

Research on Value and Strategy Reconstruction of Leading Cadres' New Media Based on Government Communication

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance]: This study aims to promote the development of the theory and practice of government communication, to reconstruct their value system and operation strategy, through collecting and analyzing Chinese leading cadres' microblog, WeChat, TikTok accounts. **[Method/Process]:** Based on the themes and contents of nearly 100 new media accounts of leading cadres at different stages collected, we analyze their value presentation and operation strategies, and reconstruct their value system and strategies. **[Result/Conclusion]:** The study finds that the new media of leading cadres can be reconstructed from the intersection of media communication and government communication, based on "as a branch, as a channel, as a means, as a position, as a way", and can build a progressive management strategy system of "function strategy, content strategy, communication strategy, evaluation strategy, matrix strategy, and brand strategy". Future studies may investigate the impacts of interactive effect of different types and levels of new media accounts of leading cadres. Future studies may also enhance the empirical research from the audience's perspective.

Keywords

Leading Cadres' New Media, Value Reconstruction, Management Strategy Reconstruction

1. Introduction

According to the 51st Statistical Report on Internet Development by China Internet Network Information Center, as of December 2022, the size of China's Internet users reached 1067 billion and the Internet penetration rate reached

75.6%. With the popularisation of new media usage, especially driven by the tremendous connectivity of social media and the community communication built on it, the media ecosystem in China has been greatly transformed and the flow of information about social activities as a whole has been more closely integrated with media communication practices.

In the media ecosystem, the leading cadres' new media has the characteristics of both being an ordinary individual in society, carrying out group communication of social life, and being a special group in society—leading cadres—carrying out political communication (Zhang & Idris, 2023). The use of their personal new media is different from news websites, commercial websites and we-media, and its value as a tool for political communication is well worth exploring. In the inherent perception, leading cadres' new media is attributed to a kind of government-assisted behavior in regular times or an emergency response to online public opinion in special times, highlighting the aspect of their identity on the use of the tool, ignoring the mutually motivating media context formed by the user and the tool, and even ignoring the value rationality of the tool in the media system in which it is embedded.

This study aims to explore the value of this special media phenomenon, and at the same time reconstruct its value system from the perspective of political communication, and analyze it based on the collected cases, and reconstruct the operation strategy by incorporating relevant theories. Thus, this study will enrich the theory of political communication and promote the new media accounts of leading cadres to play a fuller role in political communication.

2. Value Reconstruction of Leading Cadres' New Media in Government Communication

Value is a cognitive system or a certain tendency of the subject to determine the object. Although the terms “value” and “value reconstruction” are widely used, there is no clear definition of “value reconstruction”. Generally speaking, when new factors enter the information communication context where the subject and the object are located, they will stimulate the subject and the object and cause them to change (Dunleavy et al., 2006). Therefore, when the subject's original cognition or judgment of the object changes, the subject also undergoes value reconstruction (Zhao, Hu, & Zhang, 2011).

For the new media of leading cadres, the initial establishment is the personal behavior of officials on the use of new media, and the account type is single, and the content tends to be lifelike, so the public initially thinks that the new media of leading cadres is a show of officials' life or a display of their views. As more and more officials establish new media accounts, the types of new media accounts become more and more diverse (Ren, Chen, & Hu, 2022). At this time, the public thinks that the setting up of new media accounts by leading cadres is no longer an individual behavior, but a group behavior, an organized behavior of government departments, and the content tends to be government communication, and it has special value. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to recon-

struct the value system of leading cadres' new media from its special value, that is, as an important part of governmental communication.

Based on the evolution of leading cadres' new media usage in media practice and the communication characteristics reflected in government communication, combined with the internal needs of government communication, this paper uses the relevant requirements of The State Council for new media work to reconstruct the value of leading cadres' new media account in government social media communication, and identifies its intrinsic value performance in five aspects.

As a branch, it has irreplaceable special value in government communication system. News websites, government websites, government social media platforms and county-level media convergence centers have similarities in government communication system, as they are all institutional-type communication organisations, both in terms of the production of content and the organisation of communication activities presented in a group image, and in the eyes of the public, have been seen as a new category of the traditional mass communication types of government communication such as newspapers, radio and television in the Internet era. The leading cadres' new media is a special communication subject who are at all levels of officials, both with the identity of officials and media content producer identity, the communication producer has a dual identity (Zhang, 2023). The leading cadres' new media is the only one of its kinds in government communication system that has three types of communication models—mass communication, group communication and interpersonal communication—and is a hybrid communication model. This is the reason why it is possible to organise all three types of communication activities, especially in the absence of effective interaction mechanisms in the system of government communication, which group communication and interpersonal communication can properly compensate for, with special effects that are difficult to achieve with other means of communication (Gelders & Ihlen, 2010).

As a channel, it has always taken on the role of communicating between the CPC and the public everywhere during its existence. Regardless of any kind of leading cadres' new media account, from its registration and cancellation, in its media life cycle as a communication platform, no matter how many fans and how many posts it is always a mass communication media platform. So its role is the communication channel. Moreover, the inherent role of CPC and government institutions requires that they must be an important channel for contacting and providing public services to the public and thus bringing them together, which is fundamentally defined by their identity as communication subjects.

As a means, it is the forerunner of transforming government functions and building a service-oriented government. The communication subject of leading cadres' new media account—officials at all levels, whose main job is to provide various government services for the public and improve the services gradually. Leading cadres can take the communication platform as an important means to improve the work function and service ability, and can make multi-level at-

tempts as a pioneer. The current needs of government services and the characteristics of the communication platform are fully combined to optimize government services. In fact, this is also the inevitable result of the fusion of identity, duty and media characteristics. As a pioneer of social media, the leading cadres' microblog account was particularly notable in this respect at its inception, and the communication and social effects produced by its fusion have been more significant. And in recent years there has been a similarity between the live show of county officials with goods for cultural tourism.

As a position, it is one of the main bodies to guide online public opinion, build a clear cyberspace and uphold socialist ideology. Since the emergence of various types of mass incidents in 2000, which have led to the emergence of Internet public opinion. And in recent years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a major public health event, and regional epidemic outbreaks in post-epidemic era, which have led to the emergence of public opinion, and it is naturally the responsibility and obligation of leading cadres' new media account, as a form of communication that combines three types of communication, to take on the responsibility of using the authority of officials and the Key Opinion Leader of online opinion to It is an important theme to find the first signs of public opinion, to guide the public to voice rational and objective criticism, to avoid the generation of group polarisation, to reduce the risk of network fermentation of major emergencies, to achieve a good interaction and rational discussion in cyberspace, and thus to gather a benign consensus of social empathy and achieve social harmony. In the process of news clue supply, event tracking, local government emergency response, public opinion guidance and response, etc. of the Ningbo-Yongwen Line high-speed train collision in 2011, the Microblog account of CAI Qi and Zheng Jiwei, then Vice governor of Zhejiang Province, played a special value and built a benign interaction and resonance space for the local government, media and the public. It also has special value to the image of local government in abnormal times (Wu & Chen, 2020). At the same time, in the face of the global discourse in cyberspace, leading cadres' new media accounts, are also bound to be an important subject in leading the public to adhere to the Marxist concept of media communication and socialist ideology.

As a way, it is one of the ways to build a new model of social governance and improve the ability of social governance. As China's reform continues to deepen and its opening continues to expand, new phenomena and problems continue to emerge in social life, which also call for a new model of social governance. For officials at all levels, improving their social governance capabilities is the key to forming new administrative capabilities. With its mass communication characteristics, leading cadres' new media can reach many levels of society, making it easier to "ask the public" and to gather information on a wide range of social development needs (Shirky, 2011). Of course, it is also easier for officials' personal new media to "ask the public for their opinions" and to gather social wisdom to provide strategies or solutions to social problems, thus innovating social governance systems and means (Wei & Zhang, 2013).

3. The Strategy Reconstruction of Leading Cadres' New Media in Government Communication

The term “strategy” generally refers to the method that an individual or groups use in the process of developing and implementing a plan to achieve a certain goal, which they believe is conducive to the achievement of the goal. Strategy in media communication activities has a similar meaning (He, 2010). Strategy reconstruction in media communication means that after the emergence of new goals and new situations (Liu & Huang, 2018), the plan of communication activities needs to be reformulated in order to achieve new goals and also the implementation process needs to involve the introduction of new steps or methods (Fan, 2013).

The strategy in this study is one of the media communication strategies (Wang & Feng, 2017). In the primary stage of new media for leading cadres, the main goal of media communication strategy is to increase the level of communication ability. However, after the new media for leading cadres has become an essential part of governmental communication, the original media communication strategy is no longer able to achieve its new goals at this stage. Therefore, the new media for leading cadres needs to be reconstructed according to the strategy of media communication, combined with the inherent properties of government communication.

The long-standing strategy of “voluntary establishment, institutional audit, platform certification, independent production, independent dissemination and self-management” has enabled the development of leading cadres' Microblog, WeChat account, and a number of high-quality leading cadres' new media accounts have emerged, represented by CaiQi. However, there is also the phenomenon of “high number of open accounts and low quality of operation and management”. Therefore, in order to further give good play to its value in government communication, the author further analyzes the current situation of its use against the intrinsic needs of government communication, while combining the characteristics of each form of new media with the qualities of media communication to propose six aspects related to its strategic reconstruction.

3.1. Functional Strategy

The functional strategy means that the leading cadres' new media accounts are different from other personal new media accounts in the new media system. The “we media” of the official's personal new media account can be set by itself according to interests, hobbies, specialties and needs, etc. After real-name authentication, any communication behavior of the leading cadres' new media accounts is political communication behavior in the category of government communication, which must comply with the regulations and requirements of government communication. All communication activities should be carried out according to their position and administrative responsibilities during the media life cycle. Functional strategy is determined by the attributes of leading cadres' new media,

and also its unique value in the new media system. It is also the decisive factor for the realization of its media and government communication communication effect.

According to the relevant laws, the five basic functions of the government are political functions, economic functions, cultural functions, public service functions and operational functions. Government functions must be realized through various management links, and from the perspective of the management process of government functions, administrative functions include a series of operational functions. Different levels of government have different administrative functions, and different agencies or departments of the same level of government have different administrative responsibilities according to their functions. The functional strategy of setting up and operating new media accounts of leading cadres is mainly based on their administrative responsibilities for specific implementation. For example, propaganda departments, HR departments, cultural institutions, educational institutions, medical institutions, transportation institutions, public security departments, courts, procuratorates and other leading cadres' new media accounts are required to produce and disseminate content around their administrative responsibilities (Kavanaugh et al., 2011).

3.2. Content Strategy

The content strategy mentioned here includes topic generation strategy, discourse organisation strategy, content narrative strategy and content presentation strategy. In the topic generation strategy, it means that, on the premise of the functional strategy, it is also possible to combine social hotspots and even generate topics according to the collective demands of the platform's followers. The discourse organisation strategy means that the expression of the discourse should fully reflect the mixed characteristics of mass communication, group communication and interpersonal communication, and integrate the three discourse organisation strategies into one, so as to transform the overly serious and archaic governmental discourse into the new style one. The new style form of discourse organisation of government communication is a innovative one that is pleasing to the public and retaining the essential meaning of government communication (Liu, 2019). The content narrative strategy refers to the original content of government communication, combined with the current media innovation, storytelling form embedded in the organization of content re-narrative, close to the social public's cognitive acceptance range, more conducive to the formation of new government cognition. The content presentation strategy refers to the fact that government content can be story-told and recreated, and then presented in forms other than pure text, such as mixed graphics, visual charts, flattened graphics, short videos, interactive games and other forms of content presentation (Dailey et al., 2022). In terms of content strategy innovation, the new media accounts of leading cadres can learn from the practices of news websites, commercial websites and we-media quality accounts and innovate according to their own content needs. However, this is a process that re-

quires a long time and a great effort.

3.3. Communication Strategy

The communication strategy refers to the communication channels that officials can use to carry out first-level communication and multi-level communication on their personal new media accounts. First of all, the leading cadres make full use of the flow quotas given by various platforms to government communication accounts for incremental amplification of channels. Secondly, based on the platform's own communication properties to make good use of the advantages of hot topic communication for fission communication (Zhang & Zhang, 2022). The characteristics of the Microblog platform are brief content creation, strong fan participation, and active forwarding of hot topics, which is more suitable for the guidance of online public opinion (Zhou & Zhang, 2015). The characteristics of WeChat platforms are high content quality requirements, high requirements for writing level and content quality of leading cadres, but easier to form group communication, more suitable for policy interpretation and propaganda tasks. The characteristics of Tiktok are real-time live broadcast, easy to form rapid fan gathering and interaction, but the live broadcast ability of leading cadres is demanding, more suitable for live with goods and cultural products promotion of leading cadres in the cultural tourism department (Bertot et al., 2012). Bili website audience is mainly teenagers, the creation method is different from traditional video, mainly anime, the theme and content are inclined to secondary yuan style, more suitable for administrative departments facing the youth group for appropriate content placement, if the creation method is too rigid, the communication effect will be worse instead. Thirdly, in the long term, it is important to rely on content quality to gather a high level of activity and high interactivity fans to expand the self-generated diffusion circle that can be used for multistep of communication (Enli & Skogerbo, 2013).

3.4. Evaluation Strategy

The communication strategy means that leading cadres' new media account should not be evaluated on the basis of the communication power or influence indicators of general new media platform accounts. Since the intrinsic nature of the leading cadres' new media is not only the wide range of communication and the high frequency of interaction, but also the degree of achievement of their auxiliary functions or their contribution to government communication over a certain period of time, etc. So they should be evaluated more from the perspective of their public service capacity, focusing on the effectiveness of their auxiliary functions in relation to the fundamental practice of public service.

3.5. Matrix Strategy

The so-called matrix strategy refers to a leading cadre who has more than two new media accounts that can operate uninterruptedly on different new media

platforms, and these accounts form a unique leading cadre new media matrix. The new media matrix of leading cadres can realize the sharing of content production between each account of the matrix content and the deep integration of communication, which can realize the effect of incremental communication. However, it is not recommended that all leading cadres carry out new media account matrix construction, because the establishment and maintenance of new media account matrix requires great effort, and there are also high requirements for the personal new media literacy of officials, and if the operation is insufficient, it will cause repeated content release, which will trigger public resentment and have negative communication effects.

3.6. Brand Strategy

The so-called brand strategy refers to the new media accounts of leading cadres that have been operated for a long time, both in terms of the characteristics of their content production and the advantages of their communication organization are more obvious, and they have reached the level where the account operation mode can be copied and exported, and they have formed a unique style of government communication, reached the level of media products, and have the value of brand communication.

The early Microblog accounts of leading cadres have been continuously improved to form a brand of government communication. These new media accounts have a clear function of supporting government affairs, have high-quality content production and dissemination, and have the great value of integrating social opinions across different social classes at certain levels, presenting distinctly as brands the three elements inherent in brands. At the same time, these new media accounts are well known at the domestic and international level through traditional media news coverage and social media group communication, and are widely praised by the public and have a very high reputation. The rapid growth of account followers and the long-term positive interaction of fans are the manifestation of the high loyalty of the brand audience, which very clearly presents the three external elements of the self-value of the government affairs communication brand. The early Microblog accounts of leading cadres were very effective and formed the first brand specific to Chinese government communication. The strong influence of this brand has not only attracted a large number of Internet users to become a loyal audience for government communication, but also a special group of these Internet users, some leading cadres, have become practitioners of the brand, inspiring more numbers and levels of leading cadres to set up Microblog accounts for government communication. Compared with the Microblog accounts of leading cadres, the current content production of leading cadres' Tiktok accounts is more convenient, and the dissemination is more easily fissionable, so it is easier for leading cadres' ShakeYin new media accounts to realize branding. At present, many county leading cadres across the country make brand replication from the leading cadres' Tiktok accounts with better communication effect in the early stage, and widely and skillfully use their

own Tiktok accounts for local goods endorsement.

In summary, there is a progressive relationship between the six levels of strategy reconstruction, functional strategy is the most basic strategy, content strategy and communication strategy is the key link to optimisation, evaluation strategy is a mechanism strategy to manage and overall optimisation of the individual new media work of organised leading cadres in the region or institution, matrix strategy and branding strategy application and effect relying on more factors, not short-term can be achieved, and it is a long-term strategy to optimise the leading cadres' new media account.

4. Conclusion

To sum up the above that the leading cadres' new media is different from both media communication in the traditional sense and the circulation of government information in the traditional sense, but it takes into account the characteristics of both, starting from the intersection of media communication and government support, and forming its own value system with multiple "branches, channels, means, positions and ways". In the long-term development of the leading cadres' new media, six aspects of the management strategy system—functional strategy, content strategy, communication strategy, evaluation strategy, matrix strategy and brand strategy—deserve attention. Although the media practice of the leading cadres' new media accounts have been for more than ten years, research on it has only just begun, and it is necessary to carry out research on it from multiple perspectives and different aspects as soon as possible.

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Conflicts of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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