Study on the transmission of female gender empathy in the Russo-Ukrainian War

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Abstract: Based on the theory of empathic communication and questionnaire survey, this paper analyzes the influence of Chinese media reports on Ukrainian women during the Russo-Ukrainian war on three indicators: audience sympathy, anti-war sentiment and Ukrainian sense of national identity. As the war between Russia and Ukraine continues, coverage of the displacement, abuse and cannon fodder of Ukrainian women is characterized by sympathy for the underdog, Therefore, this paper puts forward six questions from two aspects: "The impact of having seen or not seen the above types of reports on the audience's sympathy, anti-war sentiment and the sense of national identity of Ukraine" and "the impact of the amount of watching such reports on the audience's sympathy, anti-war sentiment and sense of identity".
Keywords: empathy spread, war reports, sympathy and anti-war sentiment, national identity

1 Introduction

In February 2022, the Russian War officially began as Russian President Vladimir Putin declared war on Ukraine. As of February 21 this year, in the past year, according to the latest statistics of the United Nations, there have been more than 21,000 civilian casualties, and the global loss has exceeded one trillion yuan. During the war, although Russia, as our future-oriented partnership, was closer to China than Ukraine, Ukraine still gained considerable sympathy in China. During the conflict in Ukraine, in addition to the reports related to the war itself, the Internet has a large number of women in Ukraine, Ukraine women were forced to separate with Chinese boyfriend, Ukraine women displaced from place to place, homeless, Ukraine women become a battlefield victims and other related reports, these reports make the Chinese to Ukraine countries produced compassion, then aroused strong anti-war mood. It is not difficult to see that the reports of Ukrainian women are clearly characterized by sympathy with the weak, and will undoubtedly have an impact on the audience. We can't help but wonder: does Ukrainian female reporting have a special impact on our people? Does it also have an impact on the anti-war sentiment of our people and the sense of identity of Ukraine?

2 Literature review

2.1 Review of studies on Ukrainian women reporting during the Russo-Ukrainian War

The war between Russia and Ukraine has lasted for more than a year, and the related reports in various aspects have also caused many studies from the academic circle. On China CNKI, as of April 4,2023, we searched literature on "Russia-Ukraine conflict" and "Russia-Ukraine War", and 1039 related journals were searched. However, it is found that Ukrainian women are not involved in the above literature.450 results for "Women of War"; only 10, and no documents related to the Russo-Ukrainian war or the Ukrainian state. Therefore, according to the search results, the theme of Ukrainian women's reporting in the Russian-Ukrainian war is still a field that few people are involved in, which is a new perspective in the study of many reports on the Russo-Ukrainian war.

2.2 Summary of research on empathy communication theory

2.2.1 Review of research on the concept of empathy communication

Empathy is an inherent psychological mechanism of human beings. In recent years, as a psychological concept of psychology, "empathy" has been gradually introduced into the field of communication. According to the theoretical basis of The Exploration of the Theoretical Foundation and Practical Path of Asographic Communication, Wu Fei (2019) put forward three practical paths for the dissemination of empathy: empathy is based on "love", communication to promote empathy, and groups with high degree of recognition are more likely to produce empathy. Liu Licheng (2020) put forward that the so-called empathic transmission is a way and process of information transmission and acceptance by the disseminator and the recipient with empathy, so as to produce the transmission effect of "emotional infection", "opinion selection" and "empathic concern". Zhao Jianguo (2021) distinguished the concept of empathy and empathy communication in On The Communication of Empathy. He believed that empathy communication produced empathy through the transmission, diffusion and sharing of information. In addition, Ren Danyu (2021) proposed that the key to the definition of empathy communication is to generate empathy through the dissemination of information.

2.2.2 Review of studies on the application of empathy communication theory

At present, the application of the theory of "empathy communication" mainly focuses on the following aspects: the theory itself, the medical field, the field of educational psychology, and the combination with international communication or cross-cultural communication.

In recent three years, the common perspective was based on the theoretical analysis during the outbreak and public opinion, such as: Su Jinyuan during the COVID-19 <Southern Character Weekly> WeChat public spread of empathy research, in the early outbreak of the southern character weekly WeChat tweets as the research object, analysis of the effect of empathy spread and mechanism, etc. Some scholars use this theory to analyze the communication strategies of current mainstream media. For example, in the Study on Empathy Communication Strategy of Mainstream Media Short Video -Take CCTV News Douyin short Video as an example, Zhou Xin analyzed the empathy factors and communication effects in CCTV News Douyin short videos.

In addition, from the perspective of the spread of empathy, foreign scholars explored the

mechanism of the empathy effect of specific programs in the article Global Vision and Motif Empatby: Research on Empathy Communication of Food Documentary "Once Upon a Bite", and constructed the communication strategy of empathy from homesickness and empathy.

To sum up, the number of academic studies on the impact of war-related reports on audiences is extremely limited. Combining the combination of "empathic communication" and "war reporting" in cnKI and VIP, only one related journal article can be retrieved. Therefore, the existing research does not study the influence of the Ukrainian female reports on the Chinese audience from the spread of empathy, nor does it answer a series of questions such as whether these reports have an impact on the sympathy of Chinese women.

2.3 Questions are raised

Therefore, this paper will start from the theory of empathy communication and try to answer the following questions: Did the reports of Ukrainian women in the Russo-Ukrainian war arouse the sympathy of the Chinese people? Has it aroused anti-war sentiment among the Chinese people? Does it affect the Chinese people's sense of identity with the Ukrainian state?

3 Research methods

This paper uses the research method of questionnaire questions to try to answer the above questions.

3.1 Questionnaire survey method

3.1.1 Assumption Establishment:

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

H1: There is a significant difference between the audiences of Ukrainian women who have seen and have not seen the reports of Ukrainian women. The audience who have seen the report is more sympathetic to Ukrainian women.

H2: There are significant differences between anti-war sentiment among the audiences who have seen and have not seen the reports of Ukrainian women. People who have read the report are more anti-war conscious.

H3: There are significant differences between the audiences of Ukrainian women who have seen and have not seen the national identity of Ukraine. People who have read the report have a higher sense of national identity in Ukraine.

H4: The more you have seen Ukrainian women report, the more sympathetic they are for Ukrainian women.

H5: The more Ukrainian women report, the more anti-war sentiment.

H6: The more reports I have seen Ukrainian women, the higher their sense of national identity with Ukraine.

To prove the hypothesis, this study used a questionnaire survey, sampled the population, and produced questionnaires.

3.1.2 Sampling method

The corresponding research object of this hypothesis is the large group of Chinese people. First, we conducted representative sampling of this group, and selected citizens of many provinces and undergraduates of Shandong University of Finance and Economics as the overall research group; second, we selected citizens of Jinan, Shandong Province, undergraduates of Shandong University and some citizens of other provinces and cities; again, we conducted stratified multilevel sampling with 95% confidence interval and 3% sampling error. A sample of 296 students and residents was selected. If access is denied, the next class or the next family is replaced by the next student or resident.

The data collection, collation and analysis process were completed on May 5, 2023. The survey is mainly open and closed questions, and the main contents are: (1) Basic information confirmation: including gender and age. (2) Different number of current status of Ukrainian women (including 0,1,3; reports from Global Times, People's Daily and other media). (3) Three Likert scales, which reflect compassion, anti-war sentiment and degree of national identity, are divided into five levels: disagree, disagreement, unclear, agree and agree. This questionnaire contains 7 questions, including two single questions to confirm the basic information, one choice to read related reports and the number of reads, and three five-level Likert scales (the corresponding questions are 5,3 and 4, respectively). Adopt the combination of online and offline methods, through Wechat Moments, QQ space, questionnaire network sample database and offline distribution.

Three groups of questions were designed, asking the respondents to test their sympathy, anti-war feelings and national identity with Ukrainian women without looking at the material, one material and three materials. A total of 296 questionnaires were collected in this survey, of which 102 samples without materials, 89 samples of one material and 105 samples of two materials. In this questionnaire design, the variables of compassion, anti-war emotion and national identity were all measured in the form of a five-level Likert scale, so the corresponding variables generated by summing the corresponding measurement statements were included in the subsequent analysis.

4 Research findings and discussion points

4.1 Scenario absence: Media reports have no direct relationship with the strength of the audience's sympathy

The level of sympathy for Ukrainian women has nothing to do with whether they have read the report. According to the data analysis of the collected questionnaires, the mean sympathy of the respondents who have not read the material of Ukrainian women is slightly higher than that of those who have seen. It shows that even if they do not read the report, they will have strong

sympathy for Ukrainian women, that is, there is no relationship between whether they have read the relevant report and the sympathy of the audience.

Through descriptive analysis found that the Ukrainian women related material of respondents in the mean of compassion is 4.4, not seen material respondents in the mean of compassion is 4.8, indicating that respondents even if not seen related material for Ukrainian women has produced a high degree of compassion, so the study hypothesis H 1 is not supported.

The theory of empathy communication emphasizes that the environmental conditions that produce empathy is "situation". When asked whether the interviewees sympathize with the Ukrainian women, it is impossible to throw a thin "sympathy" topic to the interviewees, which will make the interviewees confused, so it will inevitably involve the elaboration of the specific situation, such as "will they feel sad for the Ukrainian women violated, exploited and sold"; "whether they have pity for the lost family or homeless Ukrainian women in the war". However, individual empathy precisely requires such large environmental conditions (i. e. situation), and the understanding of the situation can provide a basis for individuals to estimate how the emotions and state of others are in specific situations, so as to directly affect the emotions and state of the empathy themselves and make them closer to the direction of empathy. Thus, even have not seen reported Ukraine women tragic material, the audience will still use only a few digital construction of situation, feel the Ukrainian women's despair and helplessness, and sad, produce strong compassion (problem with five lekert scale, get not see the report respondents compassion intensity average as high as 4.8).

4.2 Report content promotes empathy: the audience's anti-war sentiment is related to whether to browse the media reports

The anti-war sentiment of the audience is related to whether they have seen the relevant reports of the tragic experiences of Ukrainian women: the audience who have seen the reports of the opposition against the ongoing war is higher and stronger.

The average anti-war sentiment of the respondents who did not see the material and saw the material was 3.7 and 4.7, respectively, that is, the anti-war sentiment of those who saw the relevant reports was stronger than those who did not. Through further analysis of - to test the normality of the variable "anti-war emotion" using the S-W test, it was found that the significance P value was less than 0.05, showing significance at the level, and the null hypothesis was rejected, so the data did not meet the normal distribution and required an independent sample MannWhitney-test. The median of anti-war sentiment was 4.667/3.667; the P value is less than 0.05, so the statistical results are significant in anti-war sentiment; the difference magnitude Cohen's d value is 0.334, which is small. From this, the study hypothesis that H2 is supported.

From the perspective of the content of empathy communication, when the news reports real events or the words describing the current situation of Ukrainian women are full of emotion, it will cause the emotions of the audience, the joys and sorrows of the characters and the ups and downs of the development of the event will arouse people's resonance. Have seen related reports people must understand Ukraine women helpless is caused by the conflict, the day of war continues, they

save life, return to normal life one day see hope, so the audience's anti-war mood was spawned, people see the war under the homeless Ukrainian women, feel the smoke in even life grasped by their despair, news reports on the actual situation, awaken the resonance of the audience. And not seen related reports, cannot with existing cognition of "Russia conflict should continue", "the contradiction between Ukraine can be solved by peaceful way" this kind of problem gives a clear answer, the audience's anti-war sentiment is not born out of thin air, only ambiguous, have a kind of "without others advise good" similar meaning.

4.3 Further emotional fermentation on the basis of empathy: the enhancement of media reports from nothing to relevance

Respondents who have seen the report of the status of the women in Ukraine have a stronger sense of identity with Ukraine than those who have not seen, and the difference in the identity of audiences who have seen and have not is quite significant.

The mean value of national identity was 2.5 and 3.8, respectively, that is, the sense of identity of the respondents who read the relevant reports was stronger than those who did not. Similarly, in the analysis of variable anti-war sentiment, the normality of the variable "national identity of Ukraine" using S-W test found that the significance P value was less than 0.05 was not seen, the level was significant, and the null hypothesis was rejected, so the data did not meet the normal distribution, and the independent sample MannWhitney-test was still needed. The median of national identity in Q is 3.75/2.5 respectively; the P value of the test result is less than 0.05, so the statistical results are significant. There are significant differences in national identity. The difference range Cohen's d value is 0.799. Considering all the above analysis, the study hypothesis that H 3 is supported.

Of Ukraine national identity is a more complex concept, and "sympathy with Ukraine women miserable life, against war desire to return to peace" the individual simple emotion is very different, national identity of Ukraine by the Ukraine state system, politics, economic, culture, ethnic and other factors of identity composite, compared with compassion and anti-war emotions, identity is more like a kind of emotional sublimation.

Compared with those who have not read the relevant reports, those who have seen them have more information about the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, or precisely speaking, more about the war situation in Ukraine, such as why the war started, what action plan was made in the war, and how the government settled the local people in the war. The media coverage of Ukrainian women, however clearly has the characteristics of sympathy for the weak, revealing the sense of helplessness of Ukrainian women. You know, Emotion and communication are fundamental to empathy, If war, violence, death, etc., are reported simply by pale narratives, It's just spreading negative information, From the concept of empathic communication, Negative content is more likely to cause bad emotions, Thus weakening its empathy, And, as we have mentioned above, In most of the current reports of Ukrainian women, The role of "emotion" has been valued by the media, Value content that reflect understanding, respect and communication, This helps to make the audience more empathic, By reporting on the plight of women in Ukraine, Compassion, worry

about their state, Even desperate to help within they can, Thus feel closer ties with the Ukrainian people at war, Encourage the audience to understand the current political and economic situation of Ukraine, Search for the history and culture of the Ukrainian state and the connection between the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, This rises to the level of identity with the Ukrainian state. After the above analysis can also understand why whether have seen reports on the influence of audience identity is compassion and anti-war emotions more (seen and not seen reported audience identity difference degree is bigger), because national identity is a need to do empathy, and empathy and need emotional foundation, compared to compassion and anti-war emotions easier through narrative, to the national identity of Ukraine is really only after the report of the communist party, the feelings. If it were not for the spread of empathy, how would you want to understand the Ukrainian culture, believe that the Ukrainian economy could slowly recover, and feel closer ties with the Ukrainian people?

4.4 Excessive media reporting and limited audience acceptance: the number of reading reports has no impact on the audience's sympathy, anti-war sentiment and the national identity of Ukraine

The audience is not higher or stronger in terms of compassion, anti-war sentiment, or a sense of national identity with Ukraine. Respondents who even read only one report had more compassion than those who had read three or more reports, with specific studies as described below.

Through descriptive analysis, the study found that the average of respondents who read a piece of Ukrainian women was 4.1, and that of respondents who read three materials was 4.0, so the study assumed that H4 was not supported. The differential test of anti-war sentiment and national identity found that the median of anti-war sentiment of respondents who saw different amounts of materials was 4.667/4.667 respectively; the P-value of the test result was 0.618, so the statistical results were not significant, and the research hypothesis of H5 was not supported. The median identity of respondents with different number of materials was 3.5/3.75; the P value of the test result was 0.800, so the statistical results were not significant, and the study hypothesis of H6 was not supported. Therefore, the more reports we read in Ukraine, it will not have a significant impact on the audience's sympathy, anti-war sentiment and the sense of national identity in Ukraine.

In fact, in the process of mutual agitation, if the media cannot control the empathy communication within the moderate range, from the perspective of the audience, the acceptance ability of the audience is limited.

In the modern media era, a large number of and repeated news reports will affect the public reading experience and the value of the media, read a Ukrainian women reported respondents are aware of the status quo of their life in hot water, understand the chaos in the Ukraine war, more reports can not provide new information, just for the same situation of different women story, the content of the media reports is similar. Frequent reporting of the same topic intends to cause people's empathy, but will cause the emotional fatigue of the audience. After reading a report, the interviewees 'sympathy, anti-war sentiment and sense of identity have reached a high value.

Therefore, we can also know that the more the better. While the media should rush to report, the consideration of the audience's ability to accept, and should never consume disasters or others' pain for the sake of interests.

5 Research summary and reflection

In this study, through a questionnaire survey method, From the perspective of empathy communication theory, In response to the sympathetic media reports on the tragic experience of Ukrainian women in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine that have aroused the sympathy and anti-war sentiment of the Chinese people, Performed a theoretical study, Trying to answer the question of whether the audience has seen the coverage of Ukrainian women and how much impact on their compassion, anti-war sentiment, and national identity in Ukraine, Research has found that " audiences who have seen and have not seen the coverage of Ukrainian women, There are significant differences in compassion, anti-war sentiment and sense of identity with Ukrainian women; The audiences who have read the report have more compassion, anti-war feelings and identity with Ukrainian women. And seen Ukraine women reported, the more Ukraine women sympathy, anti-war emotions, the higher the identity of the three assumptions is not established, this is mainly due to the content of multiple Ukraine women tragic reports almost similar, did not make the audience because seen more reports and get new information, or learned that Ukraine women suffer more painful other difficulties, excessive sensational news reports does not cause the audience more intense empathy, limited ability to cause emotional fatigue, and weaken the ability of empathy instead.

From the perspective of empathy theory, the influence of war reports on the audience, and the influence of the reports of Ukrainian women on the compassion, anti-war sentiment and identity in the media of the war, how to capture the perspective of empathy.

At the same time, it is worth noting that this study also found that whether the media to attract traffic and gain the purpose to report the tragic women of Ukraine, mass production related reports will not to the audience's sympathy, anti-war emotions and identity has a significant impact, and even cause the audience emotional fatigue, weaken the strong compassion, this is the media reports the present situation of Ukrainian women. This point is worthy of vigilance and thinking, especially in the disaster report, avoid excessive sensational, avoid consumption disaster, consumption of the pain of others to win the sympathy of the audience and then seek benefits! Quality is greater than quantity, and better content is the goal that the media should pursue more, rather than blindly relying on repeated and exhausted topics to perfunctory the audience and attempt to harvest traffic.

In the process of distributing and collecting questionnaires in this study, due to the limitation of manpower, college students accounted for a large proportion among the respondents, failing to collect the attitudes of middle-aged and elderly groups after reading relevant reports. In future research, researchers in the field of war reporting may need to pay more attention to whether the audience has seen the life of refugees in the war and how much influence they have seen on their compassion, anti-war sentiment and identity of the refugee country, and expand the research and

practice of the spread of empathy communication theory.

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