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Exploring Emotional Resonance in AIGC News Anchors: A Pseudo-Social Relationship Perspective

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Abstract. With the development of artificial intelligence technology, AIGC (Artificial Intelligence Generated Content) is profoundly reshaping the news communication ecosystem. AIGC news anchors such as "Jin Xiaoshuai", "Jin Xiaomei", and "Xiaoxiao Sa", which integrate voice, image, motion and semantic understanding, can achieve 24-hour non-stop broadcasting, initial emotional expression and limited interaction, and even show "human-like" characteristics, are gradually emerging in news reporting. However, news is not only a process of information transmission but also of emotional communication. Whether AIGC news anchors have the potential to establish "pseudo-social relationship" has become a matter of concern. Will the audience develop a sense of closeness like that of a "quasi-friend" due to personification design? Does this technology-driven emotional resonance affect the audience's trust and judgment of news content? This study, from the perspective of communication studies, systematically explores the mechanisms and risks of AIGC news anchors in building pseudo-social relationships, aiming to provide theoretical support and practical references for human-machine collaboration in the future of journalism.

Keywords: AIGC news anchor, pseudo-social relationship, emotional resonance, media psychology, human-computer interaction

1. Introduction

In 1956, computer expert John McCarthy first coined the term "AI" (Artificial Intelligence), and now "AIGC" (Artificial Intelligence Generated Content) Artificial Intelligence Generated Content has been widely applied in areas such as text and image creation, speech synthesis, and video editing. News dissemination, as an important part of the content industry, is undergoing an unprecedented transformation and change. Early AIGC systems relied mainly on preset templates and rules to automatically generate structured news content such as weather forecasts and financial data, with a rather mechanical broadcasting format and lacking emotional and interactive capabilities. Typical examples of AI assistants at this stage include "Tmall Genie", "Xiaoai Classmate", "Siri", etc.

With the iteration of technology and the continuous optimization of programs, with the help of natural language processing (NLP) and speech synthesis (TTS) technologies, AIGC began to achieve the integrated function of "machine writing + voice broadcasting". For example, Xinhua

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News Agency and Sogou have launched the "AI synthetic anchor" Xinxiaohao, which has the ability of personification and voice simulation. "In the media field, the industry monopoly of real hosts has been shaken by the intervention of virtual hosts and transformed by the advent of the era of artificial intelligence." [1] This advancement has driven virtual anchors forward.

An AIGC News Presenter (AI-Generated News Presenter) is a form of virtual presenter that uses artificial intelligence technology to generate content and can automatically perform tasks such as news reporting and live interaction. Youdaoplaceholder0 Currently, mainstream AIGC news presenter systems are mostly based on deep learn-based multimodal generative models that integrate voice, image, motion and semantic understanding, enabling 24-hour non-stop broadcasting, initial emotional expression and limited interaction, and even showing "human-like" features. However, these "human-like" performances are still difficult to truly evoke human "emotional resonance", although AIGC news anchors "show advancement in some aspects, such as information processing speed and accuracy, but may be lacking in other aspects, such as emotional expression and interpersonal interaction." [2] News, as a form of communication centered on "authenticity", naturally demands a high level of "credibility" or "emotional communication", and audiences do not watch news merely to obtain information, but rather to seek comfort, understanding and resonance at critical moments. In this context, traditional anchors, relying on their professional skills and humanistic sentiments, have shown irreplaceable human advantages in situations such as government affairs interpretation and disaster reporting. But can AIGC anchors achieve effective emotional communication like real anchors?

Based on this, this study aims to explore how news AIGC news anchors construct "pseudo-personas" to stimulate the formation of "pseudo-social relationships". At the same time, the study also focuses on ethical issues related to AIGC news anchors, such as: Could AIGC news anchors possibly replace real anchors? Will its popularity lead the public to indulge in the virtual world? Is there a risk of information being manipulated? And whether audiences are more inclined to choose live anchors or AIGC news anchors when faced with different types of programs or news content.

2. Literature review

Pseudo-social relationship (PSR) theory was first proposed by Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl in 1956. It is used to describe a one-way, pseudo-social psychological connection formed by the audience during long-term exposure to media figures such as television anchors and radio presenters. This relationship, though lacking real interaction, evokes a strong sense of emotional identification, dependence and trust.

In the theoretical review by scholars such as Wu Jingyu and Gao Biyao, the development of pseudo-social relationships can roughly be divided into three stages: In the first stage, the concept is mostly regarded as part of the motivation for media use, belonging to a single-dimensional communication variable; In the second stage, Gleich proposed that it should include three dimensions of "friendship, interactivity, and empathy", establishing its multi-dimensional structure for the first time; In the third stage, Hartmann views the pseudo-social relationship as a dynamic evolutionary process, arguing that its depth and breadth are constantly adjusted with the frequency of medium use and the degree of interaction. This evolution lays the foundation for the diverse applications of the PSR theory in the contemporary communication environment.

With the development of digital media and virtual technology, PSR theory has been widely applied to new communication scenarios such as social media, virtual idols and AIGC news anchors. Research shows that avatars can also form pseudo-social relationships with the audience, the intensity of which is influenced by factors such as the degree of personification of the character, the

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frequency of interaction, and the psychological traits of the audience. Among them, popular psychological factors play a key moderating role in the formation of pseudo-social relationships. For example, scholars point out that "in virtual idol live streaming, due to the real-time interaction of the 'middle person', the audience often shifts their emotions from the character itself to the real operator behind it," [3] showing the reinforcing effect of modern interactive media on the construction of PSR.

In the field of journalism, the application of AIGC technology is becoming increasingly widespread. AIGC news anchors, relying on technological advantages such as natural language generation, multimodal synthesis and round-the-clock broadcasting, have posed a certain degree of impact on traditional journalism in terms of information transmission efficiency and coverage. "New mainstream media are facing a series of risks and challenges." [4] In this context, "humanity" is regarded as an irreplaceable core value of the traditional journalism profession, "so in the inevitable trend of technology outsourcing, the most important thing is to explore and strengthen the advantages of being human and clarify one's own irreplaceability" [5], especially in scenarios such as disaster reporting or government affairs interpretation, emotional transmission is particularly crucial to the credibility and appeal of news. Although current research has mostly focused on the technical performance, broadcasting efficiency and ethical risks of AIGC, there is still a lack of in-depth exploration of how it builds pseudo-social relationships with its audience through emotional mechanisms. Take CCTV's "Sa Beining" image generation digital anchor and Shanxi Broadcasting's "Jin Xiaoshuai" and "Jin Xiaomei" as examples, all of which show that AIGC news anchors are evolving towards "personification" and "emotionalization". However, such explorations have mostly remained at the level of product application and technical presentation, and have not touched upon the underlying logic of emotional communication and the psychological mechanism of the audience.

This study aims to systematically reveal the emotional resonance mechanism of AIGC news anchors in the context of news from the perspective of communication studies, fill the research gap in the path of constructing pseudo-social relationships between them and their audiences, and further expand the interpretive boundaries of PSR theory in the field of human-machine communication. After all, as some scholars have pointed out, "Early virtual news anchors did not develop smoothly due to technical limitations, but with technological advancements, virtual news anchors have found more applications and have broad prospects for development." [6]

3. Analysis and results

3.1. Emotional resonance mechanism 1: personification of language

The first resonance mechanism worthy of priority exploration is language personification. Personification of language can effectively reduce the audience's rejection of the mechanical feeling in "AI language", and the sense of closeness itself is a key factor in enhancing the communication effect, similar to the "sense of belief" conveyed by real streamers. Colloquial and intimate expressions can shorten the psychological distance with the audience and directly enhance the user's willingness to interact and acceptance, which is also applicable to the communication situation of AIGC news anchors.

As scholars put it: "The concise and resounding consonants and vowels, the unevenness of 'Yin and Yang ascending', the emotional connection of 'stress pauses', the ups and downs of intonation and postures, and the captivating rhythm of sound and rhyme fully integrate the profound connotations of verbal communication with the precise variations of non-verbal communication, expressing both the emotions and the spirit." [7] Anthropomorphic language can be further

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optimized by imitating spoken expression and using nicknames to address it. For example, CCTV's virtual anchor "Little Sa" does not use a standardized broadcasting tone in language style. Instead, it attempts to imitate Sa Beining's own language habits and expressions such as "Don't keep staring at me", "Spring, summer, autumn, winter, four virtual hosts send blessings for a whole year", "When you decide to shine, no mountain can stop, no sea can block", thereby enhancing personification.

In addition, in order to enhance personification, AIGC news anchors often incorporate emotional language and exclamations. The purpose of this language design is not simply to imitate the way humans speak, but because it serves as a triple "emotional lever" in the chain of communication: it can trigger an "empathetic" response from the audience. Emotions can be seen as the "access card" for information to enter the memory system. Currently, AIGC news anchors are able to simulate micro-expressions such as smiling and raising eyebrows, combined with emotionalized speech generation models, making the broadcast more infectious and reducing the emotional response time to 0.5 seconds. The new generation of platforms, such as Baidu's Xiling 2.0, enables digital humans to generate responses in real time based on users' questions by invoking the knowledge base. The interactive response speed has increased by 40 percent, and it can handle more than 90 percent of regular inquiries. For example, if an AIGC news anchor only uses a straightforward way to report "12 miners were rescued in this rescue", the viewer's brain may only receive the surface content of the information, or even have difficulty forming a memory; But if it were expressed as "After a 96-hour race against life and death, all 12 miners were rescued, it was truly heart-wrenching!" It activates the amygdala - hippocampus pathway, which packs the "fact + emotion" into long-term memory, and the communication effect is achieved.

In addition, setting the gender and age of the AIGC news anchor can also help increase the acceptance of the audience. For younger children, female anchors aged between 20 and 30 are more likely to be favored. For instance, the "Moon Sister" in CCTV's "Animation Fun" program is a case in point. According to a survey of different audience groups in the book "Presenters Spread", 67.9% of viewers prefer female presenters in children's programs; Sixty percent of viewers prefer young hosts (about 20-30 years old).

3.2. Emotional resonance mechanism 2: emotional visualization

In addition to language, the visual image of AIGC news anchors is equally crucial. In terms of facial expression design, AIGC news anchors should be as close to the real human state as possible. When audiences see virtual anchors broadcasting with natural facial movements, the psychological estrangement from them will be significantly reduced, and viewers will be more likely to develop a favorable impression and trust of anchors with smiles and gentle eyes. These facial movements, including micro-expressions, breathing, blinking frequency, nodding movements, etc., are all key details that enhance the "anthropomorphism".

In addition, in the design of the host's image, the visual style should be precisely matched according to the attributes and emotional atmosphere of different programs. For example, in children's programs, cartoon characters can be used as templates to design AIGC news anchors, such as "Jumping Dragon" in the CCTV children's program "Animation Dreamworks". This character is designed as a friend-like figure who loves anime, is mischievous and can pose questions that fit the way children think. "Such character Settings bring 'Jumping Dragon' closer to the kids, making the kids feel that this friend is real and trustworthy, and willing to get close to him." [8] Through the dual personification of character and visual design, it significantly enhances the emotional identification and trust of the audience.

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In contrast, in news programs, emphasis is placed on authority and credibility. Take Kang Xiaohui, the AIGC news anchor in the Anhui episode of Live Yangtze River, as an example. She made her debut co-hosting with CCTV reporter Jiang Kai, demonstrating the adaptability of virtual anchors in serious news scenarios. Such programs are more suitable to use virtual avatars with a decent style and a steady image, such as those designed based on the appearance of Kang Hui, the "face of the country", to give AIGC news anchors the authoritative status of "first communication symbol" by leveraging their trust in the public, thereby enhancing the audience's willingness to accept and communication effect.

3.3. Emotional resonance mechanism 3: contextual interaction

Although AIGC news anchors cannot interact in real time, a sense of "interaction" can be simulated through scripted situational conversations. In different news contexts, AIGC news anchors should adjust their tone and hosting style according to the type of content, thus getting closer to the psychology of the audience. For example, a positive tone can be used when reporting Spring Festival news or major good news; When it comes to major emergencies, use a serious and solemn tone; When reporting obituaries, it is advisable to use a low and slow tone. This kind of context matching helps to resonate with the emotional state of the audience, thereby building emotional dependence and trust, and enhancing interactivity and communication effect. To build emotional resonance, you need to put yourself in the audience's shoes.

To further enhance the interactive experience, AIGC news anchors can incorporate guiding expressions in their language, such as "What do you think?" or "How was your day?" Such questions can stimulate users' sense of engagement and enhance their subjective sense of participation even in non-real-time interactive Settings. In some news apps, the AIGC news push mechanism is also showing a trend of personalization. For example, the smart voice assistant "Tmall Genie" allows users to automatically receive customized news broadcasts after the alarm clock rings in the early morning. Users can not only choose news categories but also personalize tone and content preferences.

In addition, the background of some apps can even push precise content based on users' occupation information. Although this kind of interaction is not truly "human interaction", creating a sense of simulated interaction through big data analysis and preset scripts can also effectively enhance users' trust in AIGC news anchors and make users feel the psychological satisfaction of being "watched" and "responded to". This weak but sustained interaction is the breeding ground for the formation of "pseudo-social relationship" .

3.4. Emotional resonance mechanism 4: cultural embedding strategies

In specific contexts such as different festivals, regions or anniversaries, AIGC news anchors can achieve a higher degree of emotional connection through cultural embedding. For example, during the Spring Festival, an AIGC news anchor symbolizing the zodiac sign of the year is generated, and during the Mid-Autumn Festival, a blessing of "full moon and family reunion" is added to the broadcast to enhance the atmosphere with the appropriate background. In Yunnan, it is common to see AIGC images based on the images of ethnic minorities used for tourism promotion. Kunming University of Science and Technology has created an exclusive AI image based on the school mascot "Kuster" to answer questions for teachers and students. The incorporation of these cultural symbols makes AIGC news anchors more "local", thereby enhancing their psychological closeness to the audience.

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Different cities also need to actively create virtual anchors with local cultural symbols. For instance, Shanxi Province launched "Jin Xiaoshuai" and "Jin Xiaomei", which were originally designed to shape local tourism ips and later also took on practical communication functions such as weather reporting. These broadcasts are essentially about having pre-set text processed by AIGC speech synthesis engines (such as Mobvoi's "Magic Sound Workshop" or other TTS services), and then given a fixed IP name to form an "AI-driven, IP-named" AIGC virtual streamer model.

It should be noted that "Jin Xiaoshuai" and "Jin Xiaomei" are not licensed hosts in the traditional sense, but rather "provincial" digital anchors quickly generated by provincial cultural and tourism departments through AIGC technology. These images carry a specific regional cultural identity and symbolic meaning, generating a sense of familiarity and belonging in the audience during contact, thereby evoking emotional resonance.

When AIGC news anchors have a distinct regional cultural background, they are no longer "neutral tech bodies", but become concrete carriers of cultural communication. This cultural embedding strategy not only reinforces the local attributes of the information, but also provides the audience with space for emotional projection, helping to build more sticky pseudo-social relationships.

4. Discussion

4.1. Is emotional resonance an important force in AIGC news dissemination

Research has found that emotional resonance can significantly enhance the credibility and dissemination power of news content. The Douyin account of People's Daily has successfully used an interactive ritual chain model of "co-presence - empathy - dialogue" through live footage of the "teacher-student binding Ceremony", combined with warm music and user selfies, to enable the audience to naturally complete the "credible" judgment in emotional synchronization. The data showed that emotional comments such as "I cried" and "the teacher is so great" accounted for 63 percent in the comment section of the video, significantly increasing the average trustworthiness of subsequent posts on the account. However, different types of news events have different effects and forms of realization of the resonance mechanism. In major issues such as disasters and government affairs, audiences tend to rely more on real anchors who are steady and authoritative; In light-hearted news such as entertainment and life, AIGC anchors have a strong alternative advantage and can use more interaction and emotional mobilization. Therefore, "emotional resonance" is not necessarily the stronger the better, but rather depends on the type of news.

The future direction should be more diverse and contextualized. In serious news Settings, AIGC anchors can appear as supporting roles for real anchors; And in entertainment and service programs, they can be the main communicator for a long time, thus more fully unleashing the potential of technology and the influence of media.

At the same time, AIGC anchors must also adhere to the fundamental principles of journalism. Even if the technology can achieve functions such as round-the-clock broadcasting and personalized tone and style, the content itself still needs to adhere to the three elements of "authenticity, timeliness, and accuracy". Especially when dealing with complex events and major news, be wary of the potential risk of misleading information from content generated by non-official source models. Therefore, when receiving news information, the audience should also pay attention to the source and authority of the broadcast model. Of course, the three elements of news dissemination are not a fixed proportion, but should be flexibly allocated according to the nature of the event, the risk to the audience, and the dissemination scenario. For example, sudden disasters place more emphasis on

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timeliness, government information places more emphasis on accuracy and authority, and entertainment content has a relatively higher tolerance for authenticity. Shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Reference weight distribution of the three elements of news dissemination under different event types

Event Nature	Primary objective	Allow for the sacrifice of timeliness	Accuracy tolerance	Examples
Public safety	Authenticity > Accuracy > timeliness	Minute-level delays are acceptable	Digital ±5% tolerance	Earthquake casualties
Sudden disasters	Timeliness > authenticity > accuracy	Accept	It can be based on a secondary source	New cases of the epidemic
Public Issues	Truth ≈ Accuracy > timeliness	Hourly delays are acceptable	Quotations must be fully accessible	A draft property tax has leaked
Entertainment/Services	Timeliness ≈ accuracy > authenticity	It can be sent first and then repaired	Errors have low consequences	Star weddings

4.2. Dissemination ethics warnings: the potential risks of AIGC news dissemination

There are also certain ethical risks and potential misguidance in the process of AIGC anchors disseminating news information. On the one hand, when AI communicators evoke intense emotions through personified language or expressions, they may mislead the audience to make irrational judgments. The problem is not whether it 'really has feelings', but that it' is too human-like 'and lacks the moral constraints that humans should have. In the absence of a value judgment mechanism, the emotional responses triggered by AI may be abused to manipulate, incite, or even create "empathy traps." On the other hand, be wary of the spread risk of AI-fabricated content. For instance, unauthorized use of celebrity images, impersonation of public figures' voices, and the creation of fictitious identities of anchors have crossed legal boundaries such as copyright and portrait rights and even triggered a crisis of public trust. Some mainstream institutions or private users create virtual streamer images without clear labeling, which can easily confuse the public and mislead the audience.

In addition, the abuse and generalization of AIGC images are also a prominent problem. In the absence of regulation, virtual avatars can be widely copied, arbitrarily pieced together or "shell-used", resulting in consequences such as information distortion and content homogenization, which not only reduces the quality of dissemination but may also disrupt the public opinion space.

Therefore, in the process of receiving information, the audience must have the ability to identify and be vigilant about the authenticity and source of AI content; In the process of content production and distribution, creators should also clearly indicate AI-generated attributes, especially for information disseminated through unofficial channels, which requires greater transparency and caution. This is both a respect for the audience's right to know and a reflection of the responsibility and ethical bottom line that news communicators should have in the new era.

4.3. Trust cognitive shift triggered by AIGC news anchors: from 'information authority' to 'companion'

In the context of AIGC news anchors, audiences do tend to treat AI anchors who "greet gently every day" as potential friends, leading to a shift in trust perception - from "information authority" to "companion". However, it is necessary to recognize that the "humanization" of AI is the result of a

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high reliance on big data training, and we must rationally judge the reliability of its information content while feeling emotional resonance. Once there is a sensitivity error, the audience needs to have the ability to identify and report it in time.

In everyday use, people might view AIGC streamers as virtual friends or confidants, but this raises a new question at the level of media psychology: Will the emotional connection between humans and AI in the future mainly rely on "pseudo-social relationships" to maintain? Pseudo-social relationships, though not the only emotional bond, may be the earliest to be commercialized and the most easily abused form of connection. It offers "low-cost intimacy," but also poses the risk of "one-way dependence, genuine estrangement." Therefore, the user should always be aware that the other party is not a "real human", but a simulation program with human language and behavior characteristics.

Designers should preset "psychological safety mechanisms" in advance, such as marking "This conversation has no real emotions" on the interface and regularly reminding users that "real social interaction is equally important." Platform administrators can also introduce a "pseudo-social relationship threshold" scale, which can automatically push interpersonal relationship training courses or psychological counseling resources once the user's emotional dependence is too high, forming an early warning mechanism. At the same time, users themselves should also take the initiative to enhance their real social skills. In a future where AI is more widespread, the only way to avoid being completely surrounded by virtual relationships is to stay connected to the real world.

Will the relationship between humans and AI be maintained by a sense of "pretending to be friends" like that between fans and idols in the future? Will we become more and more accustomed to seeing AI as a "quasi-friend" who "can chat with, accompany and understand us"? For example, listening to an AIGC news anchor every day, it has a gentle voice, a kind tone, and says, "You've worked hard today." "How are you?" Over time, even if you know it's just a program, you'll feel it's like a "friend". This feeling is actually a "pseudo-social relationship." Is it possible that most of the future "intimacy" between AI and humans will be built in this way? It's worth exploring.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the key to AIGC news anchors' success in delivering news lies in their ability to resonate with the audience. Especially on issues such as disaster, policy, and education, AIGC news anchors can balance the "authenticity" and "emotional authenticity" of news, and cold data can be expressed through warm language, which may become a new force in news dissemination. In the future, human-machine relationships will increasingly be based on "pseudo-social relationships", that is to say, we don't need AI to be as real as humans; it just needs to "accompany like a friend" to win users' emotions. This poses new challenges for research in fields such as media psychology and journalism.

Of course, this study has some limitations, such as the lack of empirical data to support it, the vague positioning of the future identity of AIGC news anchors, and the fact that the research perspective has not yet expanded to the broader AIGC development scenarios. In the future, a questionnaire survey could be conducted on the views and opinions of the audience regarding news programs of different natures and different types of AIGC news anchors, which could provide a more intuitive understanding of the communication effect of the public towards AIGC news anchors under the "pseudo-social relationship". At the same time, it is necessary to further identify how future AIGC news anchors can better achieve "emotional resonance" with the public.

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