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Feedback Reception and Narrative Reproduction of New Media Products in New Mainstream Media: A Perspective on Media Convergence Productio

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Abstract:
Against the backdrop of deepening media convergence, new mainstream media platforms are accelerating their transformation toward intelligence, with algorithmic feedback technologies deeply embedded in content production. However, new media products across different platforms exhibit significant differences in narrative innovation and communication effects. This study adopts semi-structured in-depth interviews with 11 new media practitioners from Chinese mainstream media at various levels, constructing an analytical framework of "feedback integration into production" by integrating media production theory and cybernetic-feedback theory. The findings reveal that algorithmic feedback data enters production through multiple channels and is selectively perceived by creative teams; during interpretation, political orientation requirements, social responsibility considerations, and professional creative concepts intersect with algorithmic logic, forming a hybrid evaluation system; based on complex feedback processing, creative teams make specific framework adjustments in subsequent narrative reproduction. This study reveals the practical logic and power dynamics of "data-human-organization" interaction in new mainstream media content production.

Keywords:
Algorithmic Feedback, Media Convergence, Narrative Reproduction, New mainstream media, Human-machine collaboration

1 Introduction

Currently media convergence continues to deepen as a national strategy. New mainstream media platforms represented by CCTV News are accelerating their transformation toward mobility and intelligence, becoming key positions for constructing a new pattern of mainstream public opinion. Against this backdrop, the logic of content production and dissemination has undergone profound changes. Technological means such as algorithmic recommendation, intelligent generation, and data feedback have been deeply embedded in the production process. New media products such as short videos and AI short dramas, with their advantages of efficient production and precise dissemination, have rapidly emerged as important components of the online

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audio-visual content ecosystem.

However, studies have found that new media products produced by different mainstream media platforms show significant differences in narrative innovation, value guidance, and communication effects. Some works skillfully integrate mainstream values with audience preferences, achieving both critical acclaim and commercial success; while others fall into the dilemma of content homogenization or chaotic narrative logic. Behind these differences lies not simply a matter of technical capability, but the result of complex negotiation among multiple forces such as algorithmic feedback, political requirements, social responsibility, and creative intentions in the content reproduction process. This study thus examines how algorithmic feedback is received, interpreted, and transformed into narrative adjustments within new mainstream media organizations.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Algorithmic Feedback in Mainstream Media Content Production

The phenomenon of "algorithmic feedback-narrative reproduction," as an emerging production practice against the backdrop of deep media convergence and intelligent technology diffusion, has gradually attracted academic attention and has been studied from multiple perspectives.

From the perspective of technological logic and production transformation, Nicholls (2019) conducted a comprehensive analysis of how algorithms reshape news production processes, pointing out that algorithms not only serve as distribution tools but also act as agents of "editorial judgment," deeply involved in news selection, ranking, and presentation, forming a new "algorithmic journalism." Chinese scholars Yu and Fang (2020) examined the algorithmic turn of China's media content ecosystem, showing that algorithms are reconstructing the value standards and evaluation systems of content production through "traffic logic" and "efficiency orientation."

From the perspective of media convergence and organizational transformation, Westlund (2014) analyzed how traditional media organizations integrate new media technologies from the perspective of "convergence journalism," emphasizing the tension between organizational culture and technology adoption. Chang (2021) discussed production mechanism innovations such as the "central kitchen" model and converged media center construction in China's mainstream media transformation, pointing out that this transformation involves not only technological upgrading but also a profound restructuring of production relations and power structures.

From the perspective of audience data and feedback application, Anderson (2011) proposed the concept of "measured audiences" based on the extension of "audience commodity theory," analyzing how media use real-time data to monitor and optimize content. Peng (2018) systematically examined how user data becomes a key element driving content production, pointing out that the feedback loop based on behavioral data such as clicks, likes, comments, and completion rates is accelerating the evolution of content production from "transmitter-centered" to "user-oriented."

Although the above studies have provided insightful analyses from macro or meso levels such as technology, organization, and audience, they have failed to further analyze a micro and core link: within the specific production field of mainstream media, how exactly is algorithmic data feedback received, interpreted, in-

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ternalized, and negotiated by creative teams? After receiving feedback, how do existing "non-algorithmic" forces such as political requirements and social responsibility intersect with algorithmic logic and ultimately reshape the narrative framework? This micro mechanism of "feedback-processing-reshaping" deserves further analysis and research.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Media Production Theory

Media production theory was systematically proposed and developed in the 1970s and 1980s by scholars such as Tuchman, Gans, and Gitlin. The core view is that news is not a simple reflection of reality but a socially constructed product of multiple factors such as internal routines of news organizations, professional ideology, and external pressures (Tuchman, 1978; Gitlin, 1980). It emphasizes revealing the organizational and institutional drivers of content formation from the perspective of "production" rather than "text" or "effects."

This theory has continuously expanded with changes in the media environment. Berkowitz (1997) supplemented this theory by studying the "cultural path" of news production, emphasizing the shaping role of shared culture and professional cognition. Wang (2011) further developed the theory through localized interpretations of news production in the context of market-oriented transformation in China, revealing the complex negotiation between political logic and market logic within media organizations. In recent years, Zhang (2019) proposed the concept of "platformized production," analyzing how platform rules and algorithmic mechanisms have become a new and powerful external productive force.

2.2.2 Cybernetic-Feedback Theory

Cybernetic-feedback theory was foundationally proposed by Norbert Wiener in 1948 in his work Cybernetics. He argued that any system can self-regulate and control through information feedback to maintain stability or achieve goals. "Feedback" is the process by which system output information re-enters as input to regulate subsequent behavior.

This theory has achieved fruitful research results in communication studies and management. DeFleur (1970) introduced it into the "dependency model" of mass communication, pointing out that audiences influence media content through feedback. In organizational communication, this theory has been widely applied to analyze organizational learning and adaptation processes (Argyris & Schön, 1978). After the rise of computational communication, scholars such as Napoli (2014) began using the concept of "algorithmic feedback" to study how digital media platforms automatically adjust content distribution strategies through real-time feedback of user behavior data.

However, existing studies have not examined the phenomenon of algorithmic narrative reproduction in new mainstream media from a comprehensive perspective combining media production theory and cybernetic-feedback theory. Media production research mostly focuses on traditional organizational factors, lacking in-depth exploration of how the algorithm as a new feedback source is integrated into the production process. Cybernetics research, on the other hand, mostly focuses on technical models and macro effects of feedback,

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rarely delving into the micro mechanism of "meaning production" within specific media institutions. Therefore, it has not answered the core question of how algorithmic feedback triggers and participates in the reproductive negotiation of narrative frameworks in mainstream media.

2.3 Literature Summary

In summary, this paper integrates media production theory and cybernetic-feedback theory to construct an analytical framework of "feedback integration into production," attempting to answer the following questions:

RQ1: In the production of new media products in new mainstream media, in what forms and through what channels is algorithmic feedback data received and perceived by content creative teams?

RQ2: How do creative teams interpret, discuss, and evaluate these feedback data internally? In this process, how do "non-algorithmic" factors such as political orientation requirements, social responsibility considerations, and professional creative concepts intervene and influence the judgment of feedback?

RQ3: Based on the above complex "feedback processing" results, what specific framework adjustments or strategic choices have creative teams made in subsequent narrative reproduction? What is the decision-making logic behind them?

3 Methodology

This study focuses on the micro mechanism of how algorithmic feedback is received, interpreted, and applied to content reproduction within new mainstream media. The core concern is to reveal the practical logic and power dynamics of "data-human-organization" interaction. Since the research object involves internal production processes, decision-making processes, and value judgments of media organizations, which are highly implicit, situational, and complex, this study adopts the semi-structured in-depth interview method as the core research method. This method can deeply explore practitioners' real work experience, subjective cognition, and decision-making details, providing sufficient qualitative empirical materials for understanding the social construction process of algorithmic feedback in the production field of mainstream media.

3.1 Participant Recruitment

This study follows the principle of combining purposive sampling and heterogeneity sampling, conducting research on new media practitioners from various levels of mainstream media in China. To cover a complete industry perspective and reduce sample bias, three major dimensions are distinguished during sampling: media level, job function, and years of experience. Media levels include four categories: national, provincial, municipal, and district/county level media; positions cover the entire production chain including planning, editing, visual production, review, operation, and management; years of experience span 1-15 years, covering both newcomers and senior practitioners. All interviewees have long been involved in frontline work of algorithmic data reception, content evaluation, and topic iteration, possessing sufficient information representativeness.

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To strictly protect interviewees' privacy, all samples are uniformly anonymized, with organization names, regions, and personal information removed, distinguished only by numbers. A total of 11 valid interview samples were finally obtained. Basic sample information is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Basic Information of Interviewees

Interviewee	Media Level	Position	Years of Experience	Interview Duration
R1	National	Editor	8	28 min
R2	National	Visual Producer	5	25 min
R3	Provincial	Planning Director	12	30 min
R4	Provincial	Content Reviewer	7	22 min
R5	Municipal	New Media Operator	3	26 min
R6	Municipal	Editor	6	24 min
R7	District/County	Content Producer	2	20 min
R8	Provincial	Operation Manager	10	30 min
R9	National	AI Product Specialist	4	27 min
R10	Municipal	Short Video Director	9	29 min
R11	District/County	General Editor	15	30 min

3.2 Interview Data Collection

3.2.1 Interview Outline Design and Pilot Study

Based on the core theoretical framework of "feedback input - interpretation negotiation - narrative reshaping," this study constructed an interview outline divided into five modules: basic information of interviewees, reception channels and forms of algorithmic feedback data, data interpretation and multi-value negotiation, content reproduction adjustment based on data, and industry pain points and open supplementary views. Each module sets core main questions and expansive follow-up questions, balancing the rigor of research logic with the autonomy of interviewees' expression.

Before formal interviews, a pilot study was conducted, selecting 3 new media practitioners from mainstream media for trial interviews. The study found that some academic expressions easily caused understanding barriers, so the outline was adjusted for accessibility, transforming theoretical concepts such as "narrative framework reshaping" and "non-algorithmic constraints" into frontline work scenario expressions such as title modification, topic selection, and public opinion risk control, optimizing question logic and order to improve information collection efficiency.

3.2.2 Interview Implementation Process

Formal interviews were conducted in July 2026, using online video interviews, with interviewees choosing their preferred method. Each interview lasted 20-30 minutes, with all content recorded in writing, accumulating approximately 120,000 words of original interview text.

Before starting interviews, research ethics guidelines were uniformly communicated: First, all interview content is only used for this academic paper writing, not for commercial or external communication purposes; second, all personal, organizational, and regional information in the full text is desensitized and will not leak privacy; third, interviewees have the right to refuse to answer and terminate the interview midway. After confirming informed consent, formal questioning began. During interviews, neutrality and objectivity were maintained, without subjective guidance or judgment of interviewees' views, conducting in-depth follow-up on cases and contradictory scenarios to fully explore specific practical cases.

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3.2.3 Correspondence of Core Dimensions in Interview Outline

The outline strictly corresponds to the three core research questions of the paper. Core questions of each module are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Interview Modules, Research Questions, and Typical Question Examples

Module	Corresponding RQ	Typical Question Examples
Reception channels and forms of algorithmic feedback	RQ1	What data indicators do you usually pay attention to? How do you receive these data?
Data interpretation and multi-value negotiation	RQ2	How do you evaluate a piece of content based on data? What factors besides data affect your judgment?
Content reproduction adjustment based on data	RQ3	Can you give an example of adjusting content based on feedback? What was the decision-making process?

3.3 Interview Data Analysis

This study uses thematic analysis to process all interview texts, strictly following qualitative research norms throughout the process.

First, data transcription and thorough reading. All interview recordings were fully transcribed into pure text, and all materials were read repeatedly, marking high-frequency keywords, typical practical cases, and contradictory viewpoints to establish overall data cognition. Second, theoretical saturation testing. After coding all 11 samples, no new research concepts or practical patterns emerged. The samples cover all levels from national to district/county and all position types, so it is determined that the data has reached theoretical saturation and no supplementary interviews are needed.

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Feedback Reception: Multiple Channels and Selective Perception

Corresponding to RQ1, this section examines how algorithmic feedback data enters the production field of new mainstream media and how it is received and perceived by creative teams. The interview data reveals that feedback reception is not a passive technical process but an active selective perception process shaped by organizational arrangements and professional habits.

First, algorithmic feedback enters the production field through multiple channels. The most fundamental channel is the background data platform, which provides comprehensive indicators such as playback volume, completion rate, like rate, comment volume, and share rate. As R3 stated, "We have a dedicated data background that updates in real time, and we can see the performance of each piece of content at any time." The second channel is regular data meetings. National and provincial-level media typically hold daily or weekly data review meetings, where operational teams report data performance and discuss content strategies. R8 mentioned, "Every Monday morning we have a data meeting where we go through the data of all key prod-

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ucts from the previous week and discuss what worked and what didn't." The third channel is real-time monitoring systems for hot topics. For major events or breaking news, dedicated personnel monitor data changes in real time and provide immediate feedback to the production team.

Second, the reception of feedback data exhibits clear selective perception characteristics. Not all data indicators receive equal attention. Interviewees generally pay more attention to indicators that directly reflect content quality and communication effects, such as completion rate and share rate, while treating playback volume with caution. R1 explained, "Playback volume can be inflated by titles or covers, but completion rate and share rate truly reflect whether the content resonates with the audience." Furthermore, the degree of attention to data varies across media levels. National-level media, with more abundant human and technological resources, establish more systematic data monitoring mechanisms, while district/county-level media, constrained by resources, rely more on intuitive perception and platform notifications. This finding confirms the view of media production theory that organizational resources and routines significantly shape the production process (Tuchman, 1978).

Third, the timing of feedback reception is closely related to production rhythms. For short video products with high update frequency, feedback data is mainly received within 2-4 hours after release, serving as a basis for rapid adjustment of subsequent content. For planned thematic products, feedback is collected over a longer period, providing reference for similar projects in the next phase. This temporal pattern reflects the adaptation of feedback mechanisms to different production logics within the same organization.

4.2 Feedback Interpretation: Negotiation Between Algorithmic Logic and Value Orientations

Corresponding to RQ2, this section analyzes how creative teams interpret and evaluate feedback data internally, and how "non-algorithmic" factors intervene in this process. The study finds that algorithmic logic does not dominate absolutely; instead, it engages in complex negotiation with multiple value orientations, ultimately forming a hybrid evaluation system.

First, political orientation requirements constitute the primary constraint on feedback interpretation. As the mouthpiece of the Party and the people, mainstream media must always prioritize political direction. When feedback data shows that certain content achieves high traffic but carries political risks or may cause misinterpretation, creative teams will decisively adjust or even remove the content, regardless of its data performance. R4 emphasized, "Traffic is important, but political direction is the bottom line. If a piece of content gets high views but might mislead the public, we will definitely take it down." This finding echoes Wang's (2011) argument about the complex negotiation between political logic and market logic within Chinese media organizations.

Second, social responsibility considerations significantly influence feedback evaluation. Interviewees generally agree that mainstream media should not merely chase traffic but should undertake the responsibility of guiding public opinion and disseminating positive energy. When data shows that serious themes or positive energy content has lower communication effects, creative teams do not simply abandon such content but instead explore more effective expression methods. R10 stated, "Positive energy content may not get the highest traffic, but we must persist in doing it; the key is to find ways to make it more watchable." This reflects the

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dual identity of new mainstream media as both market entities and propaganda positions.

Third, professional creative concepts collide and integrate with algorithmic logic. Many senior practitioners hold professional judgments about content quality that sometimes conflict with data indicators. When data shows poor performance for content that professionals consider well-produced, creative teams do not immediately deny their professional judgment but instead analyze the reasons from multiple perspectives. R3 reflected, "Sometimes we think a piece is very well done, but the data is just average. We won't blindly follow the data; we'll analyze whether it's a problem with the title, the release timing, or the topic itself." This negotiation process between professional logic and algorithmic logic constitutes an important micro-mechanism of content production in the algorithmic era.

Ultimately, the interaction of these multiple forces forms a hybrid evaluation system that balances data indicators and value guidance. This system is neither purely data-driven nor entirely based on subjective judgment, but a dynamic equilibrium achieved through continuous negotiation. This finding complements existing media production theory by revealing how algorithmic data, as a new production factor, interacts with traditional organizational and professional factors.

4.3 Narrative Reproduction: Framework Adjustment and Strategic Choices

Corresponding to RQ3, this section explores what specific adjustments creative teams make in narrative reproduction based on complex feedback processing results, and the decision-making logic behind these adjustments.

First, title optimization is the most common and direct adjustment strategy. Based on feedback on click-through rates and completion rates, creative teams continuously optimize title expression, exploring the balance point between attractiveness and accuracy. R5 shared, "We test different title styles; if a more vivid title significantly improves click-through rate without compromising accuracy, we'll use that style more often." However, this optimization has clear boundaries: sensational or misleading titles are strictly prohibited, reflecting the constraint of professional ethics on algorithmic logic.

Second, topic selection adjustment is an important strategic choice at the meso level. By analyzing the data performance of different types of topics, creative teams dynamically adjust the proportion and priority of topic selection. Topics that achieve both good communication effects and value guidance are increased in proportion; topics with poor data but high political significance are retained while their expression forms are improved. R6 described this strategy as "expanding the advantageous topics, improving the difficult ones." This adjustment logic reflects the dual pursuit of communication effectiveness and value leadership by new mainstream media.

Third, narrative perspective transformation is a deeper-level adjustment. Feedback data reveals which narrative perspectives resonate more with audiences, prompting creative teams to adjust their storytelling approaches. For example, many interviewees mentioned that data shows audience preference for micro-narratives and individual stories over macro-narratives and abstract concepts. As a result, creative teams increasingly adopt the approach of "reflecting major themes through small stories," using individual experiences to convey mainstream values. R2 stated, "Data tells us that people like stories, so we try to find the human angle

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in every topic." This represents a significant shift in narrative strategy driven by algorithmic feedback.

Fourth, form innovation is an exploration at the product level. Feedback on completion rate and share rate guides creative teams to experiment with new content forms, such as AI short dramas, animated explanations, and interactive videos. R9 mentioned, "We tried an AI short drama format for a policy interpretation topic, and the completion rate was much higher than traditional explainer videos; now we're planning more of this format." These formal innovations expand the expression methods of mainstream values and enhance the communication power of mainstream media.

Behind these adjustments lies the decision-making logic of balancing traffic performance and mainstream value guidance. Creative teams neither blindly pursue data nor ignore audience feedback, but seek the optimal intersection point between the two. This decision-making logic reflects the dual attributes of new mainstream media as both market entities and propaganda positions, and it is also the practical embodiment of the "data-human-organization" interaction mechanism revealed in this study.

5 Conclusion

This study explores the micro mechanism of algorithmic feedback reception, interpretation, and narrative reproduction in new mainstream media from the perspective of media convergence production. Based on 11 in-depth interviews with new media practitioners from various levels of mainstream media in China, and integrating media production theory and cybernetic-feedback theory, this study constructs an analytical framework of "feedback integration into production" and draws the following conclusions.

First, algorithmic feedback data enters the production field of mainstream media through multiple channels and forms, including background data platforms, regular data meetings, and real-time monitoring systems. The reception of feedback is not a passive technical process but an active selective perception process influenced by organizational arrangements and professional habits.

Second, in the interpretation and evaluation of feedback data, "non-algorithmic" factors such as political orientation requirements, social responsibility considerations, and professional creative concepts play important intervention roles. Algorithmic logic does not dominate absolutely; instead, it engages in complex negotiation with multiple value orientations, ultimately forming a hybrid evaluation system that balances data indicators and value guidance.

Third, based on complex feedback processing results, creative teams make specific adjustments in narrative reproduction, including title optimization, topic selection adjustment, narrative perspective transformation, and form innovation. Behind these adjustments is the decision-making logic of balancing traffic performance and mainstream value guidance, reflecting the dual attributes of new mainstream media as both market entities and propaganda positions.

This study reveals the practical logic and power dynamics of "data-human-organization" interaction in the content production of new mainstream media, enriching media production theory in the algorithmic era and providing theoretical references and practical inspirations for understanding the transformation and development of mainstream media in the context of media convergence. Future research can further expand sample

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size and adopt multiple research methods to conduct more in-depth investigations of the long-term effects and evolutionary trends of this mechanism.

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