

The Self-perception Debate: Do social media and platforms need better regulation?

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Abstract: With the increasing development of social media in today's society, the development of new media is also accompanied by the impact on self-identity and the spread of false information on the network, which makes user cognition more easily misled and leads to over-dependence. Based on the "cognitive dissonance theory", "existence theory" and from the perspective of users and the background of the current use of social media, this paper analyzes the impact of social media on self-identity, the spread of rumors and false information, and excessive dependence, and finally discusses its regulation measures.

1. Introduction

With the development of the Internet age, the popularity of social media is getting higher and higher. This has also affected some users. Many people have an opinion on this: Do social media and platforms need better regulation?

At a time when social media is becoming a part of people's lives, I think social media does need better regulation.

At the beginning of this article, I will first discuss "ontology", which discusses the impact of social identity on social media and platforms on users, and how it subtly affects users' self-perception. Next, I'll touch on the spread of rumors, including the promotion of false information, which greatly reduces the authenticity and reliability of social media. Finally, I'll touch on users' over-reliance on social media. Throughout the article, I'll explain why social media and platforms need better regulation, discuss the implications of both concepts, and what needs better regulation.

2. Social media has an impact on self-identity

This part is based on the concept of "cognitive dissonance," which Festinger proposes, "refers to the uncomfortable, unpleasant emotions that arise when a person's cognitive components, such as attitudes and behaviors, contradict each other, and extrapolate from one perception to another." According to the theory of cognitive dissonance, generally speaking, individuals' attitudes and behaviors are harmonious, so there is no need to change their attitudes and behaviors. Cognitive dissonance occurs if there is an inconsistency between the two, such as doing something contrary to the attitude,

or not doing what one wants to do. Cognitive dissonance creates a psychological tension that the individual tries to relieve in order to regain balance."

"The popular theory of ontology, as discussed by Baert, posits that individuals construct their lives around a finite set of existential milestones, which are vital to their sense of fulfillment and often influenced by cultural and structural factors^[1]. These milestones can leave individuals feeling incomplete if not met, and their accomplishment forms a "ladder of existence," with one's progress dependent on the achievement of others. Examples of these milestones include obtaining a formal education, lasting partnerships, and starting a family. This concept highlights the interconnectedness of these milestones and their significance in shaping individual lives."

According to Ontology: an outline of a theory of social behavior, there are certain stereotypes of milestones that are prescribed in social media. People who do not or do not meet the "expectations" of social media, who do not meet one of the definitions of the perfect person in social media, develop self-anxiety. While ontological milestones are often mutually beneficial for the actors involved in achievement, they can have unintended consequences in inherent power dynamics or other pursuits of middle class business.

Studies have found that women are more likely to experience cognitive dissonance on social media, and that it is related to the pursuit of social identification and comparison, social media impressions, and self-presentation.

The study by He examined online rumor transmission among younger and older adults, highlighting the prevalent circulation of misinformation and deformed beauty standards on social media^[2]. For instance, the "white and thin" aesthetic has led many girls to strictly manage themselves in pursuit of beauty, often resulting in health and mental damage. As beauty remains

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indefinable, it is crucial to address the negative impacts of these circulating aesthetic notions.

The privacy paradox, as examined by Barth and De Jong, highlights the discrepancy between expressed privacy concerns and actual online behavior^[3]. Despite the growing awareness of privacy risks on social media, users continue to share personal information and engage in beauty consumption, resulting in an erosion of privacy. For instance, the phenomenon of "beauty consumption" is prevalent on social media, with high school students and college graduates being the main consumer groups. As social media penetration is highest among young users, the influence of bloggers promoting beauty products and surgical procedures exacerbates the situation. The result is an unintended consequence of social media platforms opening up their services for profit, which affects the public's definition of beauty and privacy.

In addition to beauty, there are also some landmark definitions in social media. The impressions of "marriage, divorce," "work, and educational experience" mentioned in the literature are all exacerbated by the impressions spread by social media. For example, some keywords such as "single mother", "social animal", "moonlight family", "daily living alone", etc., all increased the user's impression of these milestones.

As a result, social media is one of the most reflective situations of cognitive dissonance. Publishers will perform impression management on themselves so that more people can only see the bright side of themselves, so that the output content will be more attractive and convincing to the audience. But behind it, it is the operation of the account and the construction of people.

3. The spread of rumors and false information

3.1. The spread of rumors

The spread of rumors is a frequent phenomenon on social media, and the phenomenon of network violence caused by the spread of rumors also occurs from time to time. The impact of this situation is not only a problem of reputation, but also a threat to personal property and life safety. Social media is wildly popular because of the emotional value it can bring to web users. In real life, if users' emotional needs are not met and they feel depressed and have nowhere to vent, social media platforms will become the outlet for them to vent, and many people do not have the ability to discern the nature of things, which leads to the emergence of online violence.

The empirical investigation by Lisha on WeChat integration demonstrates the significance of guanxi, or social relationships, in technology acceptance^[4]. In the context of false information spread on social media platforms like Twitter, the researchers found that rumors are more contagious than truth, highlighting the persuasive power of interpersonal relationships in shaping online behavior. This finding underscores the importance of understanding the role of social

connections in the spread of accurate and inaccurate information, as well as the implications for technology adoption and user engagement.

In the survey data, the authors investigated the extent and frequency of smartphone use and other possible mechanisms, and found that users' false use of social media was associated with mental health, as well as with "depression" and "anxiety."

The study by Gildin highlights the immense power of word-of-mouth in shaping online behavior, particularly in the context of social media platforms with hundreds of millions of users^[5]. This 'bystander effect' enables users to self-discipline rather than being supervised online. Therefore, improving Internet users' media literacy and incorporating punishment for online violence into legislation are crucial steps towards strengthening the regulatory framework. Moreover, strengthening legislation and supervision are essential to address the challenges posed by the spread of misinformation and online violence.

The influence of word-of-mouth cannot be ignored in shaping online behavior. Gildin's research found that users on social media platforms are influenced by the behavior and comments of other users, thereby adjusting their own behavior. This influence is sometimes even more effective than formal supervision, as users are more likely to be influenced by peers or peers. Therefore, word-of-mouth is an important factor in promoting the standardization of online behavior. The 'bystander effect' is an effective self-restraint mechanism. On social media platforms, many users observe the behavior of other users and self regulate themselves. This self-restraint mechanism can reduce the spread of online violence and false information, as it encourages users to realize that their behavior may affect others. By improving users' media literacy, we can enhance the effectiveness of this self-restraint mechanism.

However, relying solely on self-restraint is not enough. Legislation to punish online violence is another key step in strengthening the regulatory framework. Legislation can provide clear legal sanctions that make perpetrators of online violence pay the price. This will make potential perpetrators of online violence think twice before acting, thereby reducing the occurrence of online violence. Addressing the challenges posed by the spread of false information and online violence requires strong legislation and supervision. False information may mislead the public and lead to social instability. Online violence may cause serious harm to individuals and society. Only by strengthening legislation and supervision can we effectively address these challenges.

3.2. False information

The rise of social media has seen a new phenomenon emerge, where KOLs (key opinion leaders) respond to brand advertising, incentivizing users to spend by promoting products. However, this form of content sharing is essentially an advertising push, with KOLs working in collaboration with the brand, rather than the social media platform. The potential issue lies in the

discrepancy between the advertised product and its actual quality, which can lead to disappointment among consumers. As Biswas emphasize, a new ontology-based multimodal classification system for social media images could help address this issue by enabling users to more effectively identify credible information and navigate the vast array of content available^[6]. By doing so, it may be possible to minimize the gap between expectation and reality, and ultimately enhance the reliability and authenticity of the information shared on social media.

As Capferre puts it, "The advent of mass media, far from eliminating rumors, has professionalized them." Since then, each has had its own circulation." The core of social media is that everyone can create content, but as a result, the authenticity and reliability of social media has been diluted. Publishers can lower the quality of their work for the sake of clicks, in which case it represents disinformation. For example, consumers like to judge a business by word of mouth. A lot of advertising today is directed by companies, which distribute ads to other users in a profitable way, so as to make a profit, and finally publish ads as a sharer, from ads to shared posts. This situation is very common on the platform of "Little Red Book", which is itself a sharing platform built by overseas students in order to reduce undesirable shopping information. Gradually, due to the high stickiness characteristics of Chinese young people, a large number of advertisements are now mixed with real sharing posts, making "Little Red Book" lose its original characteristics. The promotion of false information makes it impossible for many users to distinguish the reliability and authenticity of the brand. There are others, such as false health information promotion, false epidemic information, false public information and so on. It not only makes it impossible for users to enjoy the service function of sharing platforms to obtain reliable information efficiently, but also seriously disturbs social order.

4. Over-dependence

Addiction is a pathological dependence on someone or something, often for pleasure or to reduce discomfort. This desire is often uncontrollable and has negative physical and psychological effects on the individual. Addiction is a chronic disease that involves the reward and control circuits of the brain, leading to changes in behavior, thinking, and emotions.

The study by Fiuza and Rodgers examines the impact of brief diet and anti-diet social media videos on body image and eating concerns among young women, highlighting the negative influence of social media on vulnerable individuals^[7]. As users indulge in the temptation of social media, they may develop an over-reliance on these platforms, leading to potential online fraud and a loss of independent judgment. This dependence is particularly prevalent among young people, who are also influenced by the fragmentation of information on social media. Addressing this issue requires raising awareness about the dangers of excessive social media usage and promoting media literacy to

facilitate critical thinking and independent decision-making.

As of now, Facebook is the second most visited site on the Internet. In addition, a recent qualitative study shows that Facebook has an impact on users' social interaction, changing the way users communicate and communicate.

The excessive generation of social media content and our constant desire for attention can lead to a fear of missing out, as outlined by Al Busaidi.^[8] This fear is exacerbated by individual differences and can result in individuals spending excessive time on social media, seeking pleasure and constantly wanting to learn new content. This over-dependence on social media can lead to addiction, causing individuals to neglect their real-life tasks and responsibilities. Moreover, relying on social media for communication can reduce our ability to interact in person, leading to social isolation. As such, it is crucial to recognize the impact of our social media habits on our mental health and daily lives, and develop strategies to manage our usage accordingly.

5. Regulation Measures

The media can be very powerful. Better regulation should not only improve the government and platform mechanisms, but also improve users' media literacy and awareness of social media.

1.Improve the supervision mechanism of social media. In order to increase the popularity, many we-media will choose to buy fans. Therefore, we must strengthen the control of "we media". In order to achieve certain restrictions, many social media or platforms have launched the "youth model", in which the supervision department will screen the content accepted by young users and regulate and supervise the use time. This not only reasonably controls the erosion of diverse and fragmented information on young people, but also effectively reduces their excessive dependence on social media. And strengthen the supervision of guardians over their children.To achieve this, many social media platforms or websites have launched the "youth model". This model involves a supervision department that screens the content accessed by young users and regulates and supervises their usage time. This approach not only limits the diverse and fragmented information that may be harmful to young people, but also effectively reduces their excessive dependence on social media.Furthermore, we should also strengthen the supervision of guardians over their children. Parents should be aware of their children's online activities and keep a close eye on their usage habits. By doing so, they can ensure that their children are not exposed to inappropriate content or excessive use of social media. This joint effort from social media platforms, parents, and the government can help create a safer and more responsible online environment for young people.

2.Clarify platform responsibilities and advocate evaluation of bloggers' comments on products and users. For example, the platform will set up an official group and make a list of authoritative evaluation bloggers. The

platforms must also strengthen censorship of works, and the content they publish must not contain pieced together fragments, distort facts out of context, or use social hot events for malicious marketing.

3. Increase penalties for online violence and spreading rumors.

4. Guide people to establish correct values. Now, everyone has the right to run their own social media account and publicly post the same content. Nowadays, social media and platforms have added the function of "real-name authentication", which is not only a regulation, but also a warning to remind online citizens to use their heads before their mouths. At the source, we must build the ability to distinguish right from wrong. The official account of the platform can publish more content about how to face different opinions on the Internet, improve the diversion and push of positive bloggers, and also make users feel that the platform is more reliable, so as to learn its attitude towards social media.

6. Difficult Points

Social media regulation is often accompanied by some difficulties, such as the difficult balance between "regulation" and "freedom of speech" in regulation. Among them, political limitations cannot be ignored in the regulatory process. For example, many people are fighting against black people in the name of free speech. However, different countries have different definitions of freedom of speech, and there are different cultural and legal differences in different countries. This greatly increases the boundary ambiguity, and it is difficult to tell what content crosses the boundary of free speech and even becomes totalitarian. The totalitarian speech is often very obscure, the platform cannot conduct timely and targeted supervision, and it is difficult to fully understand the content of the speech and set standards. In order to meet this challenge, continuous improvement is needed.

The effectiveness of influencer marketing on social media platforms, such as TikTok, has been examined by Lou^[9]. They found that the affordances of these platforms enable influencers to build strong relationships with their followers, which in turn drives advertising effectiveness. However, this also raises concerns about privacy issues, as exposure of IP addresses and other personal information can lead to unintended consequences, such as misuse by malicious individuals. Thus, it is important for users to exercise caution and ensure their privacy settings are properly configured when using social media platforms for influencer marketing.

7. Conclusion

1. Social media and platforms have enormous influence in information dissemination, as they can guide the thinking and behavior of netizens, thus becoming channels for the dissemination of erroneous information. These erroneous information may mislead the public, bring negative impacts, and even cause serious consequences. Therefore, strengthening the regulation of social media and

platforms is crucial. In order to prevent the dissemination of erroneous information and the occurrence of misleading phenomena to the public, the government and all sectors of society should take effective measures to strengthen the supervision of social media and platforms. Firstly, the government should establish stricter laws and regulations, clarify the responsibilities and obligations of social media and platforms in information dissemination, and crack down on violations to maintain public interests and social stability. Secondly, social media and platforms themselves should also strengthen self-discipline, establish a sound information review mechanism, strictly control the information released, and ensure the authenticity and accuracy of the information. At the same time, social media and platforms should also strengthen education and guidance for users, improve their information literacy and discrimination ability, and avoid being misled by incorrect information.

2. This article begins with an introduction to the impact of social media on self-identity and cognitive dissonance. Failure to properly guide Internet users. Then it introduced the spread of rumors and the propaganda of false information, reducing the authenticity and reliability of the media and even affecting the social order. The second is the over-reliance on social media, which not only causes online fraud and other phenomena, but also makes young users over-rely on fragmented information and lose their ability to make independent judgments.

3. However, this study has certain limitations and cannot accurately define the boundaries of speech on social media. Previous attempts to regulate social media have had little substantive impact, including some regulations that even infringe on users' privacy rights. These regulations not only fail to achieve the expected regulatory effect, but may also cause a certain degree of damage to the rights and interests of users. Therefore, the regulation of social media needs to be carried out in a more scientific, reasonable, and effective manner.

4. Platform capitalism, a controversial economic model that has taken root in the digital age, can indeed make social media regulation and censorship mechanisms subjective and opaque. By using algorithms to push only content that conforms to users' views, the platforms employed in this model can effectively ignore and silence any opposing or diverse opinions. This practice not only restricts users' freedom of expression but also gives rise to controversy and debate over the very notion of freedom of expression in the digital age. One argument is that these platforms are private entities and, as such, have every right to regulate and censor content as they see fit. However, others counter that by doing so, they are effectively silencing opposing views and limiting the flow of information and ideas that is essential to a well-functioning democracy. Furthermore, by algorithmically pushing content that is already in line with users' views, these platforms can create a bubble effect, where users are only exposed to information and opinions that align with their own, thus reinforcing their biases and potentially leading to a rise in polarizing views.

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