The Alienation of Reason: Exploring the Social Impact of Debate Talk Show Varieties

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Abstract: The ratings of debate talk shows such as "Qipao Shuo" and "Little Theater Talk Show" have further increased, and people prefer to watch online programs to pass the time. However, we have observed that with the popularity of talk shows, people are gradually showing signs of liking "spoofing" and "satirizing" in their daily lives, leading to further irrational and online violence in public opinion. Talk shows such as Qipao Shuo analyze and refute social and cultural perspectives, but their debate models tend to be parody and satire. This mode will produce "predictive effect" and "imitation effect", making online users also tend to play jokes and satire when facing social problems. Therefore, we adopt audience survey and interview methods to conduct research on such users, in order to explore the relationship between them and find the reasons for such phenomena.
Key words: debate talk show, variety show, foreshadowing effect, imitation effect, stem culture

1. Introduction

In recent years, online language variety show have seen a blowout development. This type of program is based on the broadcasting and dissemination of new media platforms, and is loved and paid attention to by the new generation of audiences with its network like expression, relaxed and humorous content, and unique and innovative style. The online debate variety show "Qipao Shuo" launched by iQiyi, which takes "Qipao" as the label of subculture, has successfully "broken the circle". The online sports program "Talk Show Conference" on Tencent platform has also been "out of the circle" constantly with the "blockbuster" and golden sentence of the players. While meeting the spiritual and cultural needs of the audience, this kind of program gives new connotation to subculture such as talk shows, and is growing steadily with its unique cultural influence and communication power.

However, we have observed that under this influence, people gradually exhibit phenomena such as liking to "play with memes" and "satire" in their daily lives, leading to further irrational and online violence in public opinion. At present, online language programs frequently make headlines and quickly spread among young audiences, becoming an important factor in the emergence of such phenomena. We have observed that other popular online variety shows will enhance people's attention to celebrities and topics, and their impact on the audience is directly and explicitly. Debate talk shows are not limited to this, as they have a long-term and implicit impact on people's expression and thinking patterns. We are curious about this, why does the latter have such particularity? Will it affect people's ways of self-expression and thinking patterns? If so,

how did it affect it?

2. Literature review

2.1 Literature review on research related to talk shows

Debate and talk show types of online syndication are actually one of the many media forms currently in use, and this phenomenon is essentially a new media form that has an impact on audience cognition. From this perspective, domestic and foreign scholars have conducted extensive research on this topic. The "magic bullet theory" that emerged from the early 20th century to the late 1930s believed that the information conveyed by the media could directly influence people's attitudes and opinions, and even dominate their actions; In 1960, foreign scholar Klapa proposed the "theory of limited effects", emphasizing the powerlessness of its influence and the limitations of its effects; McGuire et al. began investigating television programs in 1962 and summarized the types of "use and satisfaction" from the perspective of the audience. They pointed out that people's exposure to media is based on some basic needs, including information needs, entertainment needs, social relations needs, as well as spiritual and psychological needs; German scholar Neumann proposed the "Silent Spiral" hypothesis in 1980 to explain how the media exerts influence and forms public opinion among the audience; American scholar Gerbera proposed the "cultivation" theory of the subtle effects of media to illustrate how it unconsciously constrains people's views on reality.

The above is a study conducted from the macro level of the impact of media on the audience. Domestic scholars have also conducted a series of studies on specific phenomena. Domestic scholar Zhou Min focuses on media literacy and the relationship between media and youth, attempting to present the basic outline of "online variety shows and youth development"; Another scholar, Lin Aijun, focuses on analyzing the culture of "memes" on the internet, pointing out that it has gradually developed into an expression of aphasia and the dissolution of values. We should be vigilant about the dissemination of misconceptions, entertainment, and death that it brings; Scholar Liu Yitao, on the other hand, analyzed the creative dimensions of online talk show variety shows and pointed out that "as a media culture, television culture reflects and runs through the logic and spirit of postmodern culture in a relatively concentrated manner". He believed that it not only has the transmission of information, but also should have emotional resonance and value pursuit.

These studies cover macro theories to specific phenomena, exploring from multiple perspectives, both positive and negative, but overlook the psychological aspects of predictive and imitative effects starting from the audience itself.

The predictive effect is the Pygmalion effect, also known as the "Rosenthal effect". In 1968, it was proposed by Robert Rosenthal (1933 -) and others in the book Pygmalion in the classroom. Believing that teachers' expectations of students will have an effect on students' academic performance and other aspects. For students with high expectations from teachers, after a period of testing, their academic performance has significantly improved compared to other students.

There are 934 keywords searched in the Global Academic Express, most of which are based on clinical medicine, psychology and education. For example, Peng Jiajia and four other scholars wrote the article "Application of nursing based on Rosenthal effect theory in patients with diabetes nephropathy". Tald is the founder of imitation theory in social psychology. The imitation theory has an important influence on the study of the role of communication in personality formation and human socialization from the perspective of social psychology. Its core is "social imitation theory". He believes that there is no entity beyond personal psychological experience, and all social processes are nothing but interactions between individuals. Every human action is repeating something, it is a form of imitation. Imitation is the most basic social relationship, and society is a group of individuals who imitate each other. Starting from this theory, domestic scholar Liang Yi explores the audience psychology and social psychology of IP dramas; Scholar Jin Xiao explores the path of online drama going to sea based on imitation law; Li Meng and Chen Kang, two scholars, examined the formation and evolution of public opinion from the perspective of Tard's social imitation.

The review shows that these studies have not yet analyzed the impact of online variety shows on audiences from the perspectives of predictive and imitative effects, and therefore have not answered questions about the impact of debate talk show programs on people's current thinking patterns.

Therefore, starting from the theories of predictive effect and imitation effect, this article attempts to answer several questions: why does the debate talk show program have such a special impact on the audience? What kind of motivation causes the phenomenon of the audience's thinking mode being influenced, resulting in its uniqueness? How is the special impact of such programs on the audience's thinking patterns reflected at the social and cultural levels? What other factors strengthen the uniqueness and socio-cultural impact of this phenomenon?

3. Research methods

This article adopts the research methods of audience survey and interview to attempt to answer the above questions.

Audience survey method Interview method

3.1 Assumption Establishment:

Based on the above questions, corresponding assumptions are proposed here:

H1: The more you watch debate talk shows, the more inclined you are to discuss issues through sarcasm;

H2: The more you watch debating talk shows, the more inclined you are to "play with memes" when expressing your opinions;

H3: The more you watch debate talk shows, the shallower your analysis of social opinion;

H4: The more you watch debate talk shows, the more inclined you are to seek sarcastic opinions from online influencers to support yourself;

To prove the hypothesis, this study used a questionnaire survey method and produced a questionnaire.

3.2 Sampling method

a. The research object corresponding to this hypothesis is the audience group that watches variety shows, especially debate talk shows. Firstly, we will conduct a convenient sampling of this group and select current university students as the research population; Secondly, we will create a questionnaire in the form of a questionnaire star; Once again, we will distribute questionnaires through social media channels such as WeChat Moments and WeChat Groups, excluding blank and invalid questionnaires, and selecting the remaining questionnaires with research value as samples.

This study conducted 15 minutes of semi structured in-depth interviews with 50 interviewees aged 18-25 who had seen such variety shows. The interview began in April 2023 and ended in May 2023. The respondents first included college students from universities in Beijing, Hebei, and then contacted other universities online to collect more research samples.

3.3 Sample Description

a. The data collection, organization, and analysis process of this survey was completed on May 15, 2023. The survey mainly focuses on open and closed questions, and the main content is: (1) Basic information confirmation: including age, gender, and grade. (2) The dimensionality reduction statement part of the independent variable X (3) The dimensionality reduction statement part of the dependent variable Y. This questionnaire contains 15 questions, including 9 multiple-choice questions, 1 multiple-choice question, 4 matrix questions, and 1 fill in the blank question. Adopting a combination of online and offline methods, through WeChat Moments, QQ Space, Questionnaire Star Sample Library, and offline distribution. Excluding samples under 18 and over 25 years old, the sample size is 232. After removing the sample that has not seen the debate talk show variety show, the final effective sample number is 202.

b. According to the maximum sampling principle of qualitative research methods, when the 50th interviewee is collected, all interview content is sufficient to answer the research questions, and the sample collection deadline is reached. The interviewees have differences in age, hobbies, education level, and location, with a low degree of homogenization. The interviews were conducted through telephone interviews and WeChat text interviews. The interview results were compiled into a verbatim manuscript with a total of 10000 words. The processing of interview content is completed by individuals. The basic information of the interviewees is shown in the table. The interview questions are mainly divided into three parts.

The first part mainly involves the basic information of the interviewee, including their school, grade, and understanding of variety shows. The second part reduces the research question to an interview question. Including their views on the debate talk show variety shows and the phenomena they cause, specific coping strategies, and analysis of their own influence. The third part, preparation, mainly involves potential deep excavation issues. During the interview and

research process, efforts will be made to avoid the four ethical issues and deviant behaviors emphasized by scholar Al an Bryman: (1) causing harm to research participants; (2) Do not use informed consent permission documents or materials; (3) Infringe the privacy of research participants; (4) Deception of research participants. And if the interviewee has any questions or dissatisfaction that they are unwilling to answer during the interview, they can remain silent or withdraw midway. The interview materials that the interviewee stated that they were unwilling to disclose were not included or cited in this study.

4. Research findings and discussion points

The audience watching such debate talk show variety show will have a long-term implicit impact on its expression and thinking mode because of the content, characters and plot of the program. Therefore, the researchers propose the hypothesis:

H1: The more you watch debate talk shows, the more inclined you are to discuss issues through sarcasm;

Using correlation analysis to study the relationship between the number of people watching debate talk shows and their willingness to discuss issues in a satirical manner, Pearson correlation coefficient was used to represent the strength of the correlation. The two showed an explicit positive correlation, with a correlation coefficient of 0.255. The more you watch debate talk shows, the more inclined you are to discuss issues through satire, assuming H1 is supported.

H2: The more you watch debating talk shows, the more inclined you are to "play with memes" when expressing your opinions;

Using correlation analysis to study the relationship between the number of people watching debate talk shows and their willingness to express their views through "meme playing", Pearson correlation coefficient was used to indicate the strength of the correlation. The two showed an explicit positive correlation, with a correlation coefficient of 0.215. The more you watch on debate talk shows, the more inclined you are to "play with memes" when expressing your opinions, assuming H2 is supported.

H3: The more you watch debate talk shows, the shallower your analysis of social opinion;

Using correlation analysis to study the relationship between the number of debate talk shows watched and the superficiality of social opinion analysis, Pearson correlation coefficient was used to represent the strength of the correlation. The two showed an explicit negative correlation, with a correlation coefficient of -0.211. The more you watch debate talk shows, the shallower the analysis of social opinion, assuming H3 is supported.

H4: The more you watch debate talk shows, the more inclined you are to seek sarcastic opinions from online influencers to support yourself;

Using correlation analysis to study the relationship between the number of people watching debate talk shows and their willingness to support themselves by seeking satirical opinions from online influencers. The Pearson correlation coefficient is used to represent the strength of the correlation, and the two show an explicit positive correlation with a correlation coefficient of 0.280. The more you watch debate talk shows, the more inclined you are to seek sarcastic opinions from

online influencers to support your discussions, assuming that H4 receives support.

Through the analysis of the above data, all four hypotheses we made at the beginning have been demonstrated, but the data can only present the correlation among them and cannot reveal the specific mechanism of their effects. Therefore, interviews are used as auxiliary research methods to further explore the internal mechanism of hypothesis formation.

When we asked ourselves questions about expressing our opinions and personal thinking styles in the face of hot events, most respondents provided various answers. We were pleasantly surprised to find that among the diverse answers, the respondents were consistent in some aspects: they preferred to express their views through sarcasm and playful storytelling, in order to support their own views, Sometimes, they may cite the views of a large number of influencers with a certain level of popularity and fan base on the internet as support. However, from the perspective of the views themselves, it can be found that their analysis of social events and public opinion is more superficial. Their commonality lies in watching numerous debates, talk shows, and variety shows. The answers from the interviewees support my thoughts on the reasons for this approach:

There are many events that we feel expressive when we see them, so to express our resistance, I think the forms of satire and parody are very suitable, and can also be said to be a unique way for young people to express their words

In some talk show variety shows, many actors use various jokes and jokes to satirize or mock events and parties involved, in order to express their attitudes and ideas. This is a very personalized and humorous way of expression, and we really like it

There are some things that cannot be explicitly stated or explained clearly, and there are also some things that you cannot use when you reason well. Therefore, using sarcastic or humorous methods can have better results, which is also in line with the trend of online communication.

4.1 The Power of Irony: Personalized Expression of Deconstructing Events

In the online environment, a social public opinion event is easily swept up in hot searches and is under scrutiny by countless netizens. In this situation, netizens have a lot of power and space to express their opinions. But the problem is also how to make yourself stand out in such a large amount of information and such a fragmentation time? The satirical way was born. This approach not only highlights the unique viewpoint, but also strengthens its dissemination effect. The variety show of debate talk show undoubtedly magnified the "power" of satire as a way of expression. Most of the actors in such variety show have outstanding eloquence, unique views and strong demonstration effect. When using satire to express personal opinions, it not only achieved good results in the program, but also provided an experimental demonstration to the audience who watched the program: satire gave people a more daring courage to deconstruct events and express themselves, while also allowing the speaker to engage in a more positive self projection.

Whether it is the actors who are portrayed on stage as' tongues wagging against scholars' or the assumption that their views will be forwarded and praised by countless people, this predictive effect is undoubtedly poured out through satire. This is the Pygmalion effect proposed by Rosenthal playing a role. Personal power is insignificant, and personal expression of events also lacks authority. But with the support of actors' expressions and satirical methods in variety

shows, the desire to express opinions and the credibility of deconstructing events will increase accordingly.

4.2 Laughing at the root but not at the person: communication that avoids and leaves a way out

Through interviews with 50 respondents, we found that the more people who have watched such variety shows, the more they understand the culture and content of memes, and the more frequently they play with memes when expressing their opinions. Whether it's Bilibili, Weibo, Zhihu, Xiaohongshu, etc., as long as it's a place where young people exist, especially in social media apps that young people love to watch variety shows, the phenomenon of playing memes can be said to be everywhere.

The history of meme culture has been continuously developing since the birth of the Internet, and the number and rate of memes generated are even more difficult to calculate. There are many ways to generate memes, such as the deformation of famous quotes by celebrities, the concentration of the truth about popular events, and the official or personal creation of many literary works. Debate talk show variety show has undoubtedly become a hotbed of production. Whether it is the setting of program content or the language of participating guests, it is always possible to become the raw material for leading a trend. For example, during the broadcast of "roast Conference", the actors' golden sentences will refresh the microblog headlines in the way of hot search, and the audience watching these variety shows will be able to receive the latest content at the first time.

So, what is the significance of playing with memes? Firstly, there is the humorous element of meme culture. Whenever a new meme arises and appears in other viewpoints, the audience who understands the meme will feel a consistent comedic effect, and it will be easier to accept this viewpoint. This is a gentle expression that reduces malice and is easier for listeners to accept; Secondly, the meme implies the user's personal attitude, but due to the industry rule of "laughing at the meme but not at the person", the critical and opposing attitudes in the viewpoint are hidden. This is a way of expression with a way out, allowing both parties in the communication to have more leeway; Furthermore, the content of a meme is actually a condensed and abstract version of a viewpoint, so playing with memes has become an efficient and easy to understand way, which is loved by most netizens; Finally, the decoding of meme content is differentiated due to audience differences, so the understanding of views containing memes is to some extent vague and ambiguous, which leaves explanatory space for the viewpoint expressers and is therefore a way out for them.

Most importantly, according to Talde's social imitation law, when meme culture becomes a trend, people's expressions will imitate each other, thereby exacerbating the phenomenon of meme playing. This kind of variety show is undoubtedly the beginning and booster of this trend to a certain extent.

4.3 Loss of rationality: atrocities in public opinion

Unfortunately, through questionnaires and interviews, we found that 80% of people's analysis of social public opinion is becoming increasingly shallow and falling into a state of rational loss. On one hand, this is reflected in people's impatience with hot events and their unwillingness to let the bullets fly for a while by only lashing out at the initial reported content. As a result, the phenomenon of media trial and news reversal is constantly emerging; On the other hand, people's sarcasm and parody in expressing their opinions also lead to a one-sided phenomenon of emotional public opinion in events. People are obsessed with using various novel satirical methods and parody to demonstrate their "clarity" in viewing an event, This playful expression of "everyone is drunk and I wake up alone" has contributed to the growth of conspiracy theory and mindless speech, leading to a miasma of public opinion. More importantly, people lack personal rational thinking about public opinion, and are extremely easy to believe various statements, accelerating the formation of the spiral effect of silence, inevitably falling into the vicious circle of out of control public opinion.

It is undeniable that the actors in debate talk show programs also use this expression method to demonstrate rational and positive personal thinking. However, this is the result of carefully designed programs and pre prepared actors. Obviously, netizens in hot events do not have such conditions. Simply imitating can make their thinking patterns fast and shallow, and only focus on the form of expression to attract attention, Instead of focusing on the correctness of the expressed content. The foreshadowing effect has stimulated people's expression demands and confidence, and imitation of the law has reduced people's expression costs and concerns. This has turned irrational netizens into a mob, causing rampant violence in social opinion.

4.4 The End of the Argument: A Final Decision from Authority

No matter how netizens express their opinions, they are ultimately just ordinary people. Even if they borrow the shell of satire and parody, their views cannot determine the outcome of a dispute until a strong consensus is formed. So, what will they do next? It's the turn of the big Vs in the network to play their part. In the exchange of views on a hot topic, netizens with different views often cite the sarcastic opinions of these authoritative figures to support themselves. Although these sarcastic opinions of online influencers cannot replace the voices of official figures, as opinion leaders, they undoubtedly have enormous jurisdiction. In this way, as soon as their views are published, thousands of reposts and likes demonstrate the admiration of their authority, and netizens who cite their views gather under this banner, playing a decisive role in judging the event. An overwhelming viewpoint will announce the final "civilian outcome" of the hot topic event in this ironic way. Of course, it may not be correct and cannot be compared to the truth reported by the official, but it is clearly more susceptible to the support of public opinion.

5. Summary and Reflection

The debate talk show variety show fire is undoubtedly a good phenomenon. It has entertained

people's leisure life, and has also ignited the talk show art and many artists. The debate and roast links in the program content have also enhanced people's thinking and expression ability, forming a good atmosphere of paying attention to social hot events. But from an implicit perspective, it also has a negative impact on people's thinking patterns, which we should reflect on and be vigilant about.

My hypothesis mainly focuses on negative phenomena, and the description of positive effects is insufficient, so the conclusions may be biased, and even lead to exaggeration of negative effects. Therefore, I should strengthen dialectical thinking on the communication effects of such variety show, analyze from both positive and negative perspectives, and reflect from a more objective and comprehensive perspective.

Secondly, my research on the expression of meme and satire is still insufficient. The form of satire has certain sociological and psychological mechanisms in operation, and I only understand it from the surface, unable to thoroughly analyze the essence of this form. Moreover, the culture of satire has a long history and rich content, and it is also a major regret that I did not have time to conduct more in-depth research on it. At the same time, the formation of this way of expression is diverse, and it cannot be examined from the perspective of variety show alone, which is also not comprehensive enough.

Furthermore, there are limitations to the shallow analysis of social opinion and the use of authoritative opinions as support for surveys. Neither questionnaires nor interviews can perfectly reflect the rationality of people in the current network society. Especially the four questions in questionnaire design cannot fully reflect the mechanism by which people analyze the shallowness of social public opinion, but can only present a rough idea. Interview methods can also only reflect people's attitudes, viewpoints, and surface phenomena, and cannot fully and fundamentally reveal the relationship between hypotheses from the formation mechanism.

Finally, there are also issues with the choice of theory. For the negative impact on the audience watching such variety show, it is not possible to get a comprehensive and thorough result from two theories, but only to explain one or two aspects. This is the biggest limitation of my research and investigation. At the same time, the application of the two theories is not perfect, not fully consistent with the phenomenon reflected, which is also one of the directions to improve.

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