Expression of Feelings:An Analysis of the psychological Mechanism of Irrational Online Comment-makers

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Abstract: There are some irrational voices online squeezing the space of pluralistic opinions, which is not conducive to social integration. In this study, the author initially explores how the opinions of Internet stubborn opinion makers are shaped and expressed, and why they insist on their opinions like that in the method of content analysis and interview, taking the psychological mechanism of Internet recalcitrant opinion makers as the research object. The study found that the formation of these opinions often originate from a kind of celestial logic of emotions and feelings, and they firmly insist on the correctness of their feelings and intuition so that they express their opinions online in order to amplify their voices by "teaming up" with others who feel the same way.

Keywords: Emotional communication; Sensation and intuition; Stubborn opinion makers; Online violence

1 Introduction

In the age of intelligent media, the public has begun to truly enjoy the right of access to the media thanks to the popularity of social media platforms, which has provided the general public with the space to express their opinions. However, the massive amount of entertainment information and the new way of fragmented information dissemination have gradually diluted the public's rationality, leaving more and more irrational comments on social media platforms.

Among so many comment makers, there is a category of comment makers who are

convinced of the correctness of their own opinions and showing their strong hatred to others'. The conflict and clash of different opinions can easily lead to online violence. Ordinary users tend to choose what we call "close the wheat", which means they choose to stop leaving comments online, in case of suffering online violence. In the long run, it will result in decreasing space for pluralistic opinions, which is an obstruction to the process of social democracy and the consolidation of social consensus. Therefore, the author tries to apply the theory of sensation and intuition together with the theory of emotional communication, in order to study the psychological mechanism of stubborn opinion makers and initially explore how the opinions of stubborn comment makers are shaped and expressed, and why they insist on their opinions in anticipation of providing some insights into future research related to these stubborn opinion makers.

2 Literature Review

2.1 A review on theories of sensation and intuition

In the history of Chinese and Western literature, there is no shortage of statements about intuition. For example, Plato mentions "ecstasy" and "inspiration" which implied intuition a long time ago, and then the theory of intuition was elaborated by Shaftesbury, Kant and others, and finally developed by Croce[1]. Croce, a famous Italian aesthetic critic, pointed out the theory of "sense and intuition", which belongs to the category of aesthetics and art. Its core is "intuition as expression". The theory has gained the attention of scholars in the field of aesthetics and art education. In CKNI, a total of 26 documents were checked with "Croce" and "intuition theory" as the key word, most of which are interpretations or analyses of the theory of sensation and intuition. For example, in a paper entitled "On Croce's "intuition is expression" by Gao Junfeng and Li Qinghui, they pointed out that "Croce believed that aesthetics is the scientific intuition. In everyday language, intuition is the ability of grasping the truth directly without reasoning or analysis. Intuition plays an indispensable role in scientific and literary achievements"[2] There are some papers focus on the role of intuition theory in Aesthetic education of teenagers. Chen Fa-kui emphasises that "we should pay attention to the phenomenon of intuition-the performance and to conduct philosophical and psychological researches on the emotional and imaginative activities that exist in this process, and then applying the results to educational systems"[3].

The author found that there was little research on emotional communication from the perspective of feelings and intuition. Therefore, this study will examine the psychological mechanisms of emotion transmission by online stubborn opinion makers from the perspective of feelings and intuition in order to fulfill this part of the gap.

2.2 An overview of the current situation of emotional communication and irrational expression

Emotional communication is a popular research field of communication today. In the post-truth era, namely "ration after emotion" and "fact after emotion", netizen's emotional communication plays a dominant role in this state. The author searched the Internet for the keyword "emotional communication" and got 432 related articles.

Some scholars have examined the expression,characteristics, and Dissemination effectiveness of emotions in the content of media products from the perspective of emotion presentation. For example, in an article entitled "Analysis of mainstream media's emotion communication practices in the integrated media space - taking the Tokyo Olympics coverage as an example", Gao Yuran suggests that "the concept of emotion communication is embedded in the relevant coverage, which are presented: more positive emotions than negative emotions, multi-dimensional shaping of positive effects; the perspective of civilians, the increasing impact of the news; the attention to the interaction, between communication and reception, and guidance, rather than catering, promoting positive emotions; the revival of the sharing memory, developing national self-confidence and national identity"[4]. Zhang Xinwen, in her paper entitled "The Emotional Communication Practice of In a paper entitled 'A Study on the Emotional Communication of Hello, Li Huanying'", analyzed the emotional communication process of the film could be considered as a process of emotional stimulation, emotional identification and emotional sharing[5]. Other scholars have settled their studies from the perspective of the important mobilizing role of emotional communication in the formation of online hotspot.

The author of the present research searched the CNKI for the keyword "irrational commentary" and found 219 related documents. For example, in a paper entitled "Irrational Factors in News Commentary", Wei Meng explained the impact of irrational factors on commentary and how to achieve a balance between emotion and reason in it[6].

The author found that there was little research conducted from the perspective of the psychological mechanisms of stubborn opinion makers in irrational comments on the Internet, so there is still a lot of research space for research on irrational comments.

2.3 Questions

This study will therefore attempt to answer the following questions, drawing on the theory of sensory and intuitive and affective communication theory.

1. How are the opinions of the stubborn opinion makers formed? How are they expressed?

2. For what reasons do Internet stubborn opinion makers hold on to their opinions?

3 Method

3.1 Content analysis method

3.1.1 Hypothesis building

Based on the questions above, the corresponding hypotheses were again formulated.

H1: Stubborn opinion makers tend to characterize events with personal emotions, and they will not think rationally when expressing their opinions.

H2: Stubborn opinion makers often express and disseminate their opinions to amplify individual voices through groups by “teaming up” with others of the same opinion, .

H3: When disagreeing with others, stubborn opinion makers often believe in their own feelings and intuitive judgments, refusing to accept others’ opinions and trying to convince them to accept their own, which is likely to lead to internet violence in the clash of emotions and opinions.

To prove the hypothesis, this study used content analysis to sample the overall population and create a coding sheet.

3.1.2 Sampling method

The research object corresponding to this hypothesis is comment makers.

This study uses a random sampling method to sample the recent comments on Weibo about He Junlin's GCSE results.

Considering the short duration of this discussion, the author will take the comments related to the peak period of the discussion, i.e. the day of the release of the Sichuan college entrance examination results and the two days afterwards, for content analysis. The sample is selected by taking 1 comment every 3 comments among the hot ones.

3.1.3 Coding table

The author produced a table of content coding assignments by down-scaling the relevant variables in the hypotheses.

Table 1 Content coding assignment

1	Sample publisher	1=stubborn opinion maker, 2=regular user, 3=loyal user
2	Content Sentiment Tendency	1=Love, 2=Defend, 3=Neutral, 4=Dislike
3	Content keyword one	1=yes, 0=no
4	Content keyword two	1=yes, 0=no
5	Content keyword three	1=yes, 0=no
6	Content keyword four	1=yes, 0=no
7	Presence of similar views and expressions	1=yes, 0=no
8	Factors that account for a large proportion of views	1=sensory factor, 2=rational factor
9	Presence of rational discussion	1=yes, 0=no
10	Acceptance of different points of view	1=yes, 0=no
11	Repetition of opinions	1=yes, 0=no
12	Engagement of online violence	1=yes, 0=no
13	apology	1=yes, 0=no

3.2 In-depth interview method

3.2.1 Interview outline production

The interviewed questions were divided into three main parts.

In the first part, the basic information of the interviewees was mainly covered, including their age, gender, occupation and preferences.

In the second part, the research questions were downscaled into interview questions, including the duration of Weibo use, whether they often express their opinions on Weibo, whether they tend to considering characterizing events rationally or emotionally,and their views on the public opinion environment on Weibo, whether they like to comment under others' Weibo, and whether they have engaged in or suffered online violence.

In the third part, the preparation mainly deals with the questions that may be dug deeper.

3.2.2 Interviewee selection

This study conducted 15-minute semi-structured in-depth interviews with each of the 10 interviewees, which began on 28 June 2021 and ended on 12 July 2021. The interviewees were consisted of four close friends, three fans of He Junlin's super-talk and three referrals from friends, and varied in age, occupation and education level, with a low level of homogeneity.

The interviews were conducted with WeChat text interviews, which were collated into verbatim transcripts, 8,326 words in total. The following table 2 is some basic information about the interviewees.

Table 2 Demographic information of interviewees

Age	Occupation	Level of education	Location	
Interviewee 1	22	Student	Bachelor's degree	Xuzhou
Interviewee 2	21	Student	Bachelor's degree	Xuzhou
Interviewee 3	22	Student	Higher education	Huai'an
Interviewee 4	23	Taobao shopkeeper	Secondary school	Wenzhou
Interviewee 5	19	Student	Bachelor's degree	Guangdong
Interviewee 6	16	Student	High school	Chongqing
Interviewee 7	27	Primary school teacher	Bachelor's degree	Zhenjiang
Interviewee 8	30	New media operation	Bachelor's degree	Shanghai
Interviewee 9	18	Student	High School	Huai'an
Interviewee 10	25	Civil servant	Master’s degree	Huai'an

4 Description of content analysis results

4.1 Data filtering

The coding table is consisted of 50 samples. Since the coder is one person, it is not necessary to pass the coder consistency test. The coding table passed the consistency test.

4.2 Descriptive statistics

Of the 50 samples taken in this study, 22% were loyal users, 28% were regular users, and 50% were stubborn opinion makers. As for the emotional tendency of He Junlin, the protagonist of the incident, 38% of the reviewing group showed their love, 22% showed their defense, 24% of the users expressed their antipathy , and the remaining 16% group was neutral.

4.3 Hypothesis analysis

By drawing a cross chart of whether the feeling factor or rational factor accounts for a large proportion and the emotional tendencies toward He Junlin, I found that the rational factor accounts for nearly 100% in the group of users with a neutral attitude; the feeling factor and rational factor account for 33.33% and 66.67% respectively among users with antipathy attitude; 42.11% and 57.89% respectively in the group with favorite attitude; and in the group with strong maintenance,rational factors accounted for only 18.18%, while the percentage of emotional factors was as high as 81.82%.

It can be concluded that when the user group is guided by rational factors, most of them will show a neutral attitude. While emotional factors do dominate, they will show extreme attitudes of love, maintenance or antipathy.When emotional factors function more than rational factors, users no longer have their own rational judgment and will appear to be all about maintenance.

Table 3 Analysis of ANOVA

Analysis items	SSB	SST	Partial Eta Square	Cohen's
Keyword1: ventilation	0.048	8.580	0.006	0.075
Keyword2: good at study	0.264	7.380	0.036	0.193
Keyword3: not to take up the public topic	0.017	9.120	0.002	0.043
Keyword4: extreme expressions	0.045	11.520	0.004	0.063

From table 3, we found that when using ANOVA to view the intra-group differences of content keywords in the four groups, the eta-squared statistics are all less than 0.01, which indicates that the differences between groups are very small and can almost be regarded as a collection of the same views and opinions. Therefore, it can be proved that when users express their opinions, they intentionally perform group output of opinion views.

Table 4 Relations of Correlation Coefficients

		Acceptance of various views
Whether or not have a rational discussion	Correlation coefficient value	-0.175**
		0.000
Whether or not express repetitively	Correlation coefficient value	0.600**
		0.000
Whether or not conduct an online violence	Correlation coefficient value	0.694**
		0.000
Whether or not apologize	Correlation coefficient value	0.037*
		0.022

As can be seen from Table 4, the correlation coefficient between acceptance of different views and the presence of rational discussion is -0.715, which shows a significance at the 0.01 level, thus indicating that there is a significant negative correlation between the acceptance of different views and the presence of rational discussion. The correlation coefficient between acceptance of different views and

repetition of views is 0.600, which shows a 0.01 level of significance, thus indicating a significant positive correlation between acceptance of different views and repetition of views. The coefficient value of the relationship between acceptance of different opinions and the presence of online violence is 0.694, showing a significance at the 0.01 level, thus indicating that there is a significant positive relationship between acceptance of different opinions and the presence of online violence. The correlation coefficient between acceptance of different views and apology is 0.337 and shows a 0.05 level of significance, thus indicating that there is a significant positive relationship between accepting different views and apologizing.

Judging from the results, the stubborn opinion holders- whether or not supported or opposed He Junlin- made their judgment and acted in an atmosphere dominated by emotional factors, especially the stubborn opinion holders among He Junlin's fans, whose emotions almost dominated rationality, and they just showed their defence without thinking, so hypothesis one holds true. Through ANOVA, it was found that the difference between the groups was very small and could be regarded as a collection of the same views and opinions, so hypothesis two was proved to be valid. The correlation among acceptance of different opinions, repetition of opinions, online violence and the presence or absence of apologies can be concluded that people with stubborn opinions on the Internet often insist on their own judgment and their behaviors are more extreme, so hypothesis three was judged to be valid.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 opinion formation: with primitive emotions and feelings

According to the previous data analysis, we found that stubborn opinion makers often express their opinions in an atmosphere dominated by emotional factors. In the atmosphere, emotion is paramount, and people are "free" to express their opinions based on their emotions and feelings.

In the process of in-depth interview, two interviewees expressed the similar view, "I do not think that we can’t talk about He under the topic of Sichuan college entrance examination. Our brother is really excellent, he got 483 points within just two months. And we did not ask them to join in us. If they didn’t like what we talked, they could overlook it, so I think they were just jealous of him. With my understanding of him,

he will definitely go to Communication University of China. He will be the first one in his group entering a “211” university. Our brother is best!" "I prefer to comment on Weibo. If I met some words which really made me very unhappy, I will express my dissatisfaction. I just want to keep happy, who care about others!" It can be seen that both interviewees did not have a rational thinking when commenting, but formed their own attitudes and opinions about an event under the control of their feelings and self-satisfied emotions.

As a result, we can conclude that stubborn opinion makers online often form an opinion based on their emotions and feelings, and the rational factors is often ignored by them.

5.2 Expression of opinions: "teaming" under emotional communication

According to ANOVA above, it can be found that users intentionally engage in group output of opinions when made an expression. This phenomenon is particularly evident among stubborn opinion makers.

Algorithm technology accurately pushes information which is consistent with online users’ interests through the collection and analysis of users’ views and behavior data. Users accepted this way of information dissemination and formed different groups based on their interests. Groups dominated by stubborn opinion makers often show stronger "cohesion". I learned from an interviewee that their group chats have a daily activity test, and once someone makes a statement that does not conform to the majority opinion of the group, they will be removed from the group chat on the spot, and may be subject to net violence. The author thinks that this phenomenon is not surprising. Since the views of stubborn opinion makers are often originated from original emotions and feelings, if members in the group make statements contrary to stubborn opinion makers, it will be thought as a betrayal of emotion by them. When the stubborn opinion holders don’t achieve the effect of emotional communication they expect or even produce the opposite effect, they may provoke online violence.

In the debate about He Junlin, the author also found that the more radical comments that defended or abused He Junlin had more supports and similar comments, while most of those mild comments did not receive wide attention. The stubborn opinion makers "team up" to express their views and amplify their voices in an attempt to achieve the communication effect their desired for.

5.3 Persistence of opinion: the conviction of the correctness of intuition

According to Croce's intuitive principle, "In everyday language, intuition is the ability of grasping the truth directly without reasoning or analysis"[2]. This view can explain the stubborn insist of their views among stubborn opinion makers online. Marxism advocates the view that the essence of things can be discovered only through rational thinking, which is a materialist view, while Croce advocates that the truth of things can be directly apprehended through intuition, which is an idealist view.

The author believes that stubborn opinion makers consciously or unconsciously hold an idealist view characterize an event. They firmly believe in the correctness of their own feelings and intuition, and that they can directly grasp the truth of things through intuition, so they refuse to negotiate and discuss, but strongly spread their opinions and try to make others accept them, even in a harmful way.

In general, the author of the present research thinks that the opinions of stubborn opinion makers are often originated from the primitive emotions and feelings. The stubborn opinion makers are strongly influenced by their personal emotions and characterize events accordingly. Their opinions are often expressed by "teaming up" with others who feel the same way. Stubborn opinion makers are convinced of the correctness of their feelings and intuition, so they often cling to their own opinions.

5.4 Reflection and Outlook

The event selected in this study were of short duration and the subjects involved in the event were relatively simple, so there were limitations in the collection of the sample, and the results obtained may have some shortcomings in the persuasive level. In addition, since the author was not very skilled in questioning techniques, some respondents were not willing to open up and talk to each other, and the WeChat text interview method took up some time, so the depth of the interviews was not sufficient. The author thinks that a relatively complex and staged event can be further selected for the study of the psychological mechanism stubborn opinion makers online, and better research results may be achieved through the skillful use of interview techniques and the addition of telephone interviews or face-to-face interview methods.

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