

Analysis of the Framing of China's Mainstream Media Coverage of Covid-19

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Abstract

In the context of the global epidemic, the reporting framework of news media plays an important role in shaping public awareness and guiding public opinion. As an important channel for information dissemination, the reporting framework of China's mainstream media not only reflects the position of the government and the value orientation of the media itself, but also affects the public's awareness and attitude towards the epidemic. Based on the framework theory of Pan and Kosicki, this study conducted an in-depth analysis of the framework of Chinese mainstream news media in reporting on COVID-19. By conducting in-depth interviews with senior editors and journalists of several Chinese mainstream media, this paper analyzes the interview contents from four dimensions of the syntactic structure, script structure, rhetorical structure and thematic structure of the framework theory, and explores the framework adopted by Chinese mainstream media when reporting major public health events and the influencing factors behind it. The purpose of this study is to reveal the framework construction logic of Chinese mainstream media in news reports, and to provide useful reference for the media practice of Chinese mainstream news media in the reporting of unexpected major events that may occur in the future.

Keywords: Chinese Mainstream Media, Covid-19, News Frames, Framing Theory.

Introduction

In 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 pandemic a global epidemic. The epidemic has been recognized as a biological disaster, causing widespread human, social and disease economic losses (Chan,2020). China's mainstream media is the mouthpiece of the Party and the government, and should adhere to the leadership of the government (Li, 2011). As an important force for information dissemination, the framework and strategies of the mainstream media in reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic have played a key role in shaping public perception, social stability and national image. This paper aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the framework of China's mainstream media coverage of COVID-19, and explore its features and rules in terms of syntactic structure, script structure, thematic structure and rhetorical structure, with a view to providing theoretical reference for news reporting practice.

In the research process, through semi-structured in-depth interviews, the actual operation and experience sharing of 10 journalists and editors from mainstream media in China in reporting the novel coronavirus epidemic were recorded in detail, and the decision-making mechanism, value orientation and social function behind the news report were also discussed in depth. By combing and analyzing these data, this paper tries to comprehensively and objectively reveal the framework characteristics of Chinese mainstream media's coverage of the novel coronavirus epidemic.

Specifically, this paper will conduct a detailed analysis of China's mainstream media coverage of COVID-19 from four dimensions: syntactic structure, script structure, thematic structure and rhetorical structure. In terms of syntactic structure, we will focus on how to construct the framework of news headlines, sources, leads and other elements in news reports. In terms of script structure, it will discuss the composition and connection of the six elements of news report, as well as the narrative mode of the story; In terms of theme structure, it will analyze how news reports focus on the core issues. In terms of rhetorical structure, it will study the use and effect of metaphors, buzzwords or idioms in news reports.

To sum up, this paper, through an in-depth analysis of the framework of China's mainstream media reporting on COVID-19, not only helps to reveal the complex mechanism and logic behind news reports, but also provides useful thinking and inspiration for improving the communication, guidance, influence and credibility of China's news media. At the same time, the research results of this paper will also provide a new perspective and reference for domestic and foreign scholars in the field of journalism and communication research.

Literature Review

The meaning of the word "frame" has a long history. The information environment formed by the mass media is not a mirror representation of the objective environment, but an environment provided by the mass media through the re-structuring of news and information and selection, processing and reporting (Lippmann, 1922). There are some "gatekeepers" in the process of group communication, and only information content that conforms to group norms or gatekeepers' value standards can enter the communication channel (Lewin, 1947). What is truly valuable and meaningful is the media itself used in different times and the social changes brought about by media technology, rather than the content it transmits (McLuhan, 1964). Any kind of communication activity simultaneously transmits a combination of information composed of three elements: the symbol of sensory stimulation, the reference and the distinguishing reference of the symbol, and the rules of interaction between the two sides around the symbol. Here, frames refer to mutually agreed rules of interpretation on how to understand each other's symbols (Bateson, 1955). Frame refers to the cognitive structure that people use to understand and explain the external objective world. People's induction, structure and interpretation of real life experience all rely on a certain frame, which enables people to locate, perceive, understand and summarize numerous specific information (Goffman, 1974). The framework is selection, emphasis and exclusion such as Gitlin (Gitlin, 1980). Framing includes the two functions of selection and prominence. One thing of framing is to select the parts that are considered necessary and deal with them specifically in the report, so as to reflect the interpretation of meaning, attribution inference, moral assessment, and suggestions for handling methods (Entman, 1993). Zang Guoren divided the framework into three levels: high, medium and low, and the high level framework has a guiding effect on

the low level framework (Guoren, 1999). Framing is the central idea of journalism (Tankard, 1991). News framing refers to the way and Angle of media coverage of events, issues or policies, which can influence public perceptions and attitudes toward events. The choice and presentation of news frames is a strategic act that can influence public perception and decision making through the selection of specific frames, focusing on conceptualizing news texts into empirically actionable dimensions - syntactic, scripted, thematic, and rhetorical structures (Pan and Kosicki, 1993).

News media is a window to read the world and an important channel for audiences to understand information. In particular, the importance of mainstream media to the audience is not only reflected in the transmission of information and the protection of the right to know, but also in its agenda setting, authority, popularization of education, supervision of the government and emotional resonance. China's mainstream media has played an important role during the coronavirus pandemic. Through reading a large number of literatures, it is found that when the Chinese mainstream media reported similar major and sudden events, scholars often chose to use Zangguorin's framework theory to analyze the reporting framework of Chinese mainstream media from three levels: high, middle and low. However, Chinese media has a special language environment, under the unique grammar of Chinese characters and unique cultural background, it is of great significance to analyze the syntactic structure, script structure, rhetorical structure and thematic structure of news reports. However, at present, there is no research on the framework of Chinese mainstream media news reporting by using the framework theory of Pan & Kosicki (1993), which also provides an opportunity for this study.

Methodology

This study uses qualitative research methods to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews with 10 senior editors and journalists from mainstream media in China. The purpose of doing so is to have a deep understanding of the ideas of editors and journalists in news production, and to expect new ideas to emerge, which will bring innovative results to this research. Through a combination of online and offline interviews, recording was used, text was arranged, and irrelevant data was manually cleaned to ensure the authenticity and effectiveness of the interview content, and then thematic analysis was carried out on the interview content. I use the frame theory of Pan & Kosicki (1993) as my theoretical framework.

Table 1

Semi-Structured In-Depth Interview Questions

The following six questions guide the content of this in-depth interview.

Q1	In news reporting, what criteria are commonly used to select events to cover?
Q2	How is the news Angle of a news story usually determined or produced?
Q3	How do journalists decide whom to interview or cite as their primary news source?
Q4	In a newsroom, who usually has the power to decide the headlines - the editor or the reporter? Are specific criteria used in the production or selection of news headlines?
Q5	How important are visual elements from the public or witnesses in news production? What factors should be considered when deciding which visual media to use?
Q6	Some news reports contain metaphors, buzzwords or idioms. What do you think of the use of such linguistic devices in news scripts?

Table 2

Interviewee Information Statistics

number	Gender	media	post	Work time(year)
interviewee1	Male	Lanzhou Daily	reporter	10
Interviewee2	Female	Gansu Daily	editor	8
Interviewee3	Male	Sichuan Daily	editor	8
Interviewee4	Male	Shanxi Daily	reporter	7
Interviewee5	Male	Hubei Daily	editor	5
Interviewee6	Female	China Science and Technology	reporter	6
Interviewee7	Male	Chengdu Daily	editor	8
Interviewee8	Male	Chongqing Daily	editor	7
Interviewee9	Female	Sichuan Daily	reporter	5
Interviewee10	Female	China Youth Daily	editor	8

Table 3

The theme and subtheme of this study

Theme	Sub-theme
Syntactical Structures	Title decision process Title making standard The impact of the title on the story The decision-making process of news sources
Script Structures	How do editors organize news stories Editors and reporters choose who to interview or quote The impact of reporting time and frequency on events
Thematic Structures	Criteria for selecting the key themes of the story Emphasize certain aspects of skill The impact of editorial guidelines and policies on framework decisions
Rhetorical Structures	Use specific language and rhetoric Strategies for engaging different audiences through the framework

After sorting out the content of the interview results, the topic analysis method is used to analyze the content of the interview results, and the framework theory of pan and kosicki(1993) is used as the theoretical framework to analyze the topic from the aspects of syntactic structure, script structure, topic structure and rhetorical structure. These four thematic structures reflect from different aspects how Chinese mainstream media construct news frames when reporting major emergencies. First, in terms of syntax, editors and reporters use syntactic features to highlight the content of the report and attract readers' attention through special treatment of news headlines, sources, leads and other elements. Secondly, script, through the rational use of the six elements of news, the organization of news report script, select special interview subjects, thus affecting the communication effect. In terms of rhetorical structure, it influences the frame construction by selecting key themes, emphasizing certain aspects with special means, and formulating editorial policies. In terms of rhetoric, special language means, including metaphors, buzzwords, idioms, etc. are used to attract readers' attention in combination with audience preferences. The formulation of these themes together builds the framework of news reporting, achieves multiple purposes of information transmission, maintaining the image of the government, setting the agenda for the audience, and promoting the development and resolution of the incident. The details will be analyzed in the next section. The details will be analyzed in the next section.

Discussion

China's mainstream media have constructed multiple themes in their coverage of the COVID-19 epidemic, which together constitute a comprehensive and multi-dimensional media coverage framework of the epidemic. In terms of syntactic structure, the title, as the eye and soul of a news, is crucial to the success or failure of news production and communication effect. When reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic involves government actions and decisions, and the development of major events, most of them use multi-line headlines and bolded fonts to make them more visually striking and highlight the importance of the event. By using the powerful guiding function of headlines, readers are guided to focus on and interpret news content in terms of highlighting government departments, relevant leaders, party members, and anti-epidemic achievements, and a specific news framework is constructed. In the selection of news sources, priority will be given to the relevant policies and measures of

government departments, social hot events, and major livelihood events. China's mainstream media, as the government media, is the propaganda unit of the state and the government, so it pays more attention to maintaining the image of the government. At the same time, the mainstream media should bear certain social responsibilities. When choosing news sources, the public is concerned about social hot events and major livelihood events, so it should cater to the needs of the audience and use authoritative and reliable news reports to become an important channel for the audience to understand the events. In terms of script structure, the conventional pyramid type of news reporting is often used for time-sensitive news reporting. In addition, most of them use the inverted pyramid method to set suspense and increase the attractiveness of the report. To increase the credibility of news sources by interviewing government officials, experts and scholars. Through interviews with ordinary patients, volunteers to enhance the interest of news. In terms of theme structure, through the use of personalization, story-oriented and contextualized narrative means, highlighting government actions, government decision-making, medical rescue and other aspects, insisting on positive reporting and public opinion guidance, the government image and human interest framework are constructed. In terms of rhetorical structure, using the Chinese cultural background, using metaphors, idioms, buzzwords and other rhetorical ways in a specific context to attract the audience, increase the vitality and interest of the report, and arouse people's emotional perception and resonance.

Theme1 Syntax Structures

In news reporting, the components of the syntactic framework, such as title, source and lead, play a crucial role in the construction of the news framework. They not only determine the basic appearance of news, but also guide the audience's understanding and cognition of news content.

The title is a powerful guide, which can guide readers' attention to the news content and interpretation direction. By choosing different words and sentence patterns, headlines can emphasize different aspects of the news and build a specific news framework. The key words and phrases in the headlines can often summarize the core content of the news and provide readers with a preliminary summary of the information. When reporting important news events, news headlines usually use bolded fonts, multi-line headlines or special symbols to make them more visually striking, so as to attract readers' first attention. When choosing news sources, priority will be given to government image construction.

"Headlines are powerful guides that guide the audience's focus and interpretation of the news content. By choosing different words and sentence patterns, headlines can emphasize different aspects of the news and build different news frames." (interviewee1)

The lead role of the title in news reports was emphasized in Interviewee 1, which pointed out that the title can construct the news framework through the choice of words and sentence patterns, affecting the audience's attention to and interpretation direction of the news content. This view is in good agreement with the supplement of the Interviewees Wee 3. Interviewees 3 further detailed the visual appeal of headlines. Typesetting methods such as bolding, enlarging fonts or using special fonts make headlines more visually striking, thereby attracting readers' attention and increasing the reading rate of news. Together, the two reveal

the importance of headlines in news reports, not only in the guidance of their content, but also in the attractiveness of visual presentation. The two complement each other and jointly build the first impression and preliminary framework of news reports.

"In the news layout process, editors can highlight news headlines by bolding them, enlarging the font, or using special fonts to make them more visually striking. This type of layout can further attract readers' attention and improve the reading rate." (interviewee3)

Interviewee 3 analyzes how the title attracts readers from the perspective of visual appeal, while Interviewee 5 further adds from the perspective of content selection. In the design of headlines, editors need to fully consider the interests and concerns of target readers, and highlight the news points which are closely related to readers' vital interests or interest points, in order to increase the attractiveness and pertinence of news headlines. This view complements the typesetting method of the Interviewee 3, which constitutes the overall strategy of title design. Through accurate content selection and effective visual presentation, editors can more effectively guide the audience's attention, make news reports more close to the needs of the audience, and improve the communication effect.

"When designing headlines, editors need to fully consider the interests and concerns of target readers, and select news points that are closely related to readers' immediate interests or interest points to highlight, so as to increase the attractiveness and pertinence of news headlines." (interviewee5)

In reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic, Chinese mainstream media have built a comprehensive and multi-dimensional reporting framework by selecting diversified news sources such as government decisions and actions, major livelihood events, and social hot issues. These news sources not only provide the public with timely, accurate and comprehensive information, but also guide public cognition, shape the image of the government, and maintain social stability through different reporting angles and methods. At the same time, the mainstream media also pay attention to humanistic care and public opinion guidance in the reporting process, transmit positive energy, and stimulate the public's patriotic feelings and social responsibility.

"When reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic, China's mainstream media will prioritize and report on the decisions, actions and policy measures of government departments. These sources usually include official sources such as the National Health Commission, local governments, and health departments." (interviewee3)

When reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic, China's mainstream media will prioritize and report on the decisions, actions and policy measures of government departments. This strategy reflects the role of the mainstream media as the mouthpiece of the party and the government, ensuring that the public can keep abreast of the government's latest decisions and anti-epidemic measures. As interviewee3 pointed out, by choosing official channels such as the National Health Commission, local governments, and health departments as news

sources, mainstream media can convey authoritative and accurate information and enhance public trust and support for the government.

Interviewees 8 added that in reporting major livelihood events, mainstream media would pay attention to humanistic care and the impact of the epidemic on the lives of ordinary people, conveying warmth and positive energy. This reflects the mainstream media's sense of social responsibility and attention to the needs of the public. By reporting on events closely related to public life, such as the shortage of medical supplies, residents' living security, and the impact on education and employment, mainstream media not only delivered practical information, but also stimulated the public's resonance and solidarity, contributing to social stability and the smooth progress of epidemic prevention and control.

"When reporting major livelihood events, mainstream media will pay attention to humanistic care, pay attention to the impact of the epidemic on the lives of ordinary people, and convey warmth and positive energy." Major livelihood events are closely related to public life, so they become the focus of mainstream media. These incidents may include the shortage of medical supplies, the living security of residents, and the impact on education and employment.
(interviewee8)

Interviewees mentioned that hot social events are often unexpected, which require the media to respond quickly and report in time. When reporting these events, the mainstream media will pay attention to public opinion guidance, clarify facts, eliminate misunderstandings and maintain social stability through objective and fair reporting. This strategy demonstrates the mainstream media's professionalism and sense of responsibility when dealing with emergencies. By releasing accurate information in a timely manner, mainstream media can effectively alleviate public panic, prevent the spread of rumors and false information, and create a good public opinion environment for epidemic prevention and control work.

"Social hot events are often sudden, requiring the media to respond quickly and report in time." When reporting hot social events, mainstream media will pay attention to public opinion guidance, clarify facts, eliminate misunderstandings and maintain social stability through objective and fair reporting.
(interviewee9)

Theme 2 Script Structures

The news script framework provides a clear context for the news content by setting the narrative structure and logic. This includes the when, where, who, what, according to how the key elements such as, and the causal relationship between each factor and logical connection. This kind of structured presentation helps the audience to better understand and remember the news content, and also affects the audience's cognition and attitude toward news events. When editors and journalists build a news script framework, they consider how to arrange the elements, such as using an inverted pyramid to attract attention. Government officials, industry experts, scholars and other groups will be interviewed to increase the authority of the report, and the timeliness of the news will be increased by seizing the reporting time, and the frequency of reporting will be increased to produce hot topics.

"News reports often quote directly from speeches, press conferences and policy statements by government officials, which are a direct reflection of the government's response to the outbreak. The statements and actions of government officials become the key indicators to evaluate the speed of government response, decision-making ability and leadership. For example, the speeches and actions of senior officials such as health ministers, heads of local government and state leaders are often widely reported by the media as representatives of the government's image."(interviewee3)

Interviewer 3 emphasized the importance of quoting government officials' speeches, press conferences and policy statements directly in news reports. These contents are not only a direct reflection of the government's response strategy to the outbreak, but also a key indicator to assess the government's response speed, decision-making ability and leadership. Through these quotes, the media constructs the public's perception of the government's image. Specifically, the statements and actions of senior officials such as health ministers, local heads of government, and state leaders have been the focus of extensive media coverage, through which the media has helped the public understand the government's attitude and actions in the prevention and control of the epidemic, thus creating an image of a responsible and competent government.

Interviewees 6 stressed the importance of experts such as medical experts, epidemiologists and vaccine developers in reporting on the COVID-19 outbreak. With their professional opinions and research results, these experts have provided a scientific basis for government decision-making, as well as authoritative health guidance and epidemic interpretation for the public. By quoting these experts, the media can enhance the scientific and credibility of the government's decision-making, thus further cultivating the image of the government as responsible and professional.

"Medical experts, epidemiologists, vaccine developers and others are indispensable voices in the coverage of COVID-19. Their professional opinions and research results provide a scientific basis for government decision-making, but also provide authoritative health guidance and epidemic interpretation for the public. Quoting these experts can enhance the scientific and credibility of government decisions, thus building a responsible and professional image of the government."(interviewee6)

Both interviewees emphasized the importance of authoritative voices in reporting on COVID-19, but with slightly different emphasis. Interviewer 3 pays more attention to the voice of government officials, and evaluates the government's coping ability and leadership by reporting their statements and actions; Interviewer 6, on the other hand, focuses more on the voice of medical experts to enhance the scientific and credibility of government decision-making through their professional opinions.

However, both are essentially designed to project an image of responsible and competent government. By introducing authoritative voices, the media can not only provide the public with comprehensive and accurate information about the epidemic, but also enhance public trust and support for the government. This reporting method not only conforms to the basic

laws of news communication, but also reflects the social responsibility and mission of the media in epidemic prevention and control.

To sum up, Chinese mainstream media have built a comprehensive and multi-dimensional reporting framework by actively introducing the voices of government officials and medical experts in their coverage of the novel coronavirus epidemic. This reporting method not only enhances the authority and professionalism of reports, but also enhances the public's trust and support for the government, creating a good public opinion atmosphere for epidemic prevention and control.

Theme 3 Thematic Structures

Mainstream media can effectively shape the news framework, guide public opinion and emotions, and create a favorable public opinion atmosphere for epidemic prevention and control by carefully choosing the themes and controlling the tone of their reports. At the same time, it also has a positive impact on shaping the image of the government and enhancing the credibility of the government.

"Mainstream media usually adopt a positive propaganda tone in their reports, emphasizing the government's positive actions and remarkable results in epidemic prevention and control, conveying confidence and hope. This tone helps to stabilize public sentiment and strengthen social cohesion." (interviewee2)

Interviewee 2 emphasized that the mainstream media usually adopted a positive propaganda tone in their reports, which not only highlighted the positive actions and significant results of the government in epidemic prevention and control, but also conveyed confidence and hope to the public. This type of reporting can help stabilize public sentiment and strengthen social cohesion. This view reveals the important role of mainstream media as information disseminators and social stabilizers during the epidemic, guiding public sentiment and enhancing social confidence through positive reporting.

Interviewee 3 further pointed out that the mainstream media tended to take the epidemic prevention measures, policy adjustments and rescue operations taken by the government as important topics of coverage. These reports not only demonstrate the government's determination, actions and effectiveness in epidemic prevention and control, but also successfully portray the government as responsible and capable. This point of view emphasizes how the mainstream media can construct the image of the government by choosing the subject of the report and enhance the public's trust and support for the government by showing the positive actions and results of the government.

"Mainstream media often take the epidemic prevention measures, policy adjustments, and rescue operations taken by the government as important topics of coverage. These reports demonstrate the government's determination, actions and effectiveness in epidemic prevention and control, and help build an image of the government as responsible and capable." (interviewee3)

Interviewee 5 said the positive role of mainstream media in reporting the epidemic was also supplemented from another perspective, namely, through reporting the touching stories and dedication of front-line anti-epidemic personnel such as medical staff, volunteers and community workers. This point of view revealed how mainstream media narrowed the distance between the public and the government by reporting specific figures and stories. Enhance the public's sense of identity and belonging to the government.

"By reporting the touching stories and dedication of medical staff, volunteers, community workers and other frontline personnel, we will show their important role and heroic image in fighting the epidemic. Such reports can stimulate the public's patriotic feelings and social responsibility, while strengthening the positive image of government leaders. "(interviewee5)

Through a comprehensive analysis of the views of the above three interviewees, it can be seen that mainstream media have adopted various strategies to construct the image of the government and guide public opinion in their coverage of the novel coronavirus epidemic. First, the tone of positive publicity conveys confidence and hope to stabilize the public mood; Second, by reporting on the government's epidemic prevention measures and actions to demonstrate the government's determination and effectiveness; Finally, by reporting the touching stories of those on the frontline of the fight against the epidemic, the public's patriotic feelings and sense of social responsibility are aroused. Together, these strategies form the logic of framing mainstream media coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic, not only providing the public with timely and accurate information, but also successfully shaping the image of the government as responsible and competent, enhancing social cohesion and public trust and support for the government.

Theme 4 Rhetorical Structures

Through the use of images, metaphors, buzzwords and idioms in their coverage of COVID-19, mainstream media have successfully shaped the news framework and profoundly affected the public's awareness, attitudes and emotions about the epidemic. These rhetorical devices not only enhance the expressiveness and appeal of the report, but also enhance the communication power and influence of the media.

"Frequent photos of health care workers wearing protective suits, goggles and masks symbolize their bravery and selfless dedication, and reinforce the high public recognition and respect for health care workers. This pictorial metaphor shaped the positive image of the government and society towards the medical workers and conveyed the confidence to overcome the epidemic. "(interviewee1)

Rhetorical means such as pictures and metaphors have a strong framing function, which not only strengthens the public's high recognition and respect for medical workers, but also conveys confidence in overcoming the epidemic, and shapes the government and society's positive image of medical workers. As Interviewee1 said, the frequent photos of medical personnel wearing protective suits, goggles and masks became a strong visual metaphor, symbolizing the bravery and selfless dedication of medical personnel.

Mainstream media can also use buzzwords to strengthen the context of their reports. As Interviewee4 and Interviewee6 said, the mainstream media successfully created a positive image of anti-epidemic personnel by using such buzzwords as "rebellious" and "hard-core epidemic prevention", which emphasized the importance and determination of the government and society to epidemic prevention and control, and created the image of the government's active actions. It is not difficult to see that the media constructs a specific media framework through the use of special language means.

"Contrarian" : This term is widely used to describe health care workers and other anti-pandemic workers who stay on the job and work backwards during the pandemic. The word not only praises their bravery and commitment, but also inspires public respect and gratitude. By frequently using the word, the mainstream media has created a positive image of those fighting the pandemic and has conveyed a positive social atmosphere." (interviewee4)

"In the reporting of the novel coronavirus epidemic, the term "hardcore epidemic prevention" is often used to describe the strict and effective epidemic prevention measures taken by some regions or units. "By reporting these measures, mainstream media emphasized the importance and determination of the government and society to prevent and control the epidemic, and also shaped the image of the government as active and responsible." (interviewee6)

In their coverage of the novel coronavirus epidemic, Chinese mainstream media not only enhanced the attractiveness and appeal of their coverage through diversified rhetorical devices, but also successfully shaped the news framework and guided the public's cognition and emotion. These rhetorical devices are not only the enrichment and supplement of news content, but also an important embodiment of mainstream media's professionalism and responsibility in reporting major events.

Conclusion

Mainstream media in China have built a comprehensive and multi-dimensional reporting framework in their coverage of the COVID-19 epidemic, achieving multiple purposes such as information transmission, government image building, and public awareness guidance through carefully designed syntactic, scripted, thematic and rhetorical structures. In terms of framework construction, mainstream media focus on maintaining a high degree of consistency with the government, and actively communicate the government's policy orientation and anti-epidemic measures; At the same time, we also pay attention to reporting from the perspective of third parties to ensure the objectivity and impartiality of information. In addition, through the use of a variety of rhetoric and presentation methods, mainstream media has successfully captured the public's attention and aroused their emotional resonance. However, it is also necessary to note the possible problems and shortcomings in the reporting process. For example, in the pursuit of timeliness, in-depth investigation and verification of information may be neglected; While emphasizing positive coverage, it may neglect to focus on and address negative issues. Therefore, in the future reporting, mainstream media should continue to strengthen their professional quality and sense of responsibility to ensure the authenticity and objectivity of the reporting content; At the same time, it is also necessary to pay more attention to the needs and concerns of the public and

provide them with more comprehensive and in-depth information services. This study not only reveals the complex mechanism and logic behind news reports, but also provides useful thinking and enlightenment for improving the communication power, guiding power, influence and credibility of Chinese news media. In the future, China's mainstream media can continue to learn from and improve these reporting frameworks and strategies when reporting similar major emergencies, so as to better fulfill their information dissemination and social responsibilities.

Based on an in-depth analysis of the framework of Chinese mainstream media reporting on COVID-19, this study not only enriches the research content in the field of journalism and communication, but also provides a new theoretical perspective and empirical basis for understanding the reporting strategies of Chinese mainstream media in major public health events. From the perspective of theoretical contributions, this study applied Pan and Kosicki's framework theory to the analysis of epidemic reports in mainstream media in China, filling the gap in previous studies where the framework theory of Zang guoren was mostly used for high, medium and low level analysis, and demonstrating the applicability and explanatory power of different framework theories in specific cultural and social contexts. Through a detailed analysis of syntactic structure, script structure, thematic structure and rhetorical structure, this study reveals the complexity and dynamics of the construction of news report framework, and provides new ideas and directions for the research of framework theory in the field of journalism and communication.

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