

Research on the Implementation Mechanism and Path of News Reality in the Perspective of Social Media——Analysis based on 10 cases of public opinion reversal

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Abstract. Social media platforms have become the preferred channel for the vast online public to obtain information and convey attitudes, and play an extremely important role in public opinion supervision. However, in such a highly "free" social media field, the truth presentation path of news often "twists and turns". In view of this, the article will analyze several cases in detail to explore the true presentation mechanism and path rules behind the reversal of news.

Keywords: social media, implementation of news authenticity, mechanism path.

1. Literature review and research status

"News authenticity", as the core concept of journalism and communication, has never been separated from the vision of academia and the industry since Xu Baohuang put forward the view that "all the news fabricated out of thin air is not news" [1] in his book journalism in 1919. The research and discussion of the meaning of news authenticity also keep pace with the times and bring forth new ideas. According to modern journalist Lu Dingyi, news authenticity is defined as "the source of news is facts, news is the report of facts, facts are primary, and news is secondary"; Up to now, Tong Bing, a modern journalist, has defined it as the degree of conformity between news reports and the objective reality reflected [3]. Professor Li Liangrong has defined the authenticity of news as the reason, process, result, person, place and time in news reports can be verified [4]; In the era of new media, Professor Chen Lidan proposed to achieve news authenticity from both static and dynamic processes[5]; The existing research results mostly focus on the causes, regulatory measures, positive and negative impacts, process and stage characterization of reversal, and communication models of reversal news. In addition, there are also studies that incorporate news authenticity as a branch into the exploration of reversal news. For example, Song Zuhua (2017) believes that "reversal news is a different presentation of news truth, which reflects the complex social situation in the new media environment" [6]; Chen Lidan, Sun Longfei, and Kuang Xixi (2016) pointed out that "achieving news authenticity under the condition of widespread dissemination is a process that can rely on numerous netizens to verify facts" [7]; Lei Yuejie and Si Li (2019) believe that reverse news is a respect and return to news facts, and the core of reverse news is the authenticity of the news, which is a reflection of the correction process of news reporting in the new media environment. [8]

The author believes that the end of most "reversals" is still the truth of the news, but the path of exploring the truth has changed. Chen Li (2017) studied the dissemination mechanism of reversals news from the perspectives of subject, content Elaborate on the internal dissemination mechanism of reverse news from the perspective of paths and other aspects [9]; Zheng Wei (2020) discussed the driving mechanism of public opinion reversal from the perspectives of two-way interaction in the communication process, jumping nature of communication paths, and the co establishment of agendas between traditional and new media [10]; Cheng Yidou (2021) analyzed the formation mechanism of public opinion reversal from the perspectives of media system, subject system, and power system [11].

2. Research Samples

Table 1 Statistics of Reversal Cases from 2020 to 2021

Numbler	Event Name	Topic type	Latform	Nature	Cycle
1	Bao Yuming Incident	Ethical	WeChat, Weibo	Truth changes	5 months
2	Guangzhou Teachers' Corporal Punishment of Students	Education	Weibo	Truth changes	Two days
3	The Luo Champion Incident	Feminist	Weibo	Truth changes	8 days
4	Hangzhou woman rumored incident	Feminist	Weibo	Truth changes	20 days
5	Zhejiang boy's assault on a foreign girl incident	Phenomena	Weibo	Truth changes	6 days
6	A girl who jumped out of a car and died incident	law	Weibo	Spontaneous questioning	26 days
7	Chengdu student falls from a building and dies	law	Weibo	Spontaneous questioning	4 days
8	Lin Shengbin Incident	law	Weibo	Spontaneous questioning	1 month
9	Qinhuangdao Boy Rescue and Sacrifice Incident	People	Weibo, Tiktok	Truth changes	1 day
10	Alibaba Female Employee Incident	Feminist	Weibo, Pulse	Truth changes	1 month

3. Case analysis and research findings

3.1 External driving factors for frequent occurrence of reverse news

3.1.1 The hotbed of frequent news reversals: social media platforms

In the era of social media, more and more news has begun to enter the public eye in a socially appropriate manner, often becoming a hot topic of discussion on social media platforms. According to the principle of sample selection, the ten confirmed cases all occurred on social media platforms (see Table 1). The openness, connectivity, and participation characteristics of social media have strengthened the public opinion supervision function of social media; But it has also become a breeding ground for frequent reversal news, although the truth will eventually be revealed, the presentation process has become increasingly convoluted.

3.1.2 The driving force behind news reversal: types and topics

The selected cases are all social news with different topics (see Table 1). Social news is people-oriented and based on social ethics and morality, reflecting people's social life, consciousness, problems, and phenomena, involving good, bad, and new things happening around people. The reason why social news often reverses is to uncover the knowledge background, cognitive level, and life experience that are similar to the general public, especially in the field of social media, People often continue to pay attention to the vividness, interest, and proximity of social news, while being indifferent to political, military, economic, technological, cultural, and other news types that require knowledge and professional level.

3.2 The Mechanism and Path of Realizing News Reality in Social Media

3.2.1 Analysis of the main mechanism for achieving news authenticity

3.2.1.1 The main types of public opinion subjects

Through a comprehensive examination and summary of ten samples, the subjects of reverse news generally include the initiator, mainstream media, self media/marketing accounts, opinion leaders, the public/insiders, stakeholders, and verifiers. Mainstream media are generally reporters of public opinion topics, clarifiers of truth, and guides of correct social values; Self media serves as the filler of event information and the combiner of public opinion events, while marketing accounts are basically rhythm driven with traffic first; Opinion leaders are generally professionals who promote scientific knowledge and guide correct values; The public and insiders are the groups that expand event information, expand the impact of events, and influence the direction of public opinion events; The parties involved often seek help through the internet, defend their own interests through the internet, clarify the truth, gain attention, and obtain traffic; The verification party is responsible for conducting in-depth investigations to restore the truth and reduce the negative social impact.

3.2.1.2 The Internal Motivation Mechanism of the Subject of Public Opinion

Taking the Luo champion incident as an example, when the victim of the incident is a weak position in social stereotypes, the starting subject will use their advantage to edit and accuse the other party, and the public is likely to sympathize with and stand in line with the weak due to stereotypes; As the situation develops, the accused party will also defend their rights in order to safeguard their own interests, release subjective self-interest information, and stimulate conflicts; For completely opposite statements, the public becomes the main body of public opinion fermentation. They do not have a purpose and act as a "spectator", shouting for the side they believe is just among various psychological factors. However, the emotional and lack of discernment of the public are extremely susceptible to ulterior motives of inciting public opinion, causing it to lose focus. As facts reverse and attitudes change, public opinion subsides. The ten samples in this study all share the same characteristics, indicating that the speech and encoding behavior of public opinion subjects are often triggered by individual purposiveness. This inherent tendency and selectivity largely determine people's online behavior.

3.2.1.3 The External Motivation Mechanism of the Subject of Public Opinion

External sensitive information, the instigation of self media/marketing accounts, and the ease of topics can also affect people's online behavior. In the process of public opinion fermentation, both self media and marketing accounts are involved, revealing, hyping, inciting, or expanding facts, all of which affect the opinions of netizens. In addition, when people exchange information with real individuals in real space, they will engage in new online behavior; For the verification party and mainstream media, they jointly assume the function of maintaining social stability. The verification party is mainly composed of the public security department, and there are also parties involved who clarify that under public pressure, the former intervenes to maintain social stability and fulfill professional responsibilities, while the latter makes statements to prove their innocence.

3.2.2 Analysis of the stage mechanism for achieving news authenticity

3.2.2.1 Beginning of public opinion: attracting public participation and triggering public opinion

Several case studies have shown that the beginning of public opinion is when a topic begins to enter the public eye, prompting more communicators to participate in the public opinion event, forming the first wave of public opinion peak. At the same time, communicators who jointly follow the event will form an instant community to facilitate mutual communication and information exchange. However, the "majority opinion" at this stage is only formed by the majority of people listening to and believing in the "one-sided words" of the initiator of the event, and it does not equal the truth. However, it is often this "blind obedience" that causes the truth to constantly "deviate", becoming an important mechanism for frequent news reversals.

3.2.2.2 Public opinion fermentation: promoting information polarization and official intervention

Reversal news always arises in an open media environment and undergoes a reversal in the continuous filling and correction of relevant information. As diverse information about events continues to increase in the dissemination process, the first round of "majority opinion" is denied and corrected, And it has entered the second round of further revisions and supplements. However, due to the lack of authoritative verification, these expanded information from the public is highly likely to have irrational emotional polarization and difficult to distinguish between truth and falsehood, under the increasing pressure of public opinion, professional media are urged to investigate and clarify the truth, quell public opinion, and reduce social impact.

3.2.2.3 Reversal of public opinion: restore the truth and break the inflection point

Unlike regular news, reversal news has the special nature of inflection point mutation. The emergence of inflection point means that the initial information does not match the subsequent facts. Only one inflection point has occurred in nine cases in this paper, and one inflection point has occurred twice, that is, the Alibaba female employee incident. It was not until the second reversal that relevant evidence and details were disclosed, proving that the perpetrator had no criminal facts and was only detained. However, no matter how many inflection points there are, the facts will not overlap with the initial event or the inflection points that have occurred, and the degree of change caused by each inflection point varies, some are partial reversals, while others are comprehensive reversals. In addition, according to the nature of the event, the cycle of presenting the truth varies, with the highest number occurring within ten days. However, the cycle of suspected major criminal cases is relatively long, taking about one month or even five months.

3.2.2.4 Public opinion subsidies: disband immediate communities and return to calm

Generally, when the facts reverse, the real-time community that originally gathered due to the same concerns will significantly shrink until it disappears. However, when the author recorded and observed many cases in the online ethnography, he found that when the truth of the event was far from the public's "imagined truth", most of the public opinion communicators would actively change their positions, believe and respect the truth information released by the official, but a small number of public opinion subjects would still adhere to themselves, but because there was no direct evidence, They will even accuse the incident from the perspective of "conspiracy theory", but a small number of communication subjects can no longer raise public opinion without specific proof.

3.2.3 A General Path Formula for Realizing News Reality in Social Media

After examining all samples, the implementation of news authenticity follows a general path and is applicable to most reverse news:

Media/parties involved/ordinary netizens posting relevant information (attracting widespread attention) → triggering public discussion/media forwarding reports/misleading with ulterior motives (large-scale outbreak of public opinion) → media/parties involved/insiders/relevant institutions/police expanding event information (polarization of public opinion field information, reaching peak heat) → police intervention to restore the truth/parties clarifying the facts (event reversal, public opinion attitude reversal) → public opinion receding.

4. Conclusion and Enlightenment

By examining case studies, we have gained an understanding of the general mechanisms and paths for achieving news authenticity in social media, which have certain universality but are not applicable to all news, such as international news. In addition, there are limitations. Firstly, participants are willing to actively seek the truth, but their pursuit of the truth is not pure enough, due to the influence of internal psychology and external information; Secondly, not all the truth presentation processes of reverse news are closed-loop. If the truth remains unclear for a long time, it indicates that the mechanism for presenting the truth of the news is incomplete; Thirdly, in the

news reversal process, the clarification provided by public inspection agencies or professional media is more credible than that of ordinary people.

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