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Social Communication of Chinese Mainstream Media in Tiktok

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Abstract

Purpose of this study is to study the social communication of Chinese mainstream media in Tiktok, and promote the positive interaction with the audience in news information dissemination. Consequently, the audience's satisfaction with mainstream media short video news at the cognitive level, attitude level and behavior level was examined. The research object is the users who have watched the short video news of mainstream media on Internet social networking platforms such as Tiktok. A questionnaire was distributed through the online survey platform "SoJump", and 423 valid responses were obtained for SPSS data analysis. Finally, the research findings emphasize that the audience has high expectations for social news forms and believes that interactive social short video news will become the mainstream form of news in the future. Better utilization of social media may enhance the innovation of mainstream news media, transform their discourse style, and expand their influence in future development.

Keywords: Mainstream media, Short video news, Social communication

Introduction

The production and dissemination methods of media content have undergone continuous development and changes. From radio, newspapers, television, Weibo to WeChat and short videos, the paths of information dissemination have become increasingly diverse, and the forms of information have become more diverse. People's demands for information have also become higher and higher. The rapid development of Internet technology and the rapid change and popularization of mobile terminal equipment have laid a good foundation for the development of media technology(Hua,2022). The audience's needs and ways of receiving information content are also changing with the continuous transformation of media technology. Short videos, as an emerging form of content dissemination, have the characteristics of short content and easy sharing, fully catering to the fragmented and socialized online reading habits of the current audience.

The 53rd Statistical Report on the Development of Internet in China shows that by December 2023, the number of Internet users in China has reached 1.092 billion. The rise of social software and social information platforms has brought people closer under virtual terminals, driving mass media into a new era of social communication characterized by “instant communication and feedback”, “information interaction” and “social sharing”(Li,2020). More and more mainstream media and official institutions are entering different media platforms to spread to different audience types.

Based on this, this study will select the short video news released by mainstream media in the Tiktok short video platform as a sample through case analysis to analyze its theme characteristics and discourse characteristics Secondly, through a questionnaire survey on users who have watched short video news on the Tiktok platform, we can understand the factors that affect audience satisfaction with short video news of mainstream media. Through the above analysis, this study attempts to summarize the communication characteristics of short video news of mainstream media in the Tiktok short video platform. Through systematic analysis of the deficiencies in the current short video news content, it puts forward optimization suggestions for the content of short video news of mainstream media.

Literature Review

Based on the current research status of short videos both domestically and internationally, from multi platform attempts, to rapid capital entry, and then to market recognition, the development of short video platforms has entered a stable application period from explosive growth since its inception. Whether from market feedback or the research of experts and scholars on new things, it has been proven that short videos are hot enough and have given rise to KOLs (opinion leaders) based on mobile short video platforms (Li&Huo,2022). Based on the current research status of short videos and short video news applications, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The dissemination of short video news has broadened the path of news dissemination, improved the reach rate of news dissemination, and extended the boundaries of news dissemination(Wang,2023). The new features of short videos have given more possibilities for news dissemination. Both the industry and academia have recognized and actively attempted to turn news into short videos. However, a unified, systematic, and relatively standard short video news production mechanism has not yet been formed, so it is also impossible to form a normalized application in daily news reporting, and thus achieve the dissemination effect of multiple platforms, the same form, and the same content(Song,2021).

In short video news applications, only some media have first-hand information on specific scenarios such as press conferences and press conferences. In short video news, multiple media outlets may also use the same visuals and content (Zhang,2020). This not only wastes public resources of online information, but also leads to serious homogenization and copyright issues.

This research mainly applies the theory of usage and satisfaction to explore the current development status, existing problems, and propose corresponding optimization strategies of mainstream media short video news.

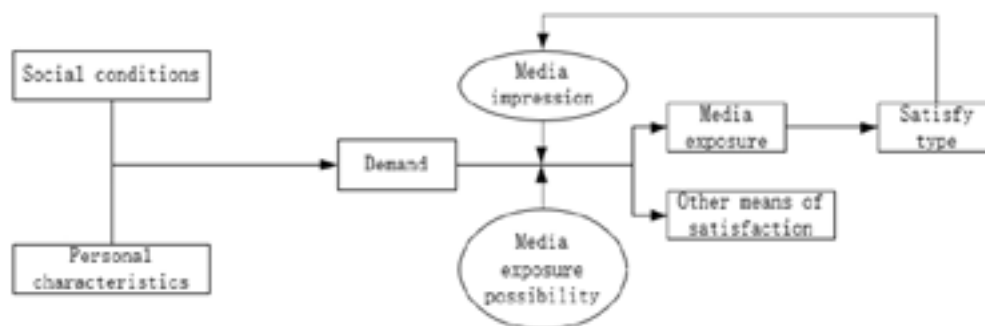


Figure 1 Using and satisfying theoretical models

From the model, it can be seen that social conditions and personal characteristics drive audience demand. Based on media impressions and the possibility of media contact, audiences choose media contact or other means to meet their needs. Regardless of whether the audience meets their needs through exposure to the media, the media will have an impact on the audience, especially on their subsequent media choice behavior, and to some extent, affect their media expectations (Gong,2017) .

Based on the theory of usage and satisfaction, research is conducted by analyzing the content of mainstream media short video news and reflecting the advantages and existing problems of short video news products produced by mainstream media from the perspective of audience satisfaction and inner expectations. Optimization is carried out in combination with audience satisfaction to improve the dissemination effect of mainstream media.

Research methodology

This research used quantitative research methods and designed a questionnaire to test the attitudes of mainstream media short video news audiences. With the help of a questionnaire survey, data is collected and used for data analysis to explore the audience's acceptance and satisfaction with mainstream media short video news, understand the influencing factors of audience satisfaction with mainstream media short video news, and lay data support for identifying problems and proposing optimization suggestions.

The questionnaire designed for the research has three dimensions. The first dimension is background information, which is based on demographic analysis to investigate the characteristics of observation samples such as gender, age, and education of short video news users. The second dimension is based on the Likert 5-factor scale to investigate the audience's satisfaction with mainstream media short video news, its influencing factors, and willingness to interact. The third dimension is the survey of user expectations for short video news dissemination. This dimension mainly explores the audience's psychological expectations for mainstream media short video news from the audience's perspective.

The research subjects are Chinese university students aged 18 to 25. Design a survey questionnaire from the perspective of audience cognition, attitude, and behavior, and use a combination of online and offline methods to obtain 423 valid questionnaires for comprehensive analysis. This research will explore the influencing factors of audience acceptance and satisfaction with mainstream media short video news, understand audience interaction willingness, and analyze the dissemination effect from three aspects: cognition, attitude, and behavior.

Demographic analysis

In this survey, 54.37% of the participants were female and 45.63% were male. The number of female participants is slightly higher than that of male participants. Among the 423 participants in the survey, the age group of 18-22 years old accounted for 59.81%, and the age group of 23-25 years old accounted for 40.19%. It can be seen that there are more people in the age group of 18-22 years old, accounting for more than half, and the user age group tends to be younger.

Communication effect

From the “bullet theory” at the beginning of the 20th century to the “limited effects theory” from the 1940s to the 1960s, and then to the 1970s, macro effects theory has been widely accepted by the public, and communication theorists have continuously deepened their understanding of the effects and impacts of mass communication. British communication scholar Dennis McGuire divides communication effects into three theories: common sense theory, on-site theory, and social science theory. He believes that the factors that influence audience acceptance of communication mainly include public opinion, internal media perspectives, and the popularization of social science. This study is based on statistical data from questionnaire surveys and conducts a micro level analysis of the dissemination effect of mainstream media short video news from three aspects: audience cognition, attitude, and behavior.

1.Cognitive level

Cognition is the primary link in communication that produces results, mainly including the process of the brain collecting and processing external information to obtain information, knowledge, and experience. This study refers to the direct or indirect impact of short video news from mainstream media on the audience’s intuition and memory system, causing an increase in people’s knowledge or changes in their knowledge structure.

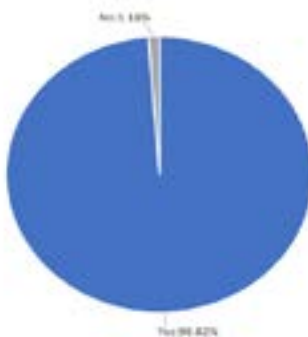


Figure 2 Proportion of respondents who have watched mainstream media short video news

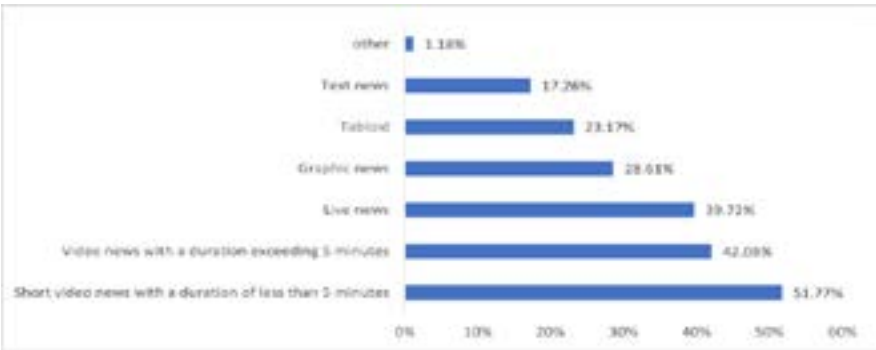


Figure 3 News Form Tendency

As shown in the above figure (Figures 2 and 3), 98.82% of the respondents have watched short video news from mainstream media, which indicates that short video news is widely spread in the current Internet. The proportion of short video news with a duration of less than 5 minutes is the highest among the preferred forms of news expression by respondents, reflecting that short video news has a good audience foundation as a new form of news content expression. Among the respondents, short video news with a duration of less than 5 minutes had the highest inclination towards news formats.

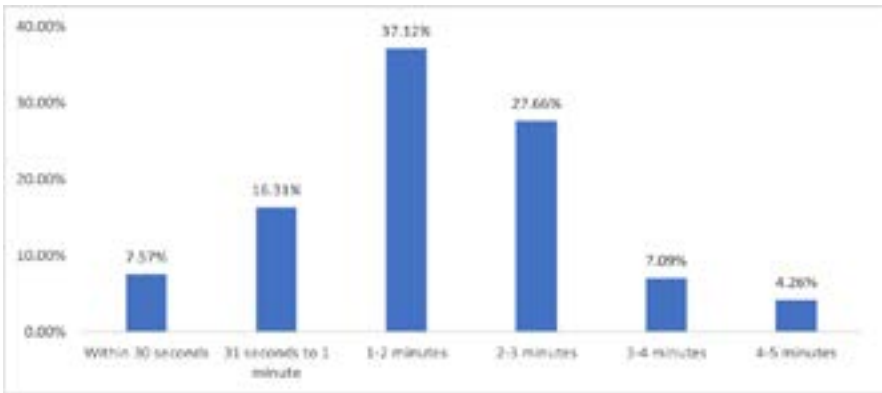


Figure 4 News duration of commonly watched mainstream media short videos

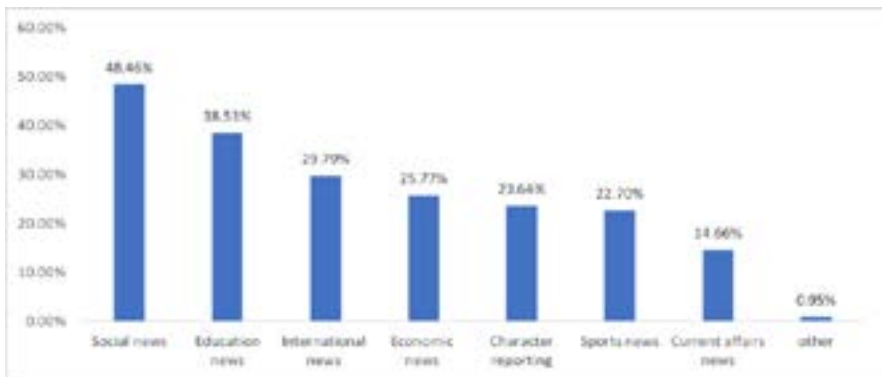


Figure 5 Popular media short video news types frequently watched

The survey results (Figures 4 and 5) show that the respondents prefer mainstream media short videos with a duration mainly concentrated between 1-2 minutes and 2-3 minutes, accounting for 37.12% and 27.66%, respectively. From this, it can be concluded that although current mainstream media short videos have the characteristic of being “short, flat, and fast”, audiences still tend to have relatively complete narratives when browsing news at a fast pace, rather than just excerpts from the climax of the news. Among the mainstream media short video news types that audiences often watch, social news accounts for the highest proportion. Currently, the selection of short video news themes published by mainstream media is consistent with the news themes with high audience attention.

2. Attitude level

Attitude is the second level of evaluation of communication effectiveness, which is an individual's psychological inclination towards a certain type of social affairs. In this study, the main focus is on analyzing the degree of influence of the audience's beliefs or value system in the short video news dissemination activities of mainstream media, as well as the audience's attitudes and development expectations towards the content itself.

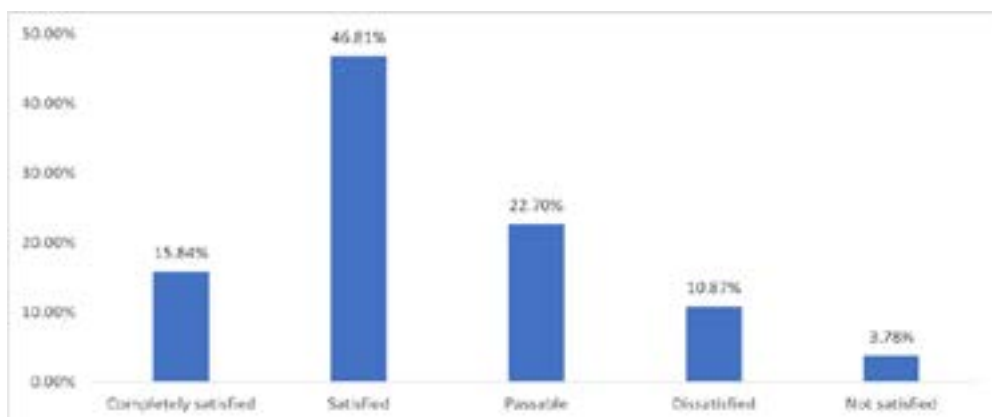


Figure 6 Overall satisfaction with mainstream media short video news

According to the questionnaire data statistics (Figure 6), it can be seen that the majority of respondents hold a high level of satisfaction with mainstream media short video news. With the development of short video platforms and the improvement and promotion of short video functions on numerous online media platforms, mainstream media short video news has a high degree of influence on the audience's emotions or emotions, and the audience is also aware of the attitude changes affected, with a high degree of acceptance.

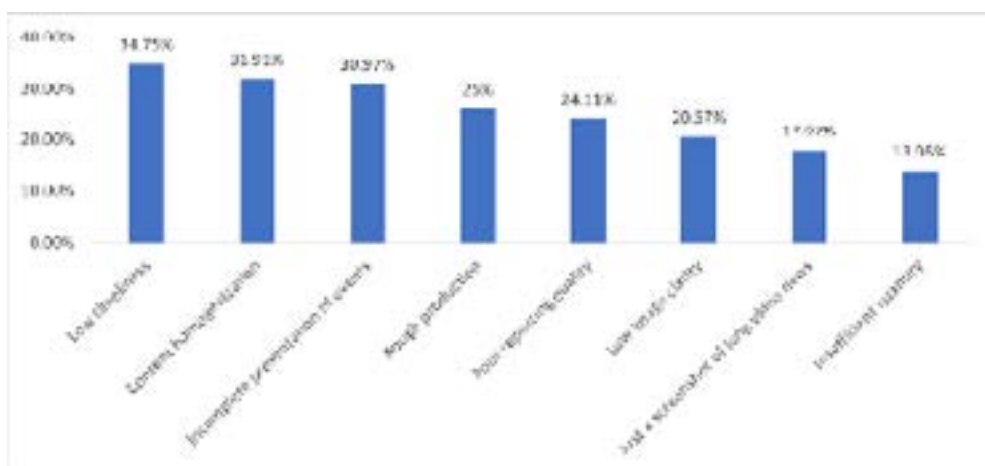


Figure 7 Shortcomings of Short Video News in Mainstream Media

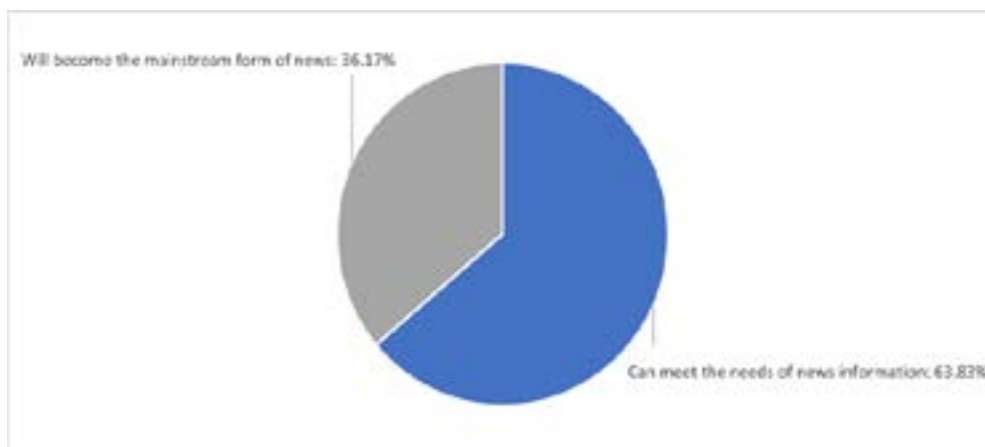


Figure 8 Respondents' expectations for mainstream media short video news

According to the questionnaire data statistics (Figures 7 and 8), it can be seen that respondents are most concerned about the shortcomings of mainstream media short video news, such as content homogenization, low timeliness, and incomplete event presentation. Among them, the problem of low timeliness accounts for the highest proportion, indicating that the audience has a high demand for the timeliness of news reporting. Secondly, there is homogenization of content and incomplete presentation of events, which may mean that the audience wants to see more reports from different perspectives and contents. According to data, most people hold a positive attitude towards mainstream media short video news, believing that it has high potential in meeting news information needs.

3. Behavioral level

Behavior refers to the overall behavior of an organism in a specific environment, and behavior generally utilizes various tools in the environment as a means to achieve goals. This study mainly analyzes the audience's viewing behavior and willingness to interact with mainstream media short video news at the audience action level.

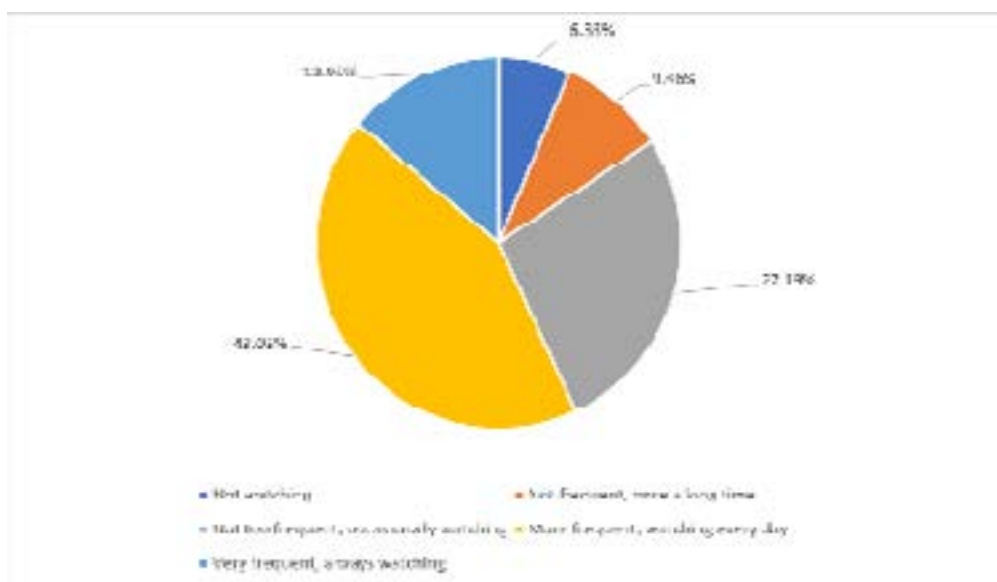


Figure 9 Frequency of watching mainstream media short video news

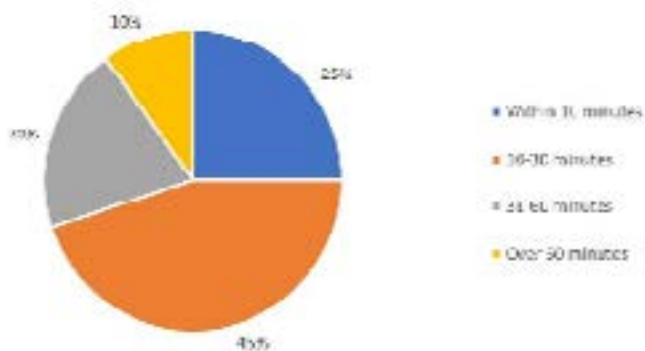


Figure 10 Duration of watching mainstream media short video news

Through statistical analysis of the questionnaire survey data (Figure 9), it was found that more than half of the respondents had a higher viewing frequency. In addition, the length of time that respondents watch short video news also shows fragmented characteristics, with 25% watching within 10 minutes, 45% watching between 11-30 minutes, and 20% watching between 31-60 minutes. The proportion of respondents who watch for a long time is relatively low, with only 10% watching over 60 minutes. It can be seen that the current mainstream media's short video news also conforms to the audience's fragmented browsing habits of information reception.

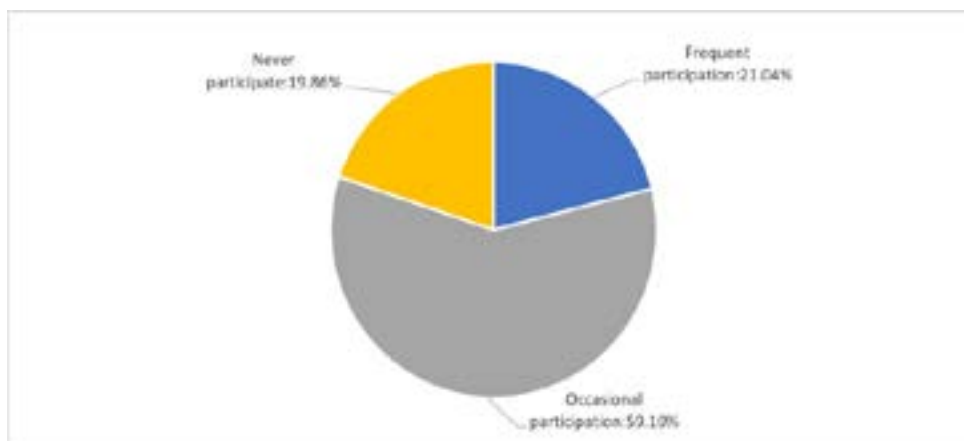


Figure 11 Audience's willingness to participate in mainstream media short video news interaction

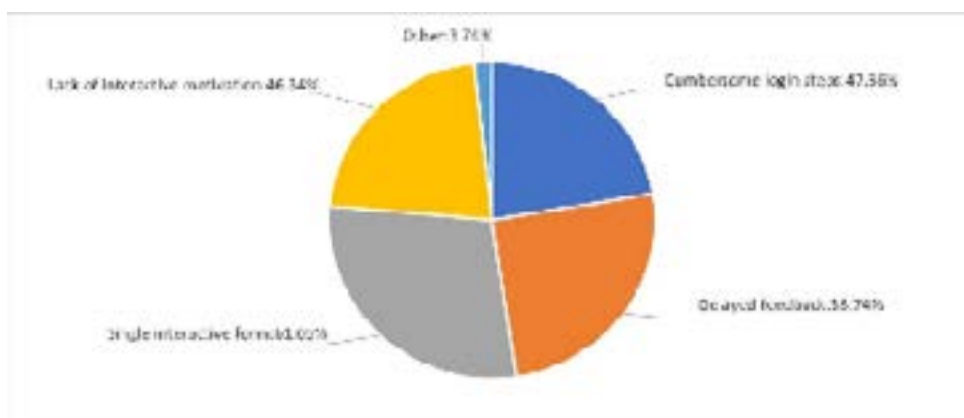


Figure 12 Reasons why audiences do not participate in mainstream media short video news interactions

According to the data statistics from the questionnaire survey (Figure 11), it was found that the audience occasionally participates in discussions on mainstream media short video news through the comment section, accounting for 59.1%; 21.04% of people frequently participate in discussions. This indicates that most people have a certain level of participation in the discussion of mainstream media short video news, especially with a higher proportion of occasional participation. Among the reasons why the audience did not participate in the interaction, the main factors were a single form of interaction and untimely feedback.

Findings

In this survey, the main focus was on investigating the audience's satisfaction with mainstream media short video news, identifying the factors that influence the audience's viewing of mainstream media short video news, as well as the problems that mainstream media faces in news dissemination.

Firstly, the survey audience likes to use fragmented time for browsing, usually with a single viewing time between 11-30 minutes, and likes to browse social news. At the same time, the audience also hopes to be as complete as possible in the news narrative.

Secondly, through the analysis of the audience's cognitive attitude, it can be seen that the audience has a high level of attention to the content quality of mainstream media short video news. The high number of interactions in news topics such as social news and international news highlights the authority and credibility of mainstream media in the news center. Through the analysis of audience behavior, it can be seen that the audience has a high loyalty to mainstream media short video news, with over 40% of the audience watching more frequently, but lacking motivation to participate in interactive behaviors such as sharing or forwarding.

Thirdly, it reflects that the audience is not blindly pursuing the "short" of short video news. Whether users actively or passively receive it, they have put forward requirements for the content quality of short video news. There is still room for improvement in the content quality of short video news dissemination in mainstream media. This also provides certain reference significance for the content setting and enhanced dissemination effect of mainstream media short video news.

Conclusion and Discussion

The rapid development of Internet technology has given birth to new ways of information presentation and dissemination, catering to the mobile and fragmented reading habits of the audience. Mainstream media also take this as an opportunity to break away from the traditional form of news, utilize its strong advantages in information resources and content production, enter short video platforms, and launch short video news products (Wang,2021). This enables mainstream media to have a deeper reach rate in news dissemination. Based on algorithmic recommendation platforms and audience are sharing methods, news reception increases the passive way of receiving news information on the basis of active viewing; The rich interactive functions allow mainstream media to communicate directly with the audience in real-time (Tu,2023).

From the initial stage of mainstream media entering short video platforms, the emergence of "hot selling" short video news, mainstream media publishing high-quality content, and short video platforms providing traffic support have a mutually complementary effect (Zhou,2017). However, at the same time, when the audience's sense of freshness in short videos decreases, they still need to return to the content itself. Only by providing high-quality short video news content can sustainable development be achieved.

As a characteristic of short video platforms, social attributes reflect the audience's willingness to share their attitudes and viewpoints through real-time interaction. Mainstream media should also strengthen interaction with the audience in the dissemination of short video news, stimulate the audience's second or even multiple reposts, and transform potential audiences with less attention to short video news from passive reception of "weak relationships" to active understanding of the news content watched by others through "strong relationships"(Yue,2018). At the same time, we should also be wary of the drawbacks brought about by algorithm recommendations, and break through the shackles of the cocoon effect by enhancing the dissemination of public information.

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