



Research and Governance of Media Ethics Chaos on Network Live Streaming Platforms --Based on the Observation of the Phenomenon of "Group Broadcasting" on TikTok Platform

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Abstract. Based on the concept of "interaction alienation" and the theoretical perspective of "use and satisfaction", this paper adopts the non-participatory observation method. It selects the live broadcast content of "group broadcasting" on TikTok as the research object to explore the media ethics disorder on China's network live broadcasting platform, analyse its manifestations and causes, and put forward governance suggestions to improve China's network live broadcasting ecology. Using the non-participatory observation method, we select the live content of "group broadcasting" on the ShakeEn live platform as the object of study, explore the media ethical disorder on China's network live platform, analyse its manifestations and causes, and put forward governance proposals to improve the ecology of China's network live broadcasting.

Keywords: Interaction alienation, Use and satisfaction, "Group broadcasting", Live broadcasting platforms

1 Introduction

Since 2005, China has seen the emergence of initial network chat rooms, heralding the rise and development of webcasting. 2016, known as "the first year of China's webcasting", YY, Douyu, Hutooth and other live broadcasting platforms are developing rapidly, laying out pan-entertainment live broadcasting business around the game, show-room and other content, and gradually forming the webcasting industry and the Netflix economy. Subsequently, major media platforms such as Shutterbugs and TikTok appeared and quickly signed and cultivated several "netroots", which set off a wave of e-commerce live broadcasts. Recently, a new type of "group broadcasting" has emerged rapidly, with the "folk girl group" as the main body of the live broadcast, wearing short shorts and short skirts of girls in the live broadcasting room, dancing, pampering, and inviting the audience to brush gifts for them to play the list. Live streaming has no content or depth, but it has become a fad.

The rapid development of the Internet has brought risks, such as an imperfect legal system, which has produced negative social impact. This paper intends to analyse the

live content of the network live broadcast platform, explore whether there is a media ethical misconduct phenomenon in the "group broadcast" of TikTok live broadcast, analyse the social impact, and explore the response and improvement measures.

2 Literature Review

Presently, domestic research on network media ethical misconduct mainly focuses on the phenomenon, the causes of formation, and countermeasures. In the early 1990s, domestic scholars attached great importance to the moral misconduct of the Internet media. Since 2002, domestic attention has heated up, focusing on the theoretical analysis of the ethical responsibility of the media and the construction of an evaluation framework [1], the formulation and improvement of the rules of journalism ethics and its internationalisation, and the theoretical discussion on how to educate the audience and improve the media literacy of the citizens. [2].

The research on the content of short video platforms has been gradually enriched, and there has been a preliminary exploration of the ethical issues in webcasting. Some scholars selected typical cases of webcasting misbehaviour during 2016-2021 to conduct a systematic study on webcasting misbehaviour, explored the causes of webcasting misbehaviour, and put forward suggestions to regulate webcasting behaviour (Cai Yishu, 2024) [3]. In addition, Wang Zhenjiang (2021) analysed the characteristics and current situation of webcasting in combination with media scenario theory and speculated on the future trend of webcasting [4]. Some scholars point out that webcasting based on innovative media is more likely to cause "the loss of consumers' right to know, the lack of subjectivity, the violation of privacy, and the dissolution of news professionalism" [5]. On the one hand, under the hostage of power, capital and technology, the flood of information can lead to the depreciation of trust, the weakening of consensus, the intensification of prejudice, the deflation of ideals, and other cyber-ethical problems [6]; on the other hand, the online and offline dual personality in cyberspace reduces the rationality of interaction, and the weakening of social interaction and the lack of personal emotional support are the fundamental reasons for the frequent occurrence of cyber misbehaviour [7].

Some scholars have systematically reviewed ethical challenges in live streaming platforms, summarising the ethical issues on live streaming platforms and discussing the implications and governance measures [8]. Some scholars have also conducted a case study on Huya.com, a Chinese live broadcasting platform, to explore the ethical challenges in live broadcasting platforms, discuss the causes and impacts, and put forward corresponding governance suggestions [9].

"Interaction alienation" was proposed by Marx and first appeared in the summary of James Muller's Principles of Political Economy in 1944. Marx explained the behaviour of alienation of interaction in the theory of social interaction at the level of economic base and superstructure, arguing that it is precisely economic development and even social attributes that lead to the alienation of human social interaction, and that "capital opens the way to the socialisation of man's material and spiritual interaction. But this premise of universal interaction has also created a new problem, namely interaction

alienation." [10] In the media field, once interaction is detached from the actual context and linked to the online media, the subject of interaction no longer follows values and norms. Still, it relies on the regulation of the media and the constraints of morality, and interaction alienation occurs.

"Usage and Satisfaction" originated in the 1940s, which viewed audiences as individuals with specific "needs" and their media exposure as a process of "using" the media based on the motivation of particular needs, from which the "satisfaction" of the needs can be achieved through the use of the media press. The process of "satisfying" needs.

3 Research Methods

This paper intends to study the phenomenon of "group broadcasting" on the Joyo platform through non-participatory observation and sampling methods, to observe whether ethical misconduct exists in Joyo's live webcasting, to analyse its causes, characteristics and impacts, and to explore the improvement measures for the phenomenon of ethical misconduct in live webcasting.

The research objects are the hottest live broadcasting platform in China, TikTok, and the "group broadcasting" live broadcasting room. The peak time for live broadcasting on the TikTok platform is from 8:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m. On the three days from 9 September to 11 September 2023, five live broadcasting rooms were randomly selected from the "group broadcasting" live broadcasting rooms, and 15 live broadcasting rooms were sampled. A total of 15 live broadcasts were selected for non-participatory observation, and the 15 live broadcasts constituted the entire sample for this study.

The observation record sheet was designed around the theme of this study. It mainly contains: the name of the live room, the gender of the anchor, the time of the live broadcast, the content of the live broadcast, and the situation of the comment section. Entering the live room and observing it, the ethical lapses were recorded, and the recordings were summarised and analysed.

4 Analysis and Findings

4.1 Media Ethical Misconducts in the Live Broadcasting Rooms

The analysis found that 11 out of 15 "group broadcasting" live rooms have ethical misconduct, the main forms of which are pornography, inducing others to consume and other ethical misconduct.

4.2 Ethical Misconduct of Live Broadcasting Rooms

The absence of live video names and anchor tags violates communication regulations and media ethics, as they may be captured in the backend of TikTok. However, a small number of suggestive pornographic names and tags still exist, e.g., the live streaming room profile of the FT girl group reads, "Your Little Stepford Wife~" etc.

There are mainly the following forms of expression in the live broadcasting room of "group broadcasting" where media ethics are out of order:

Screen content: The content of the screen contains apparent ethical misconduct, such as when the host of the live broadcast of FT Dance Company "Cai Cai" danced, the host shouted insults at the audience, "Where's the Porsche? Where's the car? Do you want a free ride?" etc.

Anchor's clothing: all samples of the anchor's clothing are an indecent phenomenon, such as "Beech-violent bear 003 sheep" live female anchor wearing erotic lingerie life; XM, Buqi women's live room, three female anchors wearing ultra-short skirts hot dance, once naked.

Anchor's language and body movements: Language and body movements containing suggestive connotations of ethical misconduct in the media were present in five videos. For example, in the live broadcast of XM Bu Qi Dance Troupe, the anchor made sexually suggestive expressions while dancing; in the live broadcast of AO Women's Troupe, the female anchor indicated that she liked to have sex and do things with the person she liked and was accompanied by sexually suggestive expressions.

Audience Behaviour: In the entire sample, there was severe media ethics misconduct in the pop-ups, and when media ethics misconduct language and images appeared in the live broadcasting room, the number of pop-ups would increase rapidly, and the reward for the anchor would also increase. For example, in the live broadcasting room of the XM Buqi female group, when the female anchor danced, a netizen "ready to cancel his number" commented: "The arse is coming out. I love to see," etc.

4.3 Reasons of Media Ethical Misconduct

Entertainment consumption: use and satisfaction. In today's society, the emergence of new media platforms such as "Shake" and "Racer" is mainly based on "fun" as the starting point. To get more pleasure, users will increase the income of anchors on the webcasting platform through likes and gifts, and at the same time, require the anchors to do the required actions to meet their requirements, such as "undressing" and "sexy dancing", which directly triggers the formation of various behaviours that violate media ethics. These directly lead to the emergence of multiple behaviours that violate media ethics.

Alienated Interaction Behaviours: "Social-like Interactions". In a fast-paced life, people often encounter huge life pressure and lack a place to vent in real life, so people release their repressed emotions in virtual cyberspace and try to gain recognition from others in the virtual world. Webcasting has also given rise to "social interaction". Netizens' "gifts" and "rewards" are the most intuitive manifestations of the alienation of interaction, webcasters will cater to the audience's needs in their live broadcasts, leading to the phenomenon of media ethics failure.

Individual dominant experience: self-reference. Audiences can watch live broadcasts and post comments precisely as they wish, and the individual-driven experience produces a stronger sense of excitement and fulfilment. Content that violates media ethics is a mapping of the desires of the audience's heart, which is why there are so many media ethics failures.

Lawlessness: the carnival of anonymity. On media platforms, people put on the mask of anonymity, away from the social pressure of a real name, and develop the mentality of "impunity", believing that they can do whatever they want and will not be punished for it.

4.4 The Social Impact of Ethical Misconduct in Group Broadcasting

Weak social, moral concepts. The ethical disorder on the webcasting platform may violate the moral code and values of the society. In particular, the impact on young people and minors is more serious, which may lead to the formation of bad values and behavioural patterns.

Deterioration of the social environment. The existence of ethical disorder may lead to the deterioration of the social atmosphere, conveying unhealthy, vulgar and violent contents and values, affecting all levels of society and undermining social harmony and stability.

Destruction of network order. The media platform is an important part of the network ecosystem, and bears the important mission of disseminating network information, inheriting social culture and leading the social trend, however, the vulgarisation of the network live broadcast and product content destroys the network ecosystem, and undermines the network moral order and the construction of network civilization.

4.5 The Improvement Measures

Improve the legislation. The Government should further improve the relevant legal system so that there is a legal basis for media governance. In recent years, the regulatory authorities have introduced relevant regulations. Still, due to the rapid iteration of the Internet business model, the speed of legislation can not keep up with the emergence of regulatory blind spots. It is necessary to introduce relevant regulations promptly to purify the cultural atmosphere of cyberspace.

Media platforms should enhance the sense of social responsibility. The proliferation of ethical misconduct is related to the tacit approval and connivance of platforms, some of which hope to gain popularity and traffic through the exposure of vulgar cultural products. The platform's attitude of "letting it happen" has further aggravated the vulgarisation of online media culture. The responsibility of platforms should be consolidated, and the sense of social responsibility of media platforms should be enhanced so that they can jointly contribute to the online ecology.

Creators and producers of online culture should improve their media literacy. Creators of online culture should adhere to the principle of consciously resisting evil works of low interest, and using high-quality and excellent works and hard work to gain clicks and the love of their fan base.

Enhancement of audience's personal media literacy and social supervision. They are strengthening social supervision and raising the sense of ownership among the general public. In the face of vulgarised content, timely complaints and reports should be dealt with promptly to not give room for disseminating vulgarised content.

5 Conclusion

In the new media era, network information is complex and diverse, and the Internet provides a breeding ground for creating, disseminating and developing all kinds of network media culture and literature. When network media content is gradually vulgarised, the consequences are unimaginable. When the development of social civilisation and the rule of law cannot keep up with social interaction and the generation of new media, there is an opportunity for ethical misconduct in the media. Therefore, the government, media platforms, media practitioners and audiences should work together to resist vulgar online media content and create an excellent online ecology!

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