The qualitative findings from Study 1 will guide the development of a subsequent survey aimed at exploring these questions, providing a deeper understanding of the complex and dynamic relationships between Instagram usage, social connections, and identity construction.

This study provides valuable insights into theoretical frameworks and practical applications in digital media studies by exploring how Japanese youth engage with Instagram for social interactions and identifying the factors that influence their strategies for accumulating social capital. Furthermore, this research invites additional investigations into the usage of Instagram and the development of social capital across various cultural contexts. It also seeks to explore how privacy

concerns and self-presentation anxieties affect the relationship between Instagram usage and social capital.

Keywords

Instagram Usage, Social Capital, Digital Identity, Online Privacy, Japanese Youth

‘Opinion tree’: Mapping opinion evolution in user talk with the help of three AI-based methods

Authors

Dr. Ivan Blekanov - Russian Federation - St. Petersburg State University

Dr. Svetlana Bodrunova - Russian Federation - St. Petersburg State University

Mr. Nikita Tarasov - Russian Federation - St. Petersburg State University

Abstract

Neural-network-based methods of opinion mining have recently been in explosive growth. Among the rest, scholars aspire to representing opinion dynamics in user discussions, so that it would capture cumulation, shift, and dissipation of in them (Papacharissi, 2015; Zhang, Mao, Lin, 2017). This would allow for tracing polarization of views on particular issues, shorten the time for evaluation of opinion development, and allow for theoretical enquiry on the nature of cumulative user opinions, including the forms in which they emerge and are seen by AI.

Opinion dynamics is today imagined via ‘tree-like’ discussion representations, where ‘branches’ develop in time from the initial point (Kawamae, 2018). However, despite multiple attempts, earlier ‘tree-like’ representations did not allow for easily reading of content and opinions, providing only hints to topicality and opinions, which demanded further manual exploration of hundreds of user texts.

We follow the ‘opinion tree’ idea but link it to the concept of cumulative deliberation (author1, 2023), thus asking: (1) how can we make the ‘opinion tree’ easily readable – that is, human-like in its final representation of text conglomerates; (2) how would opinion representations accumulated within the ‘tree branches’ look like; and (3) whether one could detect polarized opinions and ‘echo chambers’ as parts of the discussion structure.

For this, we unite three advanced fine-tuned neural-network methods, namely BERT- and HDBSCAN-based ‘smart’ topic modeling, text standardization with word embeddings, and Transformer-based abstractive summarization. Tested previously for Twitter and Reddit by our research group (authors, 2022), abstractive summarization allows for getting human-like summaries for clusters of user texts. As the case, we use the Reddit-based discussion upon the UN Climate Change Summit 2022 (COP27/UNFCCC2022) in Egypt, data collected with the help of our web crawler (author2 et al., 2016) reworked for Reddit. In mapping user opinions, we define three steps: Defining the topicality bifurcation points, measuring the ‘thickness’ of ‘branches’, and summarizing the meaning of individual ‘branches’, thus allowing for both topicality divergence assessment and opinion tracing. Our method successfully defines the ‘natural’ number of topics and macro-topics (unlike LDA- or pLSA-based topic models), the starting moment for each macro-topic, the bifurcation points when a new branch separates from a macro-topic, and the end of a branch. Thus, the clustering-based ‘opinion tree’ construction becomes possible.

We also show that opinions may be summarized in various ways in our method; scholars may set the parameters for summarization depending on their needs. We suggest three options – one-sentence short ‘title-like’ summarization, 2-to-4-sentence summarization, and the ‘book-like’ one. The first option may be used for quick mapping of discussion branches when a researcher wishes to see the ‘big picture’ of the discussion; it contains ‘wrapped’ opinions similar to enthymemes. The second option captures polar opinions well and detects opinions by major actors of the issue discussed. The third option allows for better event tracing but is not deprived of summarization errors and ‘overcontextualized’ unclear statements. However, we suggest to use all the three modes of opinion representation depending on the ‘opinion tree’ summarization task.

Keywords

opinion mining, 'opinion tree', cumulative deliberation, neural-network methods, abstractive summarization

From Darwinism to Dataism: The Mechanisms of AIGC-Driven Cultural Evolution

Authors

Dr. Xinyuan Zhang - China - Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Prof. Ke Xue - China - Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Abstract

Introduction

Compared to human creativity, artificial intelligence (AI) offers an alternative for cultural evolution. While AI technologies during the Web 2.0 era fell short of human intelligence and attracted limited attention from scholars, the advent of AI-generated content (AIGC) technology, powered by large-scale models, has significantly advanced computational capabilities. The quality and accuracy of its content now mirror human cognitive patterns, presenting new challenges for cultural evolution studies. This paper seeks to explore critical questions by theoretical debates: **How does AIGC compare to the human brain in its role within cultural evolution? What distinctive features does it bring to cultural integration that surpass human capabilities? What are the prevailing mechanisms of cultural evolution driven by AIGC, and what future trends can be anticipated?**

Theoretical Perspective

Richard Dawkins integrated the foundational principles of Darwinism with evolutionary theory and sociology, offering an explanation of cultural evolution through natural selection. However, the premise of Memetics is that humans are the sole "hosts" for culture. This view asserts that only humans can alter or reconstitute "meme." **Drawing from Darwinism, AIGC emerges as a technological entity capable of generating "meme," shifting cultural production from a human-centric Meme Machine 1.0 to an AIGC-dominated Meme Machine 2.0.** Meme Machine 2.0, powered by advanced generative AI technology, can autonomously generate vast amounts of content swiftly, contrasting with the slower, human brain-based content creation process. **This transition signifies that culture's custodianship extends beyond humans, reflecting a trend towards data-driven evolution, called Dataism, proposed by Yuval Noah Harari.**

Evolutionary Characteristics and Mechanisms

AIGC exemplifies cultural production characterized by data rationality, embodying "spiritual materiality," transcending "human physiology," and achieving "cultural fidelity." This aligns with the view that cultural evolution parallels Darwinism. However, AIGC-driven cultural evolution represents a partial move towards Dataism, facilitated by the concept of "cultural twins." Unlike "digital twins"—digital replicas of physical entities—cultural twins aren't mere accurate reproductions of the physical world. Instead, they adapt the physical world's power dynamics to foster a digital culture shift from "replication" to "re-creation." **In this evolutionary process, characterized by mutation and selection, cultural twins exhibit "the mystique of**

human-centered emergence mechanisms," "cultural biases rooted in power equilibrium," and "cultural conflicts bound by algorithmic constraints."

Future Trends

Cultural twins foster a symbiotic interaction between AI and humans, acting as a conduit between AI and human civilizations. **This interaction is poised to "improve evolutionary adaptability," "explore free will," "enhance collaborative decision-making," and "maintain human-machine trust,"** potentially leading to a harmonious development of society and culture in the future. It's important to understand that AIGC is just one step in the progress of technology, not the peak. As technology continues to advance, it will change how culture evolves and how technology and people interact. Every new development in AIGC leads to further changes in cultural evolution. This ongoing process demonstrates that both successes and challenges are integral to continuous growth.

Keywords

AIGC, Cultural Evolution, Darwinism, The Meme Machine, Dataism, Cultural Twins

Positive Emojis Are Better?: Examining the Semantical, Emotional, and Relational Functions of Emojis

Authors

Ms. Jiajing Tang - United States - University of Miami

Abstract

More than 10 billion emojis are sent in daily communication, nearly seven million per minute [1]. As the popularity of emojis increases, a growing body of research has examined their roles in computer-mediated communication (CMC) and has established various communicative functions of emojis, such as facilitating information processing [2–5], conveying emotions [2, 6], transmitting social information [2, 7–9], and improving social connectedness [10–12]. However, fewer studies have typically delved deep into the underlying mechanisms during the processing of messages containing emojis in everyday relational CMC contexts. Therefore, this current study contributes to the literature by investigating how including emojis in text-based everyday conversations influences individuals' cognitive, emotional, and relational aspects of communicative processes and outcomes. Specifically, employing the Media Richness Theory and Cognitive Dissonance Theory as the theoretical framework, we conducted a 2 (Text: positive vs. negative) x 3 (emoji: positive vs. negative vs. none) between-subjects online experiment to address the central question: How does including emojis, congruent or incongruent with textual valence, make a difference to receivers' message comprehension, emotional experiences, and intimacy perceptions?

Prior to the experiment, we conducted a pilot study (N = 55) via Amazon MTurk to help determine the particular emojis and conversational texts for creating stimulus materials used in the experiment. Based on participants' valence ratings, six emojis (three positive and three negative) and six pieces of conversational texts (three positive and three negative) were selected. All selected emojis and texts passed the valence manipulation check. The final set of experimental stimuli consisted of 18 fictitious screenshots of parent-child Facebook Messenger conversations containing or not containing emojis, with three for each of the six experimental conditions.

We recruited 212 adults who fulfill the role of parents in real life via MTurk, independent from those in the pilot study, as participants for our experiment. Participants were instructed to presume that they were chatting with their child on Facebook Messenger and were randomly assigned to one of the six experimental conditions. In their own condition, each participant completed three trials, presented in a randomized order. In each trial, after viewing the stimulus, participants were asked to report message comprehension [3, 13], emotional experiences [14], and intimacy perceptions [15] on a 7-point Likert scale. After the experiment, participants completed a questionnaire regarding demographics and control variables (i.e., messaging app usage, emoji usage, overall intimacy with their children in real life, etc.).

Results from linear mixed effects modeling suggest that people generally prioritize textual content for interpreting messages, including in certain text-emoji incongruent conditions. Using emojis in text-based digital daily conversations may not significantly enhance information processing, such as

message comprehension, and may impede information processing when they are incongruent with the text. Additionally, findings show partial empirical support for emotional contagion in CMC containing emojis; such that positive emojis can increase receivers' positive emotional experiences, such as happiness and excitement. These emotional experiences, similar to those indicated by the emojis, in turn, enhance intimacy perceptions. Furthermore, the study observes a negative bias, wherein individuals are more likely to engage with and be affected by negative elements, whether in text or emoji form.

(Note: More details, theoretical and practical implications, as well as limitations, will be presented in the full paper.)

Keywords

Emoji, computer-mediated communication, information processing, emotional experiences, relational intimacy

Blaming of minorities on Twitter: Public opinion discourse during the COVID-19 public health crisis

Authors

Dr. Yimei Zhu - United Kingdom - university of leicester

Mr. Shiyi Zhang - United Kingdom - University of Leicester

Prof. Panayiota Tsatsou - United Kingdom - Birmingham City University

Prof. Lauren McLaren - United Kingdom - university of leicester

Abstract

Social media platforms such as Twitter (now named X) have become important sites of public discourse and participation. Under a major public crisis, the narrative of ‘othering’ of ethnic and religious minorities has also been fostered by the COVID-19 crisis in which generalisations were made towards groups of collective actors to which blame was subscribed. This study collected and analysed UK-based tweets which contained key words of the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to understand the topics and sentiment about minorities and public opinions on whom to blame.

We collected tweets for two occasions. The first one-week period selected was the seven-day period after Conservative Party MP Craig Whittaker stated that ‘It is the BAME communities that are not taking this seriously enough’ in an interview with LBC which was published on LBC website on 31 July 2020. July 2020 was also the month in which a record high number of racially or religiously aggravated offences (hate crimes) was recorded. The second one-week time period selected was the end of the month that witnessed the lowest amount of hate crime (January 2021) and was a month for which we are unaware of any major events that would have been likely to trigger large amounts of Twitter discourse on minorities. We conducted computational sentiment analysis and qualitative content analysis for tweets of those two occasions.

For the first occasion, we found negative sentiment on ‘blaming China’, and the discourse for other minorities groups were not significantly negative. Qualitative analysis on tweets identified blaming discourse on Muslims and other ethnic minorities. We identified public opinions that disagreed with the MP’s negative attitudes on BAME communities, however, there was also some tweets that agreed with the MP’ view. At this time, the vaccination had not been developed, thus the public was still under panic with the high mortality rate.

For the second occasion, sentiment analysis did not reveal significant negative sentiment on any group. This period is after Covid vaccine was made available to the UK public in December 2020. This shows that the public on Twitter has changed their attention to the solution to the health crisis, rather than blaming someone for the crisis.

Mainstream media reports on ethnic minorities being more likely to be affected by covid, and government/health authorities encouraged ethnic minorities to get vaccinated. This attention is positive for the wellbeing of ethnic minorities, but may also influence the portray of ethnic minorities, as they fall victim and thus lead to more negative sentiment on Twitter towards them.

Sentiment analysis has shown an overall negative sentiment in both weeks observed which confirms the fear and stigma among the general public in response to public crises. Specifically, we observed negative attitudes towards China as the topic modelling results show ‘Blame China’ was a common theme on Twitter with negative sentiment. This is in line with other UK-based studies and similar negative evaluations of Chinese migrants was reported in studies conducted in the United States.

Keywords

othering, public opinion, discourse on Twitter, blaming of minorities,

Political Debates in Third Spaces? Football Fan Communities and the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar

Authors

Prof. Axel Bruns - Australia - Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

Mx. Laura Vodden - Australia - Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

Dr. Tariq Choucair - Australia - Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

Dr. Sebastian Svegaard - Australia - Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

Ms. Kate O'Connor Farfan - Australia - Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

Abstract

Scholarship has long pointed to the importance of nominally apolitical ‘third places’ (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982) for everyday political talk. Here, communities come together primarily around shared non-political interests (culture, religion, sports, ...), and such places are valued so much for this communal function that, when political debate inevitably intrudes at times, community members actively attempt to defuse any controversies that may threaten this sense of collective belonging.

Initially understood by Oldenburg & Brissett as cafés, pubs, bars, clubs, and other physical locations, Wright (2012) identified apolitical online discussion spaces as serving similar functions in the digital realm, describing them as ‘third spaces’. Although lacking some of the interpersonal cues available in face-to-face communication, apolitical online spaces – such as interest groups and fandom communities – substitute various other paratextual cues, and their members similarly work to maintain community cohesion when confronted with political disagreements.

Such community maintenance interventions, and their levels of success, remain insufficiently understood, however; in particular, we are lacking a greater comprehensive perspective beyond isolated case studies that may have been selected specifically *because* of their success, and across cultural boundaries. This paper addresses this gap in our understanding through a large-scale study of a particularly productive case study: the discussion of political controversies associated with the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar by football fan communities on Facebook that usually follow domestic leagues and teams in England, Germany, Spain, Brazil, and Denmark.

For this study we systematically selected the 20 most active public Facebook groups discussing the respective domestic leagues (Premier League, Bundesliga, La Liga, Brasileirão, Superligaen) in the language of their country; almost all of these were groups following specific major teams (Liverpool FC, Borussia Dortmund, etc.). With domestic competitions paused during the World Cup, such groups tend to follow their teams’ players who were selected for various national teams,

as well as overall competition; however, given the substantial and long-term controversies about corruption in awarding the World Cup to Qatar, about migrant workers' deaths in the construction of World Cup venues, about the Qatari regime's resistance to calls for equal human rights for women, ethnic groups, and LGBTIQ+ people, and about the overall use of the World Cup for 'sportswashing' the country's image, political issues were also introduced into the discussion at various points.

We gathered Facebook posts and comments from these groups for the period of 13 November to 25 December 2022 (from one week before the start to one week after the end of the World Cup), and in this paper analyse the extent to which the groups thematise these issues, what topics generate the greatest resonance, and how they address political controversies that arise. Such approaches range from actively and deliberately seeking debate to explicitly disallowing and banning it; obvious distinctions between different fan communities (e.g. supporters of clubs with traditionally conservative or progressive fanbases) as well as between national political debate cultures also emerge. Overall, our study supports but also serves as a valuable reality check on the concept of third places or spaces and their potential for enabling meaningful debate across political perspectives.

Oldenburg, R., & Brissett, D. (1982). The Third Place. *Qualitative Sociology*, 5(4), 265–284. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00986754>

Wright, S. (2012). From “Third Place” to “Third Space”: Everyday Political Talk in Non-Political Online Spaces. *Javnost - The Public*, 19(3). <http://javnost-thepublic.org/article/2012/3/1/>

Keywords

political debate, fandom communities, football, third spaces, social media

'If you don't know, vote no': Symptoms of Destructive Polarisation in the 2023 Voice to Parliament Referendum in Australia

Authors

Prof. Axel Bruns - Australia - Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

Dr. Tariq Choucair - Australia - Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

Dr. Sebastian Svegaard - Australia - Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

Ms. Samantha Vilkins - Australia - Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

Dr. Katharina Esau - Australia - Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

Mx. Laura Vodden - Australia - Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology

Abstract

Much of the research on polarisation stops short of sufficiently defining and conceptualising the concept. This can lead to the conflation of different forms of polarisation in the design and findings of empirical studies; the over-diagnosis of problematic and pernicious forms of polarisation instead of mere disagreement and antagonism; and the unquestioned adoption of technologically determinist perspectives in the search for scapegoats and solutions.

Building on a systematic, crossdisciplinary review of the different forms of polarisation that have been proposed and identified in recent studies, Esau et al. (2023) introduced *destructive polarisation* as a particularly pernicious form of polarisation that is distinguished from more ordinary and less problematic forms of polarisation by a number of distinct symptomatic features; these include (a) *breakdown of communication*; (b) *discrediting and dismissing of information*; (c) *erasure of complexities*; (d) *exacerbated attention and space for extreme voices*; and (e) *exclusion through emotions*.

Building on this conceptual work, this paper addresses the challenge of translating the definitions of these symptoms into a methodological approach for identifying them in contemporary political debates, and for the empirical assessment of their severity – and therefore, for diagnosing the presence and extent of destructive dysfunction. In doing so, it also considers whether there are additional symptoms of destructive polarising dynamics that may need to be added to the initial list presented in Esau et al.

We develop and test this approach by applying it to a cross-platform dataset of social media debates related to the 14 October 2023 constitutional referendum on the establishment of an Indigenous

Voice to Parliament in Australia. Although opinion polling early in 2023 indicated that nearly two thirds of Australians were in favour of better constitutional recognition for Australia's Indigenous peoples, the referendum eventually failed, with some 60% of voters choosing to vote No. This starkly illustrates continued polarisation in the Australian electorate about greater Indigenous recognition – and we suggest that the referendum campaigns and associated public debate, especially also on social media, exhibits several of the proposed symptoms of destructive polarisation.

This is perhaps obvious for the No campaign's official slogan 'if you don't know, vote no', which clearly seeks to erase the complexities of the decision voters are asked (or indeed, under Australia's compulsory electoral system, required) to make, and the widespread repetition of the slogan both by referendum campaigners and members of the general public demonstrates its resonance with some voters. However, the presence of other symptoms of destructive polarisation is less easily assessed, and requires more complex approaches to the operationalisation of the symptom definitions for analysis and evaluation.

In this paper, we therefore translate the symptom definitions into qualitative as well as quantifiable criteria, which we systematically apply to large-scale datasets of public debate on the Voice to Parliament referendum that were drawn from Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube for the period from 1 January to 14 October 2023. Using a mixed-methods approach that involves manual and computational content analysis, network analysis, and AI-supported coding and categorisation, we document the presence of destructive polarisation in the Voice debate and assess its severity; in doing so, we convert the symptom definitions by Esau et al. into an analytical toolkit that can be applied to polarised debates on a wide range of topics.

Esau, K., Choucair, T., Vilkins, S., Svegaard, S., Bruns, A., & Lubicz, C. (2023, May 30). *Destructive Political Polarization in the Context of Digital Communication – A Critical Literature Review and Conceptual Framework*. International Communication Association, Toronto. <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/238775/>

Keywords

polarisation, politics, Voice to Parliament referendum, social media, Australia

Implications of 3D representation for narrowing disparities across identities: missing children, recall and social media sharing

Authors

Mr. David Peters - United States - Syracuse University

Dr. Carol Liebler - United States - Syracuse University

Abstract

Children go missing in every country around the world and their images are critical tools in locating them. However, a number of factors influence the helpfulness of a photograph, including how the child is depicted (Gier et al., 2012). Additionally, not all missing children attract the public's or media's attention, with disparities evidenced across age, race and gender identities (e.g. Jeanis & Powers, 2017): "sympathetic" victims (Works & Wong, 2020) are more likely to be young, white and female (Bouchard et al., 2020). We suggest enhanced personalization of a missing child through their image may help to reduce such disparities and propose contextual 3D representation as an alternative to a 2D still photo.

We define contextual 3D representation as a child's digital full-body, animated image situated in the environment and clothing in which they went missing. This study assesses the degree to which such personalized representation (1) increases recall and (2) increases the likelihood of sharing a social media post. We explore these ideas in the context of the U.S., where over 359,000 children were reported missing in 2022, but their application is transferrable elsewhere.

This study tests a series of hypotheses through an experimental 2x3x3 design. We draw upon the Visual-Spatial Working Memory theory which posits that engaging with visual and spatial details facilitates intricate cognitive processing, thereby improving memory encoding and recall (Daley et al., 2020). Depth and dynamism of 3D moving images reduce distractions, which makes them more captivating than 2D static images and due to their perceived significance and the novel, immersive experience, leads to better learning, salience, and recall (Urech, et al., 2015). Thus the nature of 3D moving images allows for the depiction and exhibition of more detail and information about a specific missing child, arguably resulting in increased personalization over a static 2D image. The present study is further situated in research on sharing of social media posts which points to information quality as a predictor variable (e.g. Yang et al., 2022).

Recruitment of participants is through Prolific < <https://www.prolific.com/>>, which generates a representative sample of the U.S. population. Independent variables are the nature of the image (3D model moving image /2D), a child's skin color (White, Black, Brown), and gender of child (female, male, nonbinary). Dependent variables are likelihood of sharing a social media post about the child (3 item scale; Myrick & Wojdyski, 2016) and recall of information about the child (number of correct facts listed). The 3D models of children used for our stimuli were generated using the

Makehuman software for mesh design, Unreal Engine 5.3 for modeling and animation, and the MetaHuman platform for texturization.

Manipulation checks have been conducted and data collection will be completed in February 2024, followed by data analysis.

References

- Bouchard, J., Wong, J. S., & Gushue, K. (2020). The differential portrayal of 'sympathetic' homicide victims in the media. *International Review of Victimology*, 26(3), 314-331. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758020916650>
- Daley, M. J., Andrews, G., & Murphy, K. (2020). Animacy effects extend to working memory: Results from serial order recall tasks. *Memory*, 28(2), 157-171.
- Gier, V.S., Kreiner, D.S. & Hudnell, W.J. AMBER Alerts: Are School-Type Photographs the Best Choice for Identifying Missing Children?. *J Police Crim Psych* 27, 9–23 (2012).
- Jeanis, M. N. & Powers, R. A. (2017) Newsworthiness of missing persons cases: An analysis of selection bias, disparities in coverage, and the narrative framework of news reports, *Deviant Behavior*, 38:6, 668-683
- Kaminski, A. (2019), "Young learners' engagement with multimodal texts", *ELT Journal*, Vol. 73 No. 2, pp. 175-185.
- Lachter, J., Forster, K. I., & Ruthruff, E. (2004). Forty-five years after Broadbent (1958): still no identification without attention. *Psychological review*, 111(4), 880.
- Myrick, J.G., & Wojdyski, B.W. (2016). Moody news: The impact of collective emotion ratings on online news consumers' attitudes, memory, and behavioral intentions. *New Media & Society*, 18(11), 2576-2594,
- Pickett, J. T. & Chiricos, T. (2012). Controlling other people's children: Racialized views of delinquency attitudes toward juvenile offenders. *Criminology*, 5(3), 673-710.
- Urech, A., Krieger, T., Chesham, A., Mast, F. W., & Berger, T. (2015). Virtual reality-based attention bias modification training for social anxiety: a feasibility and proof of concept study. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 6, 154.
- Works, W. & Wong, J.S. (2020). Using crime news reporting to predict image inclusion in newspaper homicide articles. *Journalism Studies*, 21(4): 425-442.
- Yang, B., Liu, C., Cheng, X. & Ma, X. (2022). Understanding users' group behavioral decisions about sharing articles in social media: An elaboration likelihood model perspective. *Group Decis Negot* 31, 819–842.

Keywords

#missingchild #missingchildren #3Dmodeling #socialresponsibility #socialmediasharing #recall #visiospatialsketchpad #imagerecall

From “Tales of Bliss” to “Myths of Miss”: The Impact of SNS on Marriage Perceptions within Chinese Culture—A Qualitative Inquiry into the Life Narratives of 14 Marriage-Free Women

Authors

Ms. Yangjiadi Liu - China - Sun Yat-sen University

Prof. Xiaoyan Fu - China - Sun Yat-sen University

Mrs. Maggie Qin - China - Sun Yat-sen University

Ms. Chuanyu Li - China - Sun Yat-sen University

Abstract

The rapid expansion of the internet has significantly transformed the dynamics of female identity and gender discourse within public domains in China. In this evolving digital landscape, social media platforms have become arenas for the contestation and propagation of feminist ideologies, catalyzing a shift towards narratives that reject traditional paths of marriage and childbirth. This has nurtured a vibrant discourse and fostered community engagement around feminist stances.

Despite the visible impact of these movements, there remains a dearth of scholarly investigation into how mediatization through emerging media technologies is reshaping the perspectives on romance and marriage, particularly among Generation Z women. A critical gap exists in comprehending the extent to which the pervasive culture of women's social media, established as a structural entity since 2010, has been instrumental in redefining women's lived experiences on a global scale.

This study is anchored in the theoretical framework of meaning construction, utilizing life narrative interviews and thematic analysis to delve into the lived experiences of 14 marriage-free women. It explores the notion that the decision to remain unmarried is not static but is influenced by a complex interplay of personal narratives, media interactions, and societal factors. The use of life narratives as a methodological approach enables a deep and nuanced exploration of participants' experiences, aligning with the research's objectives. Participants were purposively sampled through open calls on platforms such as Weibo and Douban, ensuring a diverse cohort across various demographics, professions, and educational backgrounds, ages 21 to 41, to capture a wide range of perspectives on marital decision-making.

The research uncovers that emerging media are deeply embedded in the lives of modern Chinese women, profoundly shaping their views on love, marriage, and procreation. It identifies a collective disdain for traditional patriarchal norms, uniting these women in solidarity. Social media has become a pivotal platform for articulating a "high-quality single" lifestyle, challenging societal norms around "single shaming" and the pressure to marry. The decline of the "Simp Economy" and the emergence of the "She Economy" and "He Economy" signal a shift towards consumerism that

prioritizes self-gratification, intensifying gender dichotomies and reducing the allure of traditional matrimonial and familial roles.

Ultimately, this study sheds light on the significant role of sns in transforming the perspectives of contemporary Chinese women towards marriage and singleness. It highlights the complexities of navigating gender norms and expectations in a digital era, marking a notable shift towards individualism and autonomy against the backdrop of conventional matrimonial values.

Keywords

Hyper-single society, SNS, meaning construction, life history research

Digital Ark: Mediatization and Memory Reproduction of Shanghai Jewish Refugees Memorial Space under the Influence of Digital Media

Authors

Dr. Yefu Qian - China - School of International and Public Affairs, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Abstract

This paper explores the influence of location-based service technologies and digital platforms on urban memory spaces and individuals' perception of specific urban memories, with a particular focus on a memorial landscape for Jewish refugees in Shanghai during World War II. It suggests that the public's digitally mediated spatial practices contribute to a more comprehensive writing of memories that goes beyond mainstream narratives.

From 1933 to 1941, the chaos of visa regulations in Shanghai presented European Jews with a chance to find shelter during World War II (Eber, 2012:85). Approximately 20,000 Jewish individuals migrated from Europe to Shanghai. They escaped from the conflict, established friendships, and engaged in business transactions with the Chinese. They had a significant role in expediting the modernization of Shanghai, both in their personal life and business endeavors. The Shanghai Jewish Refugee Museum was established in 2008, offering a public space to commemorate and preserve this forgotten memory.

The integration of location-based technology with mobile media has made digital platforms an essential component of urban life, fostering the development of various media-space practices. This study examines the Shanghai Jewish Refugee Museum and related digital activities by applying the theories of "spatial texture" (Jansson, 2016) and "hybrid space" (De Souza e Silva, 2006). It specifically focuses on the content shared by users on China's popular social media platforms Weibo and Xiaohongshu. The study collects and does discourse analysis on 517 posts using position and topic tags, which contain public memories related to the Jewish Refugee Memorial Space. These posts exhibit various narrative structures and connotations.

The study reveals that location-based service technology enables the seamless integration of online spaces created by digital media with physical spaces that are closely connected to people's daily lives. This integration results in the formation of "hybrid spaces" of urban memory and facilitates the transformation of urban memories into interactive digital memories. Additionally, digital platforms have provided a new avenue for expressing emotions, allowing access to the emotional experiences of Chinese users. This includes their emotional attitudes towards anti-Semitism and their wishes for lasting peace in the world. Furthermore, the ongoing integration of digital media technology and urban memory space has led to a more dynamic and personalized expression of urban memories, resulting in a fluid and diverse "spatial texture" of urban memory space. The study reveals that the ongoing armed conflict in the Gaza Strip has led to an increase in political expressions and populist discourses on social media. These discussions have created conflict and tension with the mainstream narrative of urban memory.

Consistent with the conclusions of previous research, this study proposes that digital technologies have not entirely eroded urban spaces (De Souza e Silva & Frith, 2012). Instead, they have intensified and made the experience of memorial landscapes more complex. The interconnection between spatial practices and mediated communication activities in modern society has significantly impacted the preservation, expression, and expansion of urban memory. This study presents empirical evidence to enhance our understanding of the evolving forms of urban memory, specifically focusing on the intricate patterns of urban memory among Jewish refugees in the digital media environment, which will offer valuable insights for investigating novel approaches to documenting urban memory in the digital era and addressing related decolonization issues.

Keywords

urban memory, social media, memorial space, Jewish refugee, hybrid space

Social media as counterhegemonic site: Reimagining 'Mahabali' with images on Facebook and Instagram

Authors

Mr. VENKITESH S - India - Department of Communication and Journalism; University of Kerala

Dr. Rajesh Kumar B M - India - Department of Communication and Journalism; University of Kerala

Abstract

Onam is one of Kerala's major annual cultural festivals, celebrated during harvest. The celebrations centered on the myth that the Asura (demon) king Mahabali, popularly known as Maveli, ruled Kerala. According to the myth, his ruling period was prosperous, without theft or fraud, and was an egalitarian society. People neglected the Gods as there were no sorrows. The Gods felt jealous, and Lord Vishnu reincarnated as a Brahmin boy, Vamana, stepped on Mahabali's head and sent him to the netherworld. The popular belief is that Mahabali returns to visit his people during Onam every year. Thus, Keralites welcome him with a feast and flowers. Celebration of a demon king is unusual in India; the famous Hindu religious festivals, such as Deepavali and Holi, are celebrated as the success of Gods (Aryans) over demons (Dravidians) by killing them. Though the popular myth about Onam is counterhegemonic, the stereotyped image of Mahabali is fair-skinned with a mustache and potbelly, wearing gold ornaments, and with a sacred thread that represents Brahmanical identity. Commonly, in media, Asuras are depicted as dark-skinned and masculine. Mass media popularized the Brahmanical image of Mahabali, and it was adopted in the public sphere with people appearing in this costume during celebrations. Intellectuals raised fingers against the Brahmanical representation of Mahabali, though these disagreements were never discussed in the public sphere then. With the emergence of Facebook and Instagram, artists countered Mahabali's popular image with Dravidian Maveli, which is dark-colored, masculine, and without having jewels and the sacred thread. With hashtag campaigns, the idea of reimagining Mahabali popularized and democratized with campaigns to draw your own Mahabali in which people posted their drawings, including the king in an Argentinian football jersey. Furthermore, Mahabalis with Dravidian appearance were present in Onam celebrations in the public sphere.

The study analyzes the popular image of Mahabali in mainstream media advertisements and the counter-narrative picture of him presented on Facebook and Instagram. Further, the study is figuring out how social media helps democratize the visual image of Mahabali. The study also enquires whether the public sphere adopted the counter-narrative images of Mahabali after the campaigns in the digital sphere. The method used in the study is a semiotic content analysis of 80 images selected with the hashtag #ourMahabali on Facebook and Instagram and semi-structured in-depth interviews with five artists. Further, 10 Mahabalis with Dravidian appearances have been studied from the public sphere to establish the influence of counter-hegemonic narratives in social media in the public sphere. Hegemony and counter-hegemony have been used as key theoretical approaches within the post-colonialist theoretical framework in the study.

Keywords

onam, Mahabali, counterhegemony, democratization, digital sphere

Biracial Couples and Mixed-Race Families in U.S. Television Advertising: Media Flashpoint in the Culture Wars

Authors

Dr. Kenton Wilkinson - United States - Texas Tech University

Abstract

This paper examines developments and social divides surrounding the recent increase in depictions of biracial couples and mixed-race families in general market television advertising in the United States. The salience of these portrayals has increased since the upheaval surrounding the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 which further polarized positions on social justice issues and prompted some corporations' public support for the Black Lives Matter movement. Yet biracial and mixed-race representations had existed prior, garnering academic research which the paper reviews. I argue that the contemporary context is particularly fraught due to successive controversies flaring over programs promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in schools, universities, public sector agencies and private companies. Examples include furious fights over K-12 school curricula (especially as concerns gender identity), the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling affirmative action unconstitutional in 2023, and consumer boycotts of LGBTQIA-supportive corporations such as Disney, Target and Anheuser-Busch InBev, the brewers of Bud Light beer.

The study begins with background on audience responses to biracial couples and mixed-race families appearing in U.S. television advertising. A controversial advertisement for Cheerios breakfast cereal in 2013 provides an example occurring during the presidency of Barak Obama, the country's first president of color, whose political ascendancy stirred racial antagonisms within some sectors of U.S. society. Next, I report the findings of an undergraduate student survey and subsequent peer-to-peer discussions conducted in spring 2023 regarding depictions of biracial couples and mixed-race families in advertising. This data offers a snapshot of current perspectives among young adults living and studying in Texas. The paper goes on to characterize recent television advertising featuring biracial couples and mixed-race families and reports how the media industry trade press and audiences have responded toward the trend.

The conference theme, "weaving people together" provides an apt frame for the paper's concluding discussion section which engages material from prior sections in the context of Texas where concerns over border security and related politics place state leadership at odds with the federal government, where a recent law restricts the use of state funds for diversity, equity and inclusion programs at state agencies and institutions (including universities), and where Hispanics/Latinos recently surpassed Whites as the largest social group. This discussion addresses the conference theme's focus on "challenges of engaging with difference in multicultural contexts" by relating a commercial media trend that emphasizes equity and social harmony with the unfortunate realities of divisive politics and culture wars currently at play in the United States.

Keywords

Advertising, biracial couples, mixed-race families , student survey, opinion, Texas

Affective Contemplation: A Study of Shidu parents' Social Media Mourning Behaviors

Authors

Ms. Yihang Ding - China - Communication University of China

Ms. Ding Zhang - China - Communication University of China

Abstract

To alleviate environmental and resource pressure from overpopulation, China implemented the **"One-Child Policy"** in 1982, establishing single-child families as a common structure. Once the only child passes away, the parents who endure immense grief are known as **Shidu parents**. The majority of them are incapable of reproduction due to their advanced age. This leads to a state of relative isolation, emotional closure, and various social relationship disruptions, placing them in a socially marginalized and vulnerable position. The phenomenon of losing the only child is a unique social care issue within the localized context of China.

Social media provides a space for Shidu parents to engage in **digital mourning** (Walter, 2015) and interact with fellow sufferers. This online mourning exhibits a highly emotional nature, showcasing a direction towards affective medium on social media. **Affect** is an intrinsic force beyond emotions, guiding thought processes beyond consciousness (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010). **Affective medium** stimulates people emotional responses and memory experiences (Van Dijck, 2007). According to **social exchange theory**, social interactions involve an exchange of valuable resources, including recognition and emotions which allow individuals to attain psychological satisfaction and happiness (Brau, 1986). The affective medium practices of Shidu parents encompass rich emotional elements. There exists a certain emotional exchange between transmitters and receivers, effectively expanding the research scope of affective medium (Giaxoglou & Döveling, 2018). Based on this, we ask:

RQ 1: How do Shidu parents behave during digital mourning on social media?

RQ 2: How does digital mourning address the internal needs of Shidu parents, and what perceptions and experiences can they derive from this process?

In response to these questions, this paper takes social exchange theory as the theoretical perspective, observing the digital mourning behaviors of Shidu parents to find a path to strengthen their social connections from June 2023 to December 2023. We employ a qualitative research approach combining **ethnography for internet** (Hine, 2015) with **in-depth interviews**. We firstly observed the short videos, texts, and interactive comments of **98** Shidu parents on two major Chinese social media, Kuaishou and Xiaohongshu. Then through a snowball sampling method, we invited **8** Shidu parents for in-depth interviews lasting over two hours.

This paper argues that the affective medium practices of Shidu parents on social media primarily take three forms: **a tree hole expressing longing and sorrow, an imaginary bridge facilitating digital dialogues between Shidu parents and their children, and a social network that weaves Shidu parents together**. In the era of mourning as depicted in popular narratives, digital mourning

fulfills the internal needs of Shidu parents by providing a platform for **expressing shared emotional experiences, facilitating positive emotional exchanges, and addressing collective demands for justice**. Through this process, Shidu parents derive perceptions and experiences of creating emotional outlets, strengthening social connections, and engaging in a supportive online community, which collectively contribute to their coping mechanisms and social adoption.

Keywords

Shidu parents, affective medium, digital mourning, social exchange theory.

Has Facial Expression Changed? The Interaction Between Avatar-mediated Humans Based on Empirical Research

Authors

Mrs. Di Wu - China - Beijing Normal university

Mr. Beixi Jia - China - Beijing Normal university

Mr. Lichao Xiu - China - Beijing Normal University

Abstract

Virtual reality (VR) is next on the horizon to become a popular computer-mediated mode of social interaction (Gunkel et al., 2018; Rogers et al., 2022). Rogers et al. (2022) believed that realistic motion avatars are the future of social interaction in VR, and in order for social interactions happening in VR to feel more immersive and more like natural face-to-face interactions, avatars need to mimic human actors in a subtle and natural way.

One of the most effective ways is to recreate the facial expressions. As facial expression can be directly acquired through the senses, and as the most direct window of emotion transmission, it is an important non-verbal cue when human beings convey social information (Ekman, 1993). The facial expressions of avatars are important for the immersive interaction in VR. However, facial expressions convey emotions only if they are observed. From the perspective of the emotion conveyed in virtual reality, the present study mainly focused on whether the facial expressions (positive vs. neutral vs. negative) of the virtual avatar can be effectively recognized in VR.

This study used a within-group experimental design. 20 participants were recruited to talk with virtual avatars in the virtual reality game. The expressions of the avatars changed during the communication. There was a significant difference between the three facial expressions of the chosen avatar in terms of valence and there was no difference in arousal. In order to study the participants' emotional changes when seeing different facial expressions, the changes in the facial electromyography, heart rate, and EDA indicators were recorded when showing different facial expressions to the participants.

The results of the study found that there were no significant differences in COR, Zygo and EDA when facing different facial expressions. However, as the main indicator to show whether the participants noticed the facial expressions or not, there were significant differences in the heart rate. These results suggested that emotions can be perceived by the facial expressions, but people couldn't tell exactly the meaning of the expressions. This phenomenon can be attributed to two aspects: First of all, people's cognitive abilities have not yet been trained to fully receive and process all the information in virtual reality. Secondly, VR technology is still not mature enough to construct the details in the communication process to make it more realistic.

As previous research about facial expressions mostly focuses on the interaction that happened in reality, the present study focused on the facial expressions in VR and proved that the phenomena of expression recognition and emotional contagion also exist in VR, expanding the scope of

application of the theory of emotional contagion, as well as providing suggestions on how VR technology can better provide users with a virtual social experience.

Keywords

Virtual Reality; Facial Expression; Avatar; Interaction

Unstoppable scrolling: Exploring the semiotic mechanism, unconventional media use and collective effect of "doomscrolling" on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic in China

Authors

Ms. Jingwen Luo - China - School of Journalism and Communication, Jinan University

Abstract

The past three years of the COVID-19 pandemic in China have witnessed a significant increase in netizens' online duration, and a phenomenon called "doomscrolling" occurred in response to this unprecedented condition, which refers to that smartphone users compulsively scrolling through negative information or news feeds relevant to bad news, such as crises, disasters and tragedies.

The current studies on "doomscrolling" are relatively scarce and most of them are quantitative analysis that focuses on its physiological and psychological effects, such as doomscrolling's positive association with impulsivity, depression (Shabahang et al. 2022), intense anxiety, feelings of distress, and poor quality of sleep (Anand et al. 2022). Rarely do researchers conduct qualitative research on media use. In light of that, this study brings new perspectives on "doomscrolling" via witnessing the doomscroller's affective feeling and its relational impact on media use during the pandemic. One thing shouldn't be ignored is the peculiarity of China's context, China's information governance, and it plays an indispensable role whilst "doomscrolling".

Methodologically, the study mainly relies on in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted from December 2022 to February 2023 on interviewees from all over the country, who have experienced "doomscrolling" during the three-year pandemic in China, with an auxiliary questionnaire surveying respondents' demographic characteristics and media use habit. The focuses of the research are laid on the issues as follows: 1) the semiotic mechanism of the reason why "doomscrolling" is unstoppable, 2) the unconventional media usage during "doomscrolling" to contend with China's information governance, 3) the collective perspective of deeming "doomscrolling" as an attempt of social care.

The discussion of the paper are made from the following perspectives: 1) the unstopability of "doomscrolling" is generated by news feeds' multicoding mechanism, namely, liquid code, fragmented code, randomized code, and phatic code, 2) smartphone users under information governance initiated unconventional transmedia and trans-wall (*GFW*) network action while "doomscrolling", 3) the other side of "doomscrolling" indicates its proactive attempt to testify the cultural trauma and cohere as a special affective aggregation. Overall, "doomscrolling" is affected by the semiotic mechanism of the news feeds on social media along with current media ecology, and has brought unconventional media use behaviour and corresponding aggregated community.

Keywords

Doomscrolling, pandemic, semiotic mechanism, transmedia, affective aggregation

From Ritual to Memory: A Study on the Digital Mourning of Chinese Netizens on Social Media ——Evidence from Sina Weibo

Authors

Mr. Junchi Ma - China - Communication University of China

Abstract

Whether in many English-speaking countries or China, death is often a topic that people avoid in most cases. To conceal the withering process of life, funerals are often held in urban fringe area. With the development of digital technology, mourning has quietly shifted from hiding to public in both concept and practice. Death has gradually broken away the sense of isolation given by modernity, and the place of mourning have been constantly evolving since the "Digital Cemetery" website, entering social networks and public spaces. Many scholars have attached attention to this change and the digital mourning behavior that occurs on social media platforms such as Facebook and Myspace, but few have established a connection between the rituals of mourning and memory construction and few have examined it in the context of China.

This study employs quantitative and qualitative methods, using the Sina Weibo (a Chinese social media similar to X) accounts of two deceased individuals, Li Wen (a singer) and Lu Daosen (an independent photographer), as cases. We collected 3000 user comment data from their last Weibo post before their death, and encoded them into five main themes: greetings, sharing, mourning, blessings and reminiscing. Besides, we use Gephi to visualize the analysis results. The development of this study is based on long-term participation and observation of research cases (from December 2021 to November 2023). we contacted a 500000 fan blogger(Weibo ID: Shi Zhe Ru Si Fu dead, considered by Chinese netizens as an "online embalmer")who spontaneously recorded information about the deceased for free. And we conducted interviews with him in order to collect more useful qualitative data for the study.

Research has found that the field of digital mourning provided by Sina Weibo for Chinese netizens has three prominent features: weak ties, the time continuity and the space expansion. After the introduction of mourning for death into the public domain through social media, Chinese netizens tend to choose to seek a wide range of group connections to deal with grief, which is related to the tradition of collective participation in the ritual of mourning and an important part of the specific social structures and cultural structure of China. The digital mourning behavior of Chinese netizens has dual motives: ritual habits and emotional release. In the traditional values of Chinese society, the unity of the community largely depends on the mutual arrears of favor among members. The ritual of mourning carried out in the name of the dead bear the responsibility of restoring damaged relationships caused by their death. Although on social media, the dead and the mourners may be strangers, people still retain this inertia of participation. As the ritual of mourning carries out and time passes, the mourners have expanded the meaning of mourning through continuous connection with the dead, gradually including multidimensional emotional connotations such as remembrance,

companionship, attachment, and encouragement. The proportion of themes expressing grief is decreasing, and more positive emotional expressions are gradually emerging and increasing. At special time points such as traditional Chinese festivals, like the Spring Festival and the National Day, the number of netizens coming to mourn shows a peak within a certain time range. The collective participation and spatiotemporal expansion of mourning shape a special form of "emotional public", which has the features of openness, collectivity, and fluidity, being able to transcend specific event and certain spatiotemporal backgrounds, becoming the basis for generating and constructing memories. Unlike that in western countries, the digital mourning of Chinese netizens has a distinct feature of collectivism. Surprisingly, regardless of whether the deceased person is a public figure, a hero, or an ordinary person, Chinese netizens always highlight the theme of the country and the nation in their mourning, and this feature has become increasingly prominent over time.

There is an old saying: The end makes all equal. Although the connection between Sina Weibo users is considered weak, the joint participation during the ritual of mourning, the sustained representation of emotional public and the natural public feature of social media construct a sense of community with consistent participation. Relying on digital media, the new form of mourning transcends life and death, carries rich emotions, and helps people re-examine the meaning of life and death, providing an opportunity to weaving people together, accompanying each other, and a possibility to rebuild social trust.

Keywords

Ritual; Digital Mourning; Social Media; Sina Weibo

Covert Tug-of-War: How Does Social Exclusion Form in WeChat Moments

Authors

Dr. Lin Shi - China - University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Ms. Xinru Fang - China - University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Abstract

Due to the visibility of social media, exclusion (i.e. ignoring others) has become increasingly prominent in online social activities. In WeChat Moments (a section used to post text and pictures within the Chinese social media app WeChat), not receiving likes and comments can also be perceived as online social exclusion. Previous research has demonstrated the influence of online social exclusion on college students' Internet aggressive behavior. Considering the cultural context and internet situation unique to China, the authority of Chinese parenting, and the idea of face-saving, college students are afraid to confront others directly when faced with exclusion. This study, based on the "frustration-aggression" theory, extended the concept of aggression to covert aggression (i.e. don't reply to others' comments) and examined the relationship between online social exclusion and covert aggression within the context of WeChat Moments. Through a questionnaire survey (N = 523), the study empirically tested a moderated mediation. The findings indicated that social exclusion in WeChat Moments had a significant and positive effect on exclusion towards others, mediated by a sense of alienation. However, the hypothesized moderating role of social sensitivity in this relationship was not observed. These results contribute to the understanding of how online social exclusion leads to covert aggression: experiencing exclusion leads to a sense of alienation, which results in covert aggression, providing a social psychological perspective on the prevailing state of exclusion in the online social sphere. The study also offers practical implications for addressing this issue. Educators can provide effective psychological guidance to young people, enabling them to realize online social exclusion appropriately, and online platform providers can strive to ensure the stable functioning of their technology or create a "remove social clues" feature, empowering individuals to control whether the interactions between two people in their Moments are exposed to third parties.

Keywords

online social exclusion, frustration-aggression, mental health, social media

Bystander Reactions to Cyberbullying Against Internet Celebrities in China: A Comparative Study of Cognitive, Emotional, and Behavioral Differences

Authors

Mr. Junjie Wu - China - Communication University of China

Ms. Haitong Song - China - Communication University of China

Ms. Zhuo Ma - China - University of International Business and Economics

Dr. Qifan Jia - China - Communication University of China

Abstract

The widespread use of information technology has led to the emergence of numerous internet celebrities in China's online landscape. Due to their fame and exposure, cyberbullying against internet celebrities is increasing. Bystander behavior plays a key role in the persistence of cyberbullying incidents and its possible consequences for both the victim and the perpetrator (Bussey et al., 2020). Hence, this paper aims to examine how bystanders behave in internet celebrity cyberbullying.

Previous research has indicated that bystander behavior is typically categorized into four types: active facilitation (i.e. defending the victim), passive facilitation (i.e. supporting the victim), active harm (i.e. assisting the bully), and passive harm (i.e. ignoring; Salmivalli et al., 2011). Bystander behaviors differ between celebrities and ordinary individuals in cyberbullying incidents. Some studies suggest that celebrities experiencing cyberbullying are less likely to be blamed, and the bullying incidents are judged as more severe (Hand & Scott, 2022). Conversely, others have found that celebrities are more likely to be blamed due to their identity claims (Lim, 2017), receiving less support in bystander behavior (Machackova, 2020). Additionally, emotions such as sympathy and anger can influence bystanders' reactions to cyberbullying (Balakrishnan, 2018).

This paper aims to investigate bystanders' reactions to cyberbullying against internet celebrities through two studies. Study 1 recruited 365 participants to measure people's cognition (victim blaming and perceived severity), emotions (sympathy and anger), and bystander behavior differences regarding incidents targeting ordinary users and internet celebrities. Study 2 involved 236 participants measuring cognition, emotions, and bystander behavior towards cyberbullying of six types of internet celebrities.

Study 1 indicates that compared to ordinary users, people tended to attribute higher levels of blaming and ignoring towards internet celebrities, perceive lower severity of cyberbullying incidents, feel less sympathy towards the victims, less anger towards the bullies, and engage in less protective and supportive behavior towards internet celebrities. There was no significant difference in active harm between internet celebrities and ordinary users. Mediation analysis reveals that

cognition and emotions played significant roles in the relationship between victim identity (ordinary user or internet celebrity) and bystander behavior.

Study 2 shows significant differences in cognition, emotions, and bystander behavior across different types of internet celebrities. Knowledge-based internet celebrities received the lowest victim blaming but the highest in perceived severity, sympathy, anger, protection, and support behavior. Comedy and talent-based internet celebrities received relatively low victim blaming but higher in perceived severity, sympathy, anger, protection, and support behavior. Beauty, gaming and e-commerce-based internet celebrities received higher victim blaming, lower perceived severity, sympathy, anger, and higher levels of ignoring behavior. These differences were associated with people's stereotypes of various internet celebrities.

This paper is the first to focus on internet celebrity cyberbullying, offering new evidence for its examination in the realm of celebrity cyberbullying research. By establishing a pathway involving cognition, emotion, behavior, and emphasizing the impact of stereotypes, it provides a novel perspective on bystander behavior in cyberbullying incidents. These findings are expected to contribute to tackling bullying in real-life scenarios.

Keywords

cyberbullying, internet celebrities, bystander behavior, stereotypes

Affective Media and Affective Publics: A Case Study of Online Public Mourning in the Crash of China Eastern Airlines Flight MU5735

Authors

Ms. Mengyuan Zhang - China - School of Media and Communication, Shenzhen University, Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province

Prof. Yuqiong Zhou - China - Shenzhen University

Abstract

Under the mediated communication of digital media, the occurrence of disaster accidents has transformed mourning from a private domain to a public sphere, turning grief into not just personal emotional property, but also a public emotional experience in the era of “spectacular grief.” (Jacobsen, Lund, & Petersen, 2020) However, most existing research on disaster events focuses on media coverage, neglecting public emotions. This paper introduces the perspective of “affective publics” (Papacharissi, 2015) and “affective medium” (Bao, 2015) in the study of disasters in the digital age, proposing an online public mourning model that encompasses public affective practices and media news production. The study aims to explore how public affective practices and media news production shape the media logic and communication mechanisms during the social transition of mediatization in China, focusing on transforming users’ identities and journalists’ roles.

On March 21st, 2022, China Eastern Airlines flight MU5735 crashed in Tengxian, Wuzhou, Guangxi, China, resulting in the loss of all 132 people on board, triggering national mourning. The mourning exhibits a distinct cross-platform nature through the engagement of social media platforms such as Weibo, TikTok, and WeChat. Furthermore, it has formed a “sphere space” and “manufactured environment” (Bao, 2015: 16) enveloping numerous communication subjects, due to the interplay between various online and offline mediums. Taking the crash of China Eastern Airlines flight MU5735 as a case study of online public mourning, we investigated the mourning situation in Weibo, Douyin, and an online sacrificial platform on WeChat through text analysis, topic modeling (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) and in-depth interview.

Findings reveal that within the digital affective media sphere, users can have a mediated witnessing of public death events, express their individual affective experiences, participate in collective affective rituals, and become affective publics who “I mourn therefore I am.” (Derrida, 1995: 321) through the affordance of technology. Especially in times when the truth is inaccessible, Douyin and Weibo carry a large number of videos, images, and other sensory-stimulating media that can easily evoke emotions. News media can make multiple modifications and edits to their reporting content through the technological affordances of social media platforms, making “emotionalization” adjustments. Journalists can also serve as intermediaries for the public to achieve affective experiences. All these factors converge to transform public events into affective practices, where emotions rather than truth become the dominant force.

This study sheds light on the complex landscape of China's digital public sphere, where emotional logic overwhelms cognitive logic. In the mediatization of society, it is imperative to address how the public can have both the opportunity for emotional expression and the hope for truth-seeking.

Keywords

Affective medium, Public mourning, MU5735 air crash, Affective publics, Media

The Power of Elite Narratives: Evidence from the Tweets of the 2020 US Presidential Election

Authors

Dr. Lihan Yan - China - Nanjing University

Ms. Yu Zhou - China - Nanjing University

Ms. Wanxi Wei - China - Nanjing University

Prof. Cheng-Jun Wang - China - Nanjing University

Abstract

The outcome of the 2020 United States presidential election has sparked extensive discourse within academia, with scholars engaging in multifaceted discussions and analyses encompassing economic, political, and related dimensions. According to Robert Schiller, narratives play a significant role in shaping social reality, providing a new perspective on understanding the election outcome. Moreover, extensive research underscores the narrative's role as a powerful tool in situations marked by partisan conflicts, power struggles, and other tense relationships. Currently, numerous studies have expounded upon conceptualizations of narrative influence. However, limited attention has been directed towards procedures for causal attribution and the exploration of relevant analytical models in this regard. Therefore, this study aims to explore whether political narratives can influence public political attitudes and political facts.

Drawing on the framework of narrative economics and the Cascading network activation model, we analyze a dataset of 11,518,432 Twitter texts mentioning "Trump" from August 20, 2020, to January 20, 2021, with the method of social network analysis, LDA (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) topic modeling analysis, DAG (Directed Acyclic Graph) causal diagram analysis, VAR (Vector Auto Regression) model analysis, and QAP (Quadratic Assignment Procedure) analysis. We conclude that Popular narratives have the potential to influence public political attitudes, shape public political behavior, and impact political realities. Specifically, we find that: (1) Anti-Trump elites (i.e., opposing elites) dominated the narrative discourse during the election, and media narratives guided public narratives; (2) Narrative economics theory can be applied to the political domain with narratives can predict changes in candidate support; (3) There are cross-group narrative effects among US elites, with narratives shifting from anti-Trump elites to pro-Trump elites (i.e., supporting elites). In conclusion, this study combines the cascade activation theory of networks with narrative economics to elucidate political phenomena from a narrative perspective, contributing to the expansion of existing research perspectives on analyzing and predicting political outcomes. Moreover, the study employs standard economic methods like DAG causal diagrams and VAR model analysis, along with the commonly used QAP analysis in social sciences, to quantitatively measure and analyze narratives and their effects, further contributing empirical evidence to narrative economics.

Keywords

Narrative Economics, Cascading Network Activation Model, Elite Narratives, Presidential Election

Public Opinion Mirror: An Empirical Study on the Completeness and Sustainability of Campus Violence News

Authors

Ms. xie mianxia - China - school of Journalism and Communication, Xiamen University

Dr. Su Junbin - China - school of Journalism and Communication, Xiamen University

Abstract

Campus violence and bullying are global issues. UNESCO's Director highlighted on International Anti-Bullying Day 2023 that almost one-third of students in 144 countries faced physical violence annually. Addressing such global problems requires mediated communication to mobilize society's attention effectively. However, online audiences often harbor hostility toward media agendas on such events: Only severe cases are reported, and the media discontinues coverage to protect individual interests. Audience skepticism and dissatisfaction have become a dilemma for communication. While existing research focuses on ethical issues and content analysis of campus violence reporting, little attention has been paid to the dynamics of public opinion on social media.

This study examines the issues of "comprehensiveness" and "sustainability" in campus violence news reporting, placing them in the public discourse to identify the breakthroughs. Based on a sample of 500 Weibo posts and articles containing the keyword "campus violence" from November 5, 2020, to November 5, 2023, this research conducts frequency analysis, sentiment analysis, and co-occurrence word network analysis on the sample content. The aim is to explore the popularity, lifecycle, dissemination networks, and comparison with public discourse in the media coverage of campus violence. The analysis reveals that reporting of campus violence tends to focus on the victim's social network, gender-based violence, and accountability and measures. In terms of lifecycle, high-profile events have multiple peaks due to multiple actors involved, legal procedures, and societal expectations, lasting up to five months, while low-profile events lasted only 1-2 days. The study concludes that media coverage is generally objective but superficial, lacks depth, and continuous coverage. Key public opinion events rely on unofficial and diverse dissemination nodes.

By revealing the transient and dynamic nature of campus violence issues on social media, this study aims to demonstrate how media communication can elevate underage campus violence incidents on the societal agenda. Through media reporting and intermediary dissemination nodes, it seeks to enhance public awareness, government transparency, and trust, shaping attitudes towards underage violence incidents, ultimately contributing to a safer environment.

Keywords

public opinion, media representation, social communication network, content analysis

War in Ukraine and Decolonization in Kazakhstan: Communicating Crisis Through Facebook

Authors

Mrs. Nazira Bairbek - United States - IUP

Abstract

The war between Russia and Ukraine, which began two years ago, has raised concerns among post-Soviet countries. Given their historical, economic, and military ties with Russia, there was fear that the conflict could escalate beyond its borders, potentially destabilizing the entire region.

Kazakhstan, a post-Soviet country that gained independence in 1991, has pursued a foreign policy strategy aimed at balancing the interests of Russia, China, and Western countries. However, the Russian influence in both its domestic and foreign policy was significant (Isaacs, 2020). Kazakhstan's economy was heavily dependent on Russia due to its participation in regional international organizations like the EEU (Libman & Obydenkova, 2022). The Russian language still dominates in this country (Leydiker, 2023). Russian irredentist dreams about Kazakh land, frequently voiced by Russian politicians, have long fueled separatist sentiments among ethnic Russian groups in the northern regions (Pannier, 2022). Despite all these, after the war began, Kazakhstan expressed support for Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Kazakh citizens have actively embraced social media, particularly Facebook, for civic activism (Beisembayeva et al., 2013). When Russia attacked Ukraine, they started communicating their concerns over the war through Facebook. Among this content, there was also an emergence of expressions and concerns on integrity and security of Kazakhstan. The number of posts criticizing the Russian imperialism rapidly increased (Leydiker, 2023). Social media users began calling on the government to act towards decolonization by making appropriate steps in national security, politics, economy, education, and culture.

This study investigates decolonization-related messages on Facebook in Kazakhstan before and after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Applying Agenda-setting theory, it explores which decolonization-related issues were prioritized in different times. Conducting content analysis with quantitative research approach, Facebook profiles of journalists, writers, scientists, political figures, and social activists' that share their messages on decolonization are examined. Expected findings show the Russian invasion of Ukraine has intensified the struggle for decolonization through Facebook in Kazakhstan. New decolonization-related demands, including calls for the shutdown of Russian propaganda TVs in Kazakhstan and the withdrawal of Kazakhstan from Russian-led organizations such as EEU, CSTO, have emerged.

Keywords

Decolonization, Kazakhstan, Post-Soviet country, War in Ukraine, Russia, Facebook

Examining the Role of Authenticity in Computer-Mediated Interpersonal Perception

Authors

Dr. Pengxiang Li - China - School of Journalism and Communication, Minzu University of China

Abstract

In today's online environment, social bots, deep fake technologies, or even filtered selfies, all these communication artifacts challenge the way of knowing other people's authenticity. Recent research agenda begins to shed light on the role of authenticity in computer-mediated communication and attempts to uncover how social media balance the presentation of the ideal self and the expression of the authentic self through using different social media profiles. This study aims to examine how people evaluate authenticity when viewing social media profiles and to provide empirical evidence regarding how perceived authenticity affects different dimensions of interpersonal perceptions such as social attractiveness and task attractiveness.

Existing literature suggests that a target person's authenticity is dependent on self-consistency or the level of consistency between the target's performances and observers' base-rate knowledge. This study thus contends that perceived consistency constitutes one dimension for perceiving authenticity. In addition, people believe that authenticity is the feeling of being true to oneself, so they attempt to know the inner self of others. In this regard, the disclosure depth of a target person is considered the other dimension for perceiving authenticity. Importantly, these two dimensions exert an interaction impact on perceived authenticity.

Two online experiments were conducted using Mturk workers to examine how self-consistency and disclosure depth affect perceived authenticity and how perceived authenticity further affects a target person's social attractiveness and task attractiveness. Both studies were 2*2 between-subjects factorial design. Study 1 was about the (in)consistent impression regarding different disclosure depths (belief-related vs. behavior-related) on the same Facebook account of a target. 167 respondents participated in this study. The results showed that perceived authenticity in the self-consistency condition was higher than in the less consistent condition, whereas the effects of disclosure depth and the interaction effects between the two were found non-significant. The findings further unveiled that perceived authenticity led to a positive evaluation of the target's social and task attractiveness.

Study 2 was conducted to examine the influence of the consistency between one's social identity (college student) and his online expressions on different Instagram accounts, and the factorial design was (consistent vs. inconsistent with identity) by (private vs. public account). This online experiment received 161 responses. The results showed that perceived authenticity was higher in the expression-identity consistency condition and in the private account condition. The expression-identity consistency that occurred in the private account condition was found more authentic than other conditions. In addition, the influence of perceived authenticity was significant on social attractiveness but not on task attractiveness.

This study contributes to the existing literature by confirming the salient role of self-consistency in assessing one's authenticity and by foregrounding the importance of disclosure depth in understanding perceived authenticity. In particular, the results suggest that individuals mainly consider the deep and intimate expressions occurring in the private space more authentic.

Keywords

Authenticity, Computer-mediated communication, Interpersonal perception, experiment

Social Media Platform Vitality and the Effect of Censorship: An ABM Approach

Authors

Ms. Xuebing Zhang - China - School of Media and Communication, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Mr. Hanqing Zhao - China - School of Media and Communication, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Prof. Yan Ge - China - School of Media and Communication, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Abstract

In our paper titled "Social Media Platform Vitality and the Effect of Censorship: An ABM Approach," we embark on an in-depth investigation into the intricate relationship between the practice of censorship on social media platforms and the consequential impacts on their vitality. Utilizing an advanced Agent-based Modeling (ABM) framework, this study meticulously analyzes the dynamics of information dissemination, user engagement, and the overall quality of content under varying degrees of censorship. This scholarly endeavor is set against the backdrop of the burgeoning influence of social media platforms on public opinion and behavior, juxtaposed with the paramount challenge of fostering civil discourse amid rampant disinformation, hate speech, and other malign content.

The impetus for our research lies in the increasing scrutiny faced by platforms like TikTok, as highlighted by Reuters.com (2023), and the ongoing debates surrounding the moderation of online content as discussed by the United Nations Human Rights office (2021). Recognizing the pivotal role of "platform vitality"—a concept we define as the capability of a platform to produce, disseminate diverse, engaging content, and to retain and expand its user base—we probe into how censorship influences this vitality. We propose that user engagement and content quality are essential dimensions encapsulating this concept.

Our research is guided by the pressing question: What form of censorship can optimally mitigate negative impacts on social media platform vitality while enhancing user engagement and content quality? To address this, we employ an ABM to simulate a social media environment with 1000 users (agents) interconnected within a Barabasi-Albert scale-free network. This simulation enables a granular observation of information diffusion dynamics, influenced by individual beliefs, censorship actions, and emergent social dynamics.

Within our model, we delineate variables such as individual beliefs, degree of information adoption, and the influence of individuals on the platform, alongside feedback mechanisms stemming from censorship actions—namely resentment towards censorship and the perception of the platform environment. These variables facilitate a comprehensive examination of the effects of varying censorship intensities on the vitality of the platform, particularly focusing on user retention and the quality of content disseminated.

Our findings reveal a nuanced landscape where censorship, while effective in curbing the spread of undesirable content to a degree, can also precipitate user attrition and dampen social vitality when

applied excessively. A pivotal discovery is that a moderate level of censorship may offer a balanced approach, preserving content integrity while maintaining social cohesion and connectivity. This suggests a nonlinear relationship between censorship intensity and platform vitality, challenging reductive perspectives on content moderation.

Through our discussion, we delved into the multifaceted nature of internet content censorship, advocating for a balanced approach that eschews extremes. This study underscores the necessity for a nuanced comprehension of censorship's impact, taking into account the myriad factors that influence the dynamics of social media platforms. However, we acknowledge the inherent limitations of our study, particularly the challenges in validating our ABM findings against empirical data, given the proprietary nature of user data on platforms.

In conclusion, "Social Media Platform Vitality and the Effect of Censorship: An ABM Approach" contributes significantly to the ongoing discourse on social media governance, offering nuanced insights into the effects of censorship on platform vitality. This research illuminates potential pathways towards more effective and judicious social media governance strategies, balancing the imperative of safeguarding public discourse with fostering a vibrant, engaging online ecosystem. We believe our findings will resonate with policymakers, platform administrators, and the academic community, providing a foundation for further research and discussion on optimizing social media governance in an increasingly digital world.

Keywords

Social Media Censorship; Platform Vitality; Agent-based Modeling (ABM); Information Dissemination

Global Mediated Memory in Wikipedia -- As with the case of Article Climate Change

Authors

Ms. Mingli Xiong - China - School of Journalism and Communication, Shanghai International Studies University

Abstract

Introduction

The development of digital media in the era of globalization has brought structural changes to memory, giving birth to a new form of memory, global mediated memory, which transcends the national territorial boundaries of collective memory and takes issues of common concern to mankind as the object of memory. This study, through an analysis of the Wikipedia article Climate Change, proposes that new media provides technological affordances for global mediated memory, and that the perspective of human community against the backdrop of globalization has given rise to global mediated memory. Benedict Anderson believes that imagined community is the basis for the birth of nationalism. This study maintains that imagined community also breeds a global mediated memory that transcends nationalism. The concept of places of memory (lieux de mémoire) proposed by Pierre Nora points out that the places of memory can be a symbolic field, which also provides a theoretical basis for the global mediated memory on new media platforms. The cosmopolitan theory that emphasizes global moral equality, global citizenship, global economic and social justice, and global environmental responsibility further provides a theoretical basis for this study.

Research questions

1. What characteristics does the global mediated memory of Wikipedia's Climate Change article reflect?
2. What are the dynamics of global mediated memory in Wikipedia's Climate Change article?
3. What kind of technology-memory discursive practice does the global mediated memory of Wikipedia's Climate Change article reflect?

Research methods

1. Text analysis: The study analyzes the global mediated memory of the Global Warming article through word frequency, subject words, structure analysis, etc. to show the general picture of global mediated memory on Wikipedia.
2. Discourse analysis: Drawing on Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, the study analyzes the text content, development and changes of the article history, and the hot spots of debate in the article discussion page through the lenses of discourse practice and social practice.

Results and discussion

Global mediated memory written by the public on the new media platform Wikipedia reflects an obvious global consciousness, which is the basis for global mediated memory. Unlike collective memory, global mediated memory is action-oriented and future-oriented. Although global mediated memory is formed on common values and global consciousness, the study still found memory hegemony and intensive political, cultural and ideological discourse contentions. As a new media platform, Wikipedia's platform rules have greatly impacted global mediated memory writing, reflecting the interaction between technology and memory practice discourse.

Keywords

global mediated memory; Wikipedia; climate change; discourse practice

Crossing Digital Frontiers: Third-Person Effect and Cyberbullying in China's Social Media Landscape

Authors

Mr. Wang Tat CHIO - Hong Kong - Hong Kong Baptist University

Ms. Yu QIU - Hong Kong - Hong Kong Baptist University

Ms. Yajing LU - Hong Kong - Hong Kong Baptist University

Abstract

In an era where social media transcends geographical boundaries to offer a universal platform for diverse voices, the shadow of cyberbullying looms large, presenting a critical challenge to the ethos of digital freedom and safety. With an increasing concern about the aggressive and intentional acts perpetrated against victims, existing research highlights the pervasive and severe nature of cyberbullying, magnified by the evolving Information and Communications Technology (e.g., Chen et al., 2017). Its ramifications extend beyond the immediate harm to victims' mental and physical well-being, fostering a climate of insecurity that undermines the very foundation of online community environment.

Regarding individuals as essential stakeholders in taking action against cyberbullying, this proposal aims to unravel the complex dynamics between the reception of harmful content and the perceived impact of such messages on a broader online community. Applying the third-person effect (TPE) theory, our study conducts a survey targeting young adults in China to examine their perceptual discrepancies concerning the influence of violent messages, as well as its relations with proactive and corrective actions.

In the context of China, home to the world's largest internet population, nearly two-thirds of college students report varying encounters with cyberbullying (Huang et al., 2021). This research focuses on Sina Weibo, a leading Chinese social media, which is often considered a battleground for cyberbullying incidents. This focus not only highlights the issue's gravity but also provides a critical lens through which to examine the broader implications of this kind of online violence.

Expanding the traditional application of TPE theory from mass media to social media, this study introduces two novel variables—empathy and supportive interaction—as pivotal elements in understanding TPE's mechanisms in the digital age. By exploring these dimensions, our research aims to enrich theoretical discussions around TPE theory and address the gap in the literature concerning the spectrum of actual behaviors deployed by users in response to cyberbullying, from reporting offensive content to engaging in supportive interactions. Meanwhile, the insights from this investigation guide effective strategies for social media governance, informing platform policies that foster a secure, engaging, and sustainable online ecosystem. This study, therefore, with both theoretical innovation and practical imperative, offers a comprehensive roadmap for mitigating the harm of cyberbullying and contributing to a more inclusive digital world.

Keywords

Cyberbullying, social media, third-person effect, China

Anonymity in Chinese Social Media : Strain Theory Analysis of Douban's 'Momo' Phenomenon

Authors

Dr. YIZHE CUI - China - University of Nottingham Ningbo China

Abstract

In an era where "everyone can be famous for 15 minutes," a unique phenomenon has emerged on Chinese social media platforms: Users are adopting public avatars and nicknames, actively choosing to remain anonymous in their online interactions.

This study examines the "momo" community on the Chinese social networking site Douban, where members adopt a common nickname and avatar, they achieve an anonymous group identity, engaging in social activities while obscuring individual identities. This practice potentially mitigates risks such as cyberbullying and privacy breaches.

Drawing on Robert K. Merton's Strain Theory, this study analyzes the choice of anonymity on social media by the Douban momo community and the media dilemmas they encounter.

Douban, a social networking site for book and film enthusiasts in China, evolves users from cultural consumers to creators and hosts vibrant discussions on societal and internet trends. The secondary anonymity phenomenon through "momo" began in Douban groups, —marked by a standard nickname "momo" and pink dinosaur avatar. These identity markers originate from the popular Chinese instant messaging app WeChat, which offers "momo" and the pink dinosaur as default nickname and avatar options when users first log into external apps, including Douban.

Notably, "momo" is not the first attempt at secondary anonymity by Douban users. Previous trends included nicknames such as "administrator," a playful act to blur identities since Douban groups have administrator roles, and "cancelled account," with a gray and white half-body human logo as the avatar. Douban officially renamed users who had chosen "administrator" to "Jianghu Pianzi (Swindler)," marking the second collective anonymous identity choice for its users. With the widespread adoption of "momo" following the WeChat to Douban transition, it became the third collective anonymous identity choice among Douban users.

This study employs textual analysis and the five modes of adaptation from Strain Theory to dissect the momo phenomenon across various Douban entertainment groups. Although the collective attempts at anonymity by Douban users—changing profile pictures and nicknames—may seem superficial, when privacy settings are enabled, their account ID, personal profile, public posts, and diaries are concealed, making their user pages virtually inaccessible.

However, since August 1, 2022, Chinese internet regulations have required the display of IP address locations. Consequently, Douban, like other platforms, displays each user's IP address in all activities and interactive comments. This regulation may have intensified the pursuit of anonymity among internet users, leading to the rapid proliferation of public avatars and secondary anonymity across multiple platforms. Despite the mainstream culture of Chinese social media platforms that

favors creating internet celebrity images and maximizing the visual economy, the 'momo' phenomenon, which originated from Douban, has extended to other platforms like Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book). Users there continue to engage in social activities using anonymous media images, thus cultivating a unique internet culture.

Using Merton's Strain Theory, this study provides an in-depth analysis of the user group on the Douban platform that selects the "momo" nickname. It explores why they have forsaken platform-specific anonymous media images like "administrator," "cancelled account," and "Jianghu Pianzi" in favor of "momo."

Additionally, the study investigates user behavior on Douban: When a user identity becomes "momo," are they empowered to "boldly open the mic" (Chinese: Da Dan Kai Mai, meaning to speak one's mind openly on the internet) in cyberspace, articulating their views without fear of severe backlash from those with opposing viewpoints? The effectiveness of this secondary anonymity in overcoming media dilemmas, which includes preventing harassment and attacks through doxxing or cyber armies, will be critically assessed.

This study meticulously examines the socio-cultural dynamics behind the "momo" phenomenon, delving into the psychological and social structural factors driving individuals to adopt an anonymous identity, and how such behavior influences their interaction patterns and self-presentation on social platforms. The aim is to innovatively apply Merton's Strain Theory to the analysis of individual behavior patterns on social media and to thoroughly investigate the reality and complexity of online anonymity culture within the contemporary Chinese social media context.

Keywords

Anonymity, Strain Theory, Online Identity, Social Media

SNS Accounts as Tombstones: Online Social Support and Emotional Transformation in Online Mourning Behavior of Bereaved People

Authors

Dr. Rui Qiao - China - School of Humanities, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

Abstract

According to Walter (2015)'s classification, the forms of mourning can be divided into different stages with historical changes, namely: the family/community mourning in the pre-industrial society, private mourning in the urbanization and industrialization period of the 20th century, public mourning for celebrities at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, and currently online mourning. For the latest stage, we distinguished between the public fundraising websites of the Web1.0 era and the personal mourning SNS accounts of the Web2.0 era, and the focus of this study is the latter.

This study focuses on social media accounts written by bereaved individuals to commemorate deceased relatives or friends. These social media accounts play the role of "tombstones". And the owners of the SNS accounts play a special role as 'non-silent grave keepers.' This study attempts to analyze (1) how bereaved individuals and online mourners interact based on the social media accounts, (2) what kind of online social support the bereaved people receive from the online mourners, and (3) whether bereaved individuals can undergo emotional changes.

This study used observation and in-depth interviews as the main research approach. There are a total of 25 participants in the study, with 9 of them being interviewed either through voice or online interviews. They have different identities in terms of the deceased family members, including 4 who lost their parents, 2 who lost their children, 1 who lost their spouse, and 2 who lost their grandparents. The age range is from 22 to 60 years old, mostly female. Each interview lasts for 30 to 60 minutes. Among them, 5 users are from Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book) and 4 users are from Douyin (TikTok).

We found that the establishment of 'SNS accounts as tombstones' does not fundamentally cause emotional transformation, but online mourning is still a digital practice full of emotions. Emotions often play a central role in different intensities of display and flow, and some interactions between the bereaved and mourners promote emotional transformation. Combining with the theory of online social support, online mourning happened on SNS platforms brings emotional transformation to the bereaved include (1) emotional support of homogeneous mutual assistance to reduce negative emotions such as grief and loneliness, (2) information support and (3) tool support have positive effects on the bereaved to obtain social assistance, generate positive beliefs and behaviors, while (4) negative support such as cyberbullying and questioning is not conducive to emotional transformation of the bereaved and may even bring new problems. Online mourning can establish a social support space, connect with each other through information flow recommendation mechanism, improve narrative through collection function, and compensate for the absence of the

body through the presence of the network. It has a good effect on reducing the impact of negative emotions and promoting positive emotions, but at the same time, it also has a negative effect of attracting network questioning voices.

Keywords

Online mourning; Grief healing; Online social support; Emotions.

Convenience or burden : The impact of social media usage time on users' social stress and social anxiety.

Authors

Ms. yuyun zhang - China - Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Abstract

Background

With billions of users around the world, social media has brought enormous business and social value, but also social media maladaptive use and addiction are associated with mental health problems such as stress, anxiety, and depression. (Marino, Finos, Vieno, Lenzi, & Spada, 2017; Toker & Baturay, 2016). Social anxiety, as described by Morrison and Heimberg, pertains to an irrational fear that individuals experience during social interactions, stemming from their apprehension of receiving attention and being observed, scrutinized, or evaluated by others

Previous research on the problem of social media use has largely attributed it to users' characteristics as well as to social media design and content (Neophytou, Manwell, & Eikelboom, 2019). With the widespread use of social media, social stress and social anxiety have become common problems for people. Therefore, unlike previous studies, this study will be analyzed from the perspective of the user's self-image and self-inner cognitive, a behavioral characteristic.

Theory

This research explored how social media use influences user's social stress and social anxiety. To do so, this research drew Cognitive-Affective Intention Theory (CAM) and used Quantitative Research —survey methods. the participants in this study constituted a Probability (random) sample of 300 persons aged between 18 and 60, selected from WeChat, TikTok, Bilibili, Redbook, and Weibo.

Method

This study describes and develops scales to measure social anxiety as measured by social media platforms. Measuring the impact of social media usage on social stress and social anxiety in a multidimensional format. The Social Anxiety Scale is divided into four dimensions: privacy concern anxiety(5); interaction anxiety(6); shared content anxiety(7); and self-evaluation anxiety (3).

Based on past research on the mechanisms of social anxiety, it is reasonable to hypothesize that self-image and self-inner cognition may mediate the relationship between social stress and social anxiety. Drawing on insights from prior studies, the purpose of the research mainly includes three aspects: H1: Length of social media use exerts a significant positive effect on social stress; H2: self-image mediates the relationship between social stress and social anxiety; H3: Length of social media use affects social stress not only through the self-inner cognitive but also through the self-image affects social anxiety.

Data and Result

First, this study tested for common method bias using exploratory factor analysis. Then, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used to calculate the mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficients of all variables. Finally, to test the mediated effects, we employed the bias-corrected nonparametric percentile bootstrap method. We utilized Hayes' PROCESS macro model 6 to identify the serial mediated effects, which involved bootstrapping with 5000 samples to obtain a 95% confidence interval. Exploratory factor analysis was used to test for possible common method biases. The findings revealed that 11 factors in total possessed eigen root values exceeding 1. Additionally, the first common factor accounted for only 20.32% of the overall variance, falling short of 40.00%. This finding suggests that the data in this study are not affected by significant common method bias. Descriptive statistics of the age and gender of the participants showed that of the 300 sampled, 122(41%) were males and 178 (59%) were females. The mean age of the sample was 35.26 years.

The results showed that there was no significant difference between genders on the variables ($p > 0.05$), indicating that the variables were not affected by gender. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K-S) test was conducted as a preliminary normality test, and the results showed that the p-value of the variables was bigger than 0.05. Utilizing a Pearson correlation analysis, potential associations among social stress, social anxiety, and self-image.

Individuals often resort to social avoidance behaviors as a protective mechanism to alleviate negative emotions or to prevent harm from negative evaluations. These thoughts and behaviors also reinforce an individual's anxiety, creating a vicious cycle. It was found that when individuals overfocus on their self-image will further trigger social anxiety. Therefore, only when individuals focus on the perceptions and realizations about their intrinsic self-worth and explore their diverse beauty can they effectively enhance their self-confidence in interpersonal interactions and avoid the occurrence of social anxiety. In addition, the present study had some limitations that need to be improved in future research.

Keywords

Keywords: social anxiety、 self-image、 inner-cognitive

Aao, Jagah Banaye!: Voicing and Listening to Stories of Vending, Mending, and Reclaiming the City

Authors

Dr. Sonali Sharma - India - AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Milia Islamia

Abstract

In New Delhi, women street vendors significantly contribute to the city's urban local economy. However, as marginalised groups from the informal sector, they have remained mainly invisible from conversations and actions in top-down planning processes and mainstream media. In August 2021, India's Parliamentary Standing Committee on Urban Development submitted a report on implementing the Street Vending Act (2014). The report shares a dismal image of partial implementation and the persistent lack of basic infrastructure and awareness. *Aao, Jagah Banaye!* (Come, Make A Place) is an interdisciplinary, research-driven, socially engaged art project supported by Khoj Studios that ran over 15 months in 2021-22 and engaged with the daily women street vendor groups or *pheriwalis* of Raghbir Nagar. The low-income and low-resource neighbourhood in North West Delhi houses one of India's cheapest second-hand cloth markets. By closely examining *Aao Jagah Banaye!*, the paper looks at (i) The women's regular cycle of work, life and care responsibilities, the everyday socio-spatial struggles they endure and the financial precarity they face. How do these women go about converting public spaces into places of work and reclaiming the city? How can their familiar places of labour be made more inclusive by the artists' reimagining and co-creating with the working women groups? (ii) *Aao, Jagah Banaye!* uses photographs, mapping, and zine-making tools to voice and listen to street vendors. What opportunities and challenges are afforded by utilising research-driven, socially engaged creative story-making, storytelling and story-sharing practices? (iii) How do artists and urban planners-researchers Saleha Sapra, Riddhi Batra, and 'collectives' engage in generative, process-driven approaches with the vending community? How do these creative approaches amplify the communities' subjective voices and aid in sharing their stories of resistance and resilience in physical spaces and online platforms? What ways of self-sustaining, consistent community engagement may projects suggest? The paper examines how the mediated, gendered, networked practices of the artists, Raghbir Nagar women street vendors, arts organisations like Khoj, workers' organisations like SEWA, and collectives like City Sabha and Zinedabaad intersect, coalesce and intervene in physical, public places and online on social media platforms like Instagram.

Keywords

collectives, community, digital media, Instagram, socially-engaged art, women street vendors