

A Comparative Research on the Reports about the COVID-19 Pandemic Happened in Chinese Mainland from TV Programs—Take CCTV News Weekly and Sisy's World News as the Examples

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Abstract: *This study uses the framework theory to analyze the content of the two representative TV news magazines on the mainland's coronavirus epidemic. The study found that the two programs in the relevant reports show the five general news frameworks of economic consequences, responsibility, conflict, human feelings, and people's livelihood. Compared with Sisy's World News, CCTV News Weekly contains fewer conflicts and pays more attention to human interests and people's livelihoods. However, there is no significant difference between CCTV News Weekly and Sisy's World News in general news frameworks such as economic consequences and responsibility. At the same time, there are also significant differences in the tone of the reports presented by the programs.*

Keywords: *News of COVID-19; General news framework; TV news magazine; Cross-strait television media*

1. Introduction

Modern news media is the most powerful in the information society communication system. Although news reports adhere to the principle of objectivity and balance, different media presents an event through various reporting frameworks, which affects the audience's attitude. During COVID-19, mass media played a vital role in public opinion guidance, supervision, and propaganda. As for the report of COVID-19, the media in Chinese mainland and Taiwan have some similarities, but they also show differences.

This study takes CCTV News Weekly and Sisy's World News in Taiwan as examples to study the relevant reports of these two influential TV news programs on the situation of COVID-19 in Chinese mainland by using frame theory.

2. General Framework of News and Research Hypothesis

The news frame is a specific principle for media to process the news, mainly determining a media's essential attitude and judgment on events. At the same time, it affects journalists' choice of reporting elements, language tendency, and expected social impact. Usually, events have complex and various attributes. Due to the requirements of timeliness and news text characteristics, it is challenging for journalists to list these attributes in detail in a report. They can only capture some of the attributes of events and incorporate them into the framework. The news framework is generally reflected in two aspects. First, the choice of reported material, that is, image sources; second, the construction of news reports. They include the delineation of reporting objects, the expression, the number of reports, the layout, and the tone of the theme [1].

Through a series of constructivist paradigms, Newman et al. found that the framework used by the media in reporting is essentially the same as the framework used by the audience in discussing news events. As a result, they summarized the frameworks that often appear in news reports, such as the character influence framework, the vulnerable group framework, the economic framework, and the conflict framework [2]. Semector and Valkenburg propose frameworks for human feelings, responsibility, and morality. Moreover, they embodied the economic framework as a framework of economic consequences. Zillman and other researchers added the framework of truth and leadership [3].

Based on the above, de Vries summed up the concept of a general framework for news; it is the framework that exists in reports on different topics, issues, cultures, and historical periods [4].

Guo Yong read related research by local scholars on the general news framework. In the article "People's Daily News Framework Research Review and Analysis," he pointed out that the ten frameworks people use most often include responsibility, human feelings, economic consequences, leadership, conflict, morality, and plot frameworks [5]. In a study, Luther and Zhou Xiang compared the presentation of news frames in Chinese and American newspapers' reports on SARS. The results show that Chinese and American newspapers embody the economic consequences, responsibility, conflict, leadership, and human framework in their news reports on SARS. In addition, there are differences in the extent and manner in which these frameworks are used [6].

Many scholars and journalists in China have published analyses and papers on news reports of COVID-19, most of which are countermeasure studies combined with specific practices. Regarding empirical research on the media, some researchers took the Wall Street Journal as the research object and analyzed the reports of major western media on China's fighting against COVID-19 from the perspective of multimodal cognitive criticism discourse. Scientists have found that Western mainstream media coverage of China's fight against the epidemic is not objective or fair and that China's image is being deliberately tarnished [7]. In short, the relevant analysis of reports involves many aspects, but a relatively complete system has yet to be formed. In particular, empirical studies based on the reporting framework still have room for improvement.

After observing the reports of cross-Strait TV programs on the epidemic, combined with the research of Zhou Xiang, Feng Tingting, and Wang Feng, we draw some conclusions.

The economic consequences, responsibilities, conflicts, and human feelings frameworks of the two TV news magazine programs, News Weekly and Sisy's World News, in their reports on the epidemic, show the following characteristics, as shown in Hypothesis 1 to Hypothesis 5 of this study.

Hypothesis 1: In the reports on COVID-19 in Chinese mainland, compared with Zhongtian Sisy's World News, CCTV News Weekly reflects less on the framework of economic consequences.

Hypothesis 2: In reporting on COVID-19, compared with Sisy's World News, the responsibility framework is rarely used in CCTV News Weekly.

Hypothesis 3: In the reports on COVID-19 happening in Chinese mainland, compared with Sisy's World News, the conflict framework is rarely used in CCTV News Weekly.

Hypothesis 4: In the reports on COVID-19 happening in Chinese mainland, compared with Sisy's World News, the framework of human feelings is used more in CCTV News Weekly.

Hypothesis 5: In the reports on COVID-19 happening in Chinese mainland, compared with Sisy's World News, the framework of people's livelihood is used more in CCTV News Weekly.

The framework theories involved in Hypothesis 1 to Hypothesis 4 are derived from the general news framework introduced above. The framework of economic consequences emphasizes the economic impact of behavior or event on individuals, groups, and countries; The framework of responsibility refers to the discussion of responsibility; The framework of conflict emphasizes the conflict, competition, and confrontation between people. The framework of human feelings is characterized by daily life, highlighting the theme and emotional expression and reflecting the individuation of reporting.

In addition, the framework for people's livelihood mentioned in Hypothesis 5 is a new analysis variable proposed based on the inferential exploration of News Weekly and Sisy's World News reports. It mainly refers to the impact of events on citizens' primary medical care, education, employment, housing, pension, and other areas of social life security. It mainly refers to the impact of events on citizens' primary medical care, education, employment, housing, pension, and other areas of social life security. In addition, it includes measures taken by government departments and social organizations to improve social relief, implement minimum living security, improve living quality, and promote social and economic development. Moreover, the category "framework for people's livelihood" is proposed to help people comprehensively analyze the differences between the news media in reporting. This framework analyzes the news system and ideology hidden in the differences.

At the same time, by sorting out the literature on TV programs, we find that the research on TV programs on two sides of the Taiwan Strait is relatively independent. They use comparative research less but tend to study arrangement and style. Therefore, this study explores how news programs present

the news framework mentioned in the hypothesis when reporting COVID-19.

Then combined with the inference, we propose Hypothesis 6 and 7.

Hypothesis 6: In the reports on COVID-19 in Chinese mainland, Sisy's World News tends to report with a negative attitude.

Hypothesis 7: In the reports on COVID-19 in Chinese mainland, CCTV News Weekly tends to report with a positive attitude.

3. Research Methods

The research focuses on COVID-19 happening in Chinese mainland and takes the reports in CCTV News Weekly and Sisy's World News as typical cases. We used content analysis to conduct research. The programs of the study are selected from February 1, 2020, Beijing time (the first issue of Sisy's World News broadcast after the "Wuhan Lockdown") to a special episode of "COVID-19" on May 2, 2020 (the last issue of "News Weekly"). First, we analyze the layout structure of the two programs and find that each issue talks about a significant theme, which is divided into several sub-topics. Each sub-topic is independent, with the hosting of comments or leads as a link. Therefore, we take the sub-topic as a part and use it as a sample analysis unit [8]. Finally, we extracted 57 reports from 11 issues of CCTV News Weekly and 65 from 14 issues of Sisy's World News [9].

The contents of the variable and category construction are as follows. First, based on the general framework of news proposed by de Vries, combined with the induction by Guo Yong, according to hypotheses 1 to 5, we discuss the "presentation of the news framework" of the programs and determine the categories such as frameworks of economic consequences, responsibility, conflict, human feelings, and people's livelihood. The framework definition is defined by problem deconstruction as the basis of the coding [10]. On the other hand, according to research hypotheses 6 to 7, this study divides the report's tone into three types: positive, negative, and neutral, corresponding to the values 1, -1, and 0, respectively.

Before the coding, the researchers systematically trained two coders and randomly selected 20 reports from the summarized content analysis material library for trial coding [11]. Referring to the reliability test method proposed by Holsti, the researchers compared the results of the trial coding. The results showed that the inter-coder reliability of each variable was above 0.9, which met the content analysis criteria [12].

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The use of the general framework for news is shown in table 1. Through chi-square test analysis, among the five hypotheses, hypothesis 3, hypothesis 4, and hypothesis 5 are true. Hypotheses 1 and 2 remain unproven.

Table 1: Comparison of the presentation of news report frameworks between News Weekly and Sisy's World News

News Framework	News Weekly (N=57)	Sisy's World News (N=65)	χ^2 (d.f. = 1)
Economic consequences	52.63%	56.92%	0.23
Responsibility	91.23%	89.23%	0.14
Conflict	21.05%	58.46%	17.57 **
Human feelings	87.72%	36.92%	38.84 **
People's livelihood	73.68%	38.46%	15.22 **

Note: ** $p < .001$ (no ** indicates no statistical significance)

As shown in Table 2, the mean comparison (t-test) of the tone of the two programs when using the framework of economic consequences to cover epidemics shows that Sisy's World News presents the news negatively. At the same time, the News Weekly tends to present news positively. Therefore, hypotheses 6 and 7 are true.

Through their research, Luther and Zhou Xiang found that Chinese newspapers used less framework of economic consequences and responsibility in their reports on SARS than the United

States. Therefore, in this paper, CCTV News Weekly is expected to be less reflective of the economic impact and responsibility in reporting COVID-19 events in China compared to Sisy's World News. However, data did not support this hypothesis. Reasons for this include the nature and position of the media, objective differences in trends, and changes in the media environment and concepts in Chinese mainland.

Table 2: Comparison of the average of tone in the reports presented by the news frames

News Framework	News Weekly	Sisy's World News	t
Economic consequences	0.4	-0.2	6.64**
Responsibility	0.61	-0.25	6.51**
Conflict	0.11	-0.48	7.24**
Human feelings	0.67	-0.02	6.71**
People's livelihood	0.67	-0.12	8.75**

Note: ** $p < .001$ (no ** indicates no statistical significance)

In the report on SARS, Chinese official media could have avoided the content involving economic consequences and responsibilities and presented a framework containing more human feelings to attract the audience's attention. But today's official media is trying to move from avoiding problems to confronting them. On the one hand, the necessary economic impact and responsibility are reflected in the news. On the other hand, journalists consider facts and value guidelines to build people's trust and strengthen their resolve. Therefore, we can see that News Weekly involves the economic consequences and the responsibility framework; the reports are largely positive for meeting the cognitive needs of the masses and addressing their emotional needs.

With a higher narrative impact and credibility, the Western mainstream media has used many conflicts in their reports on the epidemic happening in Chinese mainland [13]. Due to the profound influence of Western media, Sisy's World News pays more attention to the harmful effects of the epidemic in its reports. The average tone of the conflict framework shows the most significant negative tendency. In addition, "empathy communication" contributes to the formation of public opinion [14]. Therefore, CCTV's news reports are more inclined to include human feelings and people's livelihoods.

On the one hand, by the framework of human feelings, the media presents warm stories to the audience, realizing the credible and subtle effect. On the other hand, the media responds to people's concerns about safeguarding people's livelihood during the epidemic by using the framework of people's livelihood. To sum up, applying the framework of human feelings and people's livelihood in news reporting reflects the perspective of ordinary people and journalists, which is conducive to getting close to the audience, better transmitting information, and realizing emotional and value guidance [15].

From the report's tone, because Sisy's World News emphasizes the conflict framework more frequently than News Weekly and tends to highlight the incident as the contradiction between the government and the public that is difficult to reconcile, the attitude of the framework is mainly negative. Next, News Weekly presents the story more positively regarding economic consequences, responsibility, and conflict. For example, in describing the economic consequences, Sisy's World News emphasizes the negative impact of the epidemic on Chinese mainland's economy. At the same time, News Weekly pays more attention to the measures taken by the government and relevant agencies dealing with the epidemic's impact.

In addition, in presenting human feelings and people's livelihood, Sisy's World News emphasizes the story's sadness, including sympathy and pity. However, News Weekly pays attention to the warmth of mutual help between people in the narrative. It emphasizes the practical actions government departments or social organizations take to solve people's difficulties in life and promote social development.

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