Research on the Improvement of College Students' Media Literacy in the New Media Environment: A Case Study of Sina Weibo

Dian Jing

School of Journalism and Communication, Zhengzhou University, Zhengzhou, China

1342170453@qq.com

Abstract. As a tool for human beings to understand the world indirectly, the media has an important impact on people's cognition and behavior, especially for college students living in the new media era, in the face of more diverse media information and more frequent and free media contact, college students must have a high level of media literacy if they want to make reasonable use of the media to provide convenience for their own study and life. This paper selects Sina Weibo (hereinafter referred to as "Weibo"), which is an active platform for college students, and finds that there are still problems in the media literacy of college students in the new media environment, such as frequent media contact, pan-entertainment, blurring of media information cognition, and irrationalization of media contact, through literature research method and questionnaire survey method, and from the three aspects of media contact, media cognition and media participation. Improving the media literacy of college students in three aspects: media literacy education in colleges and universities and self-education of college students.

Keywords: New Media, Weibo, College Students, Media Literacy

1   Introduction

In the era of new media, college students' media literacy is facing severe challenges due to the large and uneven information flow on the Internet, the anonymity of media participation, and the lack of network supervision. Specifically, data technology, multimedia technology, mobile terminal technology and intelligent technology are changing with each passing day, from the 2G era to the 5G era, the most intuitive feeling is that the information transmission is getting faster and faster, the information torrent is becoming more and more "turbulent", and the self-media platforms such as Weibo are also growing rapidly in the hotbed of technology1, with low entry thresholds and strong interactivity in a timely manner, and large-scale and rapid transmission of various platform information. Economic benefits give rise to the concept of "traffic first", which also promotes some self-media to use eye-catching methods to earn clicks and spread good and bad information, so fake news, news reversal, manuscript washing and other

self-media chaos frequently appears2. In the complex network environment, it is difficult to make completely correct choices and judgments3. In recent years, the Internet field has changed with each passing day, and China's informatization has also entered the fast lane of development. According to the Statistical Report on the Development of China's Internet released by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) on August 31, 2022, as of June 2022, the number of Internet users in China reached 1.051 billion, and the Internet penetration rate reached 74.4%. The biggest difference between cyberspace and real life is that everyone does not know each other's true identities, everyone just communicates with their "ID", the anonymity of media participation makes netizens unconsciously drown in the crowd, and people's sense of social responsibility and self-control are gradually diluted in the state of anonymity that lacks social constraints"4. Online rumors, fake news and even online violence can be seen in college students. It can be seen that under the anonymity of media participation, college students' scientific evaluation of the media and the information it conveys is more challenging.

2   Methods

According to the connotation of college students' media literacy, this paper uses the questionnaire survey method to conduct research, and makes the following questionnaire design: this survey mainly selects full-time undergraduate students of Zhengzhou University, and uses the peer relationship network to share online questionnaires, and invites undergraduates from many domestic universities as the research objects, involving multiple disciplines of arts, science, engineering and medicine, which is representative. A total of 403 questionnaires were distributed on the Questionnaire Star platform, and 403 questionnaires were recovered, of which 403 were valid. In terms of questionnaire question setting, the media exposure is most directly reflected in the types of media that college students are exposed to, the purpose of media use and the duration of media exposure. Therefore, in the question setting, the respondents' Weibo usage, purpose of use, and daily usage time are mainly measured, while the media cognition is reflected in the judgment and screening of college students' media and its information.

3   Findings

3.1   Current status of media literacy among college students

In terms of college students' media contact, this paper mainly takes the microblogging platform as an example to explore the purpose and frequency of college students' media contact. According to the data obtained from this questionnaire survey, from the perspective of media exposure, all the surveyed college students have used Weibo, as shown in Figure 4, in this survey, in the "average daily use of Weibo time" option, 41.44% of the respondents have a cumulative time of less than one hour per day, 28.29% have a cumulative time of 1 to 3 hours per day, and 30.27% have accumulated more than 3 hours a day. As shown in Figure 4, in the multiple-choice survey of "the

main purpose of using Weibo", 88% of the information needs, 54% of the entertainment needs, 76% of the social needs, 34% of the learning needs, and 22% of other needs. In terms of college students' media information cognition, this paper mainly explores the ability of college students to identify media information with microblogging as an example. As shown in Figure 3, in this survey, 53.1% of the respondents chose not to doubt the option of "whether they doubt the information obtained on Weibo"; As for the 46.9% of those who would be skeptical, 56.61% would take the initiative to verify "if they doubted, would they take the initiative to learn about the verification information from more media", while the remaining 43.39% felt that there was no need to ask for verification. In terms of college students' media information participation, this paper mainly explores the ability of college students to use microblogs and other media to express their voices. As shown in Figure 4, in this survey, 40.2% of the respondents chose yes and 59.8% chose no in the option of "whether they will take the initiative to express their opinions in the face of controversial events". Among the respondents who chose to speak out, 65.43% of the respondents would cater to the mainstream opinion, and 34.57% dared to express their views independently. In the "Reasons for Silence" option, 65% of respondents said they were afraid of being hit or because they had nothing to do with it.

3.2   Problems in college students' media literacy

Weibo can be based on user relationships, information sharing and dissemination, and rely on the attention mechanism to establish the connection between users, providing a one-to-many social platform for users to share real-time information, and it can even be said that Weibo perfectly caters to the needs of college students and even the entire adolescent stage of curiosity, eager to show themselves, and interact with others, so it is deeply loved by contemporary college students. But at the same time, the more serious problem is that college students' dependence on microblogging is becoming more and more serious, and the proportion of students who use microblogging for more than three hours a day is 30.27%, and excessive media exposure will induce "media dependence", which makes college students escape from real social interaction and indulge in virtual social interaction provided by new media such as microblogging. Expressing their voices on the Internet, but remaining silent in reality, will lead to a lack of social responsibility among college students, and even depressive tendencies such as loneliness and autism.Media cognition is related to whether college students can treat media information rationally and comprehensively5. According to the survey, it is not difficult to see that the vast majority of college students still believe in the authenticity of the information conveyed by the media, and even if they express doubts, the number of college students who conduct in-depth research is still in the minority. College students still lack a rational understanding of the media, especially in terms of social control and media morality. College students are eager to obtain information from the outside world, but because of their lack of ability to interpret and identify media information and lack of vigilance, it is easy for them to blindly believe and blindly follow the media, and regard the "picture" depicted by the media as their own perception of the outside world. Once the information transmitted by the media is wrong, college students will

be greatly affected, and most of the problems such as online fraud and campus naked loans in recent years are also due to this.

In the new media era, with the popularization of the Internet and the development and improvement of mobile terminals, the users of the new social media represented by Weibo are no longer simply "passive recipients of information", but have transformed into "active disseminators of information" with a high degree of autonomy. As a group of high-quality netizens, college students can freely express their opinions and participate in the discussion of public events in the discourse space provided by Weibo, which is not only conducive to social governance and the construction of a pluralistic society, but also beneficial to their own self-awareness, mutual cognition, and socialization. But at the same time, the phenomenon of "conformity" in the survey results is not unlimited, and the resulting group polarization is also worthy of alarm. For those who choose to be "silent", it proves that the phenomenon of "spiral of silence" still exists in today's Internet popularity. At the same time, college students' indignant speeches are likely to be manipulated by people with ulterior motives, turning into online violence and threatening the stability of social order.

4   Conclusions

4.1   The government and industry should strengthen administrative management

In the media literacy education system, the government should take the lead6. In addition, the government should also set up relevant institutions to be responsible for media literacy research, online public opinion monitoring and rectification of violations, so that there are laws to follow, law enforcement must be strict, and violations must be investigated. At the same time, the relevant government departments should also link the "top-level design" with grassroots activities to carry out legal popularization of media literacy education. In the face of the new media environment with endless media forms, how to keep up with the trend of the times and update relevant laws, regulations and management measures with the times is the direction that government departments should strive to work hard in the future. In the media literacy education system, media platforms should be in the dominant position, as the eyes and ears of the Party and the people, China's news media should always adhere to the principles of Party and people's nature, adhere to the Party's leadership, and always serve the overall situation. In the era of new media, the commercialization of media is serious, and media platforms should put social benefits in the first place, fully understand their own positioning in the national media literacy education system, and take the initiative to assume the responsibility of media literacy education and fulfill relevant obligations. Specifically, media platforms should improve operational rules, strengthen information control and content drainage, avoid excessive commercialization, and reduce the spread of negative information. In addition, media platforms should also take advantage of their own advantages, increase publicity, cooperate with the government or universities, integrate the relevant knowledge of media literacy education into the production of media content, and mobilize Internet celebrities and authoritative figures on various platforms to

cultivate them as relevant online opinion leaders, indirectly establish a correct public opinion orientation for college students, and create a good platform environment.

4.2   Media literacy education should be included in the education system of colleges and universities

Media literacy research originally originated in the West and is a complete "foreign product", but the basic research on media literacy in China is insufficient, and the media literacy education in colleges and universities is also "stunted". According to the survey, at present, most colleges and universities in China only offer media literacy education related courses for journalism and communication students, and there are no media literacy education courses for all teachers and students. In view of this, the author believes that after all, "there is a specialization in the art industry", and college students have limited time and energy, it is unreasonable and unrealistic to completely promote the compulsory courses of journalism and communication students to teachers and students of all majors, but colleges and universities can consider combining media literacy education with ideological and political education. As a collective course that has been offered by most colleges and universities in China for many years, ideological and political courses have been fully valued by contemporary college students by virtue of their perfect theoretical system and good social foundation. Therefore, colleges and universities can integrate college students' media literacy education into the ideological and political education curriculum, impart media literacy knowledge to college students with the help of mainstream education concepts, strengthen relevant case teaching, explore the establishment of reasonable teaching models, scientific curriculum evaluation standards, etc., and improve the reward mechanism to improve the enthusiasm of college students to participate in media literacy learning.

As the main front of ideological and cultural education in colleges and universities, campus media resources play an important role in disseminating information, publicizing and education, communicating life, and guiding public opinion. In addition, in the face of the impact of digital media and intelligent media in the new media era, relying solely on traditional media may not be able to achieve the expected effect of media literacy education, and the characteristics of college students' fast-paced life and fragmented reading require media literacy education to keep pace with the times, using new media platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and Bilibili, through H5, short videos and other forms that college students like to see, promote media literacy knowledge, innovate MOOC forms, optimize teaching resources, intercept the fragmented time of college students, and give full play to the advantages of new media. Improve the enthusiasm of college students in media literacy learning.

In today's rapid development of media, media literacy is the basic literacy that college students should have, and it is also a necessary quality for college teachers, who are the pioneers on the education front, and the level of media literacy of teachers is related to the quality of media literacy education in colleges and universities. First, colleges and universities should set up media literacy research institutions, use faculty to strengthen theoretical research, and provide theoretical guidance for media literacy education in the new media environment. Second, colleges and universities should also

set up media literacy training courses, organize teachers to collectively learn media literacy knowledge and teaching methods, organize media literacy education forums for teachers, and regularly share the teaching experience of media literacy education courses, so as to promote the overall progress of the teaching staff. Third, to train teachers to become "campus opinion leaders", whether offline or online, teachers should play the role of releasing authoritative information and reasonably guiding public opinion, maintain conscientious interaction with students, solve doubts and doubts for students, grasp the dynamics of students' thoughts, and dominate public opinion in our campus media.

4.3   Strengthen the self-education of college students

External forces such as the government, industry, and schools can only play an auxiliary role in the media literacy education system, and the key to fundamentally improving the media literacy of college students depends on their self-education7. First of all, in terms of media contact, college students should strengthen the study of new technologies, improve their ability to operate new media, look at various media from a critical and dialectical perspective, make reasonable media choices according to their age, education, background and other factors, and use media suitable for their own situation. In terms of media contact content, college students should clarify the purpose of media use according to actual needs, reduce the time for entertainment gossip and ineffective social networking, avoid drowning in superficial information and popular entertainment, actively obtain social hotspots, study and life information from the media, and give full play to the ability of the media to serve study and life. At the same time, it is also necessary to pay attention to the cultivation of self-control ability, reasonably plan the time of contact with the media, enhance the ability to think independently, and avoid the formation of dependence on the media.

In terms of media cognition, in the new media era, the characteristics of the media, such as low threshold and decentralization, have caused the Internet information to fall into the mud and sand, and all kinds of false information and bad information threaten the physical and mental health of college students. Specifically, in the face of media information, college students should always maintain a calm attitude, adhere to the strategy of independent thinking, rational judgment, courage to question, and active verification, do not easily believe in network information, do not blindly follow the surface public opinion of netizens, do not follow the trend, refuse to spread rumors, believe rumors, and spread rumors, and use it to expose and report violent, pornographic, and bad information.

In terms of media participation, college students should closely integrate theory and practice. First of all, college students should improve their awareness of media participation, learn the theoretical knowledge related to media literacy independently, and actively use the media to speak out and serve their own learning and life. On the one hand, in the public sphere of cyberspace, we fully respect the rights of others, speak out rationally, and consciously avoid cyberviolence. On the other hand, college students should also pay attention to the protection of personal privacy, improve vigilance and protective psychology, avoid the exposure of personal privacy, when their legitimate

rights and interests are infringed, they must not swallow their anger, and have the courage to take up our legal weapons and resolutely defend their rights. College students should also actively participate in media practice and actively cooperate with the work of media literacy education in the country, society, and schools. Specifically, college students should have a correct learning attitude, conscientiously study the relevant courses of media literacy education in colleges and universities, improve their own media knowledge system, actively participate in practical activities such as media literacy popularization and publicity organized by colleges and universities, make full use of various media platforms provided by schools and new media environments, and maintain good interaction with the media. In addition, college students should make full use of the immediacy, interactivity, speed, sharing and other advantages of new media, personally participate in the process of production, identification and dissemination of media content, become the main body of media activities, use the media to participate in online topic discussions, and actively make suggestions and suggestions for national and social development.

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