The Roles of Social Media and Traditional News Media in Promoting Government Responsiveness in Social Incidents

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Received: November 21, 2023 Accepted: January 2, 2023 Online Published: January 10, 2024
doi:10.11114/smc.v12i1.6536 URL: https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v12i1.6536

Abstract

Social media is considered to play an important role in promoting government responsiveness. However, it is impossible for the government to respond to all issues in the actual situation. Especially when encountering controversial social incidents, the local government usually evades responsibility due to damage to reputation or interests. This paper argues that when a controversial social incident occurs in China, the traditional news media will work with social media to encourage the local government to respond. Three cases are selected according to the hot discussion index of Sina Weibo, China's largest social media platform for multiple-case studies. 21 participants were interviewed to explore the function of social media and traditional news media during the process of government responsiveness. The results showed that traditional news media played the role of professionalism, supervision, and broker to develop social incidents. And social media took the information aggregation part in most situations. Social media and traditional news media work together to promote the local government to make government responsiveness active.

Keywords: traditional news media, social media, government responsiveness, local government, broker role, supervision

1. Introduction

When a social incident needs government departments to respond to, the inclusion of social media can promote government responsiveness (Eom et al., 2018; Wang & Driscoll, 2019; Zhang et al., 2020). Social media can effectively promote the speed and effectiveness of the government's response, but in practice, the social media information is complex and numerous, not all the social incidents presented in social media can get government responsiveness. The social incidents to which the government responds are inevitably those that have formed a relatively large influence in social media, such as incidents with a large number of retweets and likes.

At the same time, social media is heavily fragmented and cannot systematically present the full truth of an incident. It may also be misled by wrong information and become a source of distorted information or false information (Gao et al., 2018). So other factors must be added to promote social media to effectively promote government responsiveness. Taking mainland China as an example, this paper explores the important factors that work together with social media to promote government responsiveness when social incidents occur in mainland China through multiple case studies. The second part is the literature review, the third part is the methodology introduction, and the fourth part is the conclusion.

2. Literature Review

In China, the local government is mainly responsible for government responsiveness (Christine Huang et al., 2020). Unlike in Western countries, citizens can vote to promote the government responsiveness. Nevertheless, listening to the needs of citizens is also an inherent requirement of every government.

In recent years, China has improved the efficiency of e-government, not only for the consideration of functions, such as efficiency and economy, but also to improve the level of service to the public, make information dissemination more transparent and efficient, and achieve good political and social functions (Tang et al., 2018). According to the survey report released by the United Nation every two years, the Chinese government’s EGPI ranking has risen from 78 in 2012 to 43 in 2022 (United Nations, 2012, 2022).
2.1 Social Media and Government Responsiveness

The promotion of social media to government responsiveness and information disclosure has been demonstrated (Bekkers et al., 2013; Gao et al., 2018; Huang, 2021). Social media can promote ineffective government and improve service efficiency. It is also conducive to the public's timely access to the information that should be informed. At the same time, the public can also get relevant information about government management and work.

As mentioned above, in China, the local government is mainly responsible for the government responsiveness, but the local government will weigh the interests and reputation of the local government in the process of deciding the response. The promotion of Chinese government officials is more affected by three factors: political loyalty, economic performance, and public opinion in the jurisdiction. The weight of public opinion in the jurisdiction is gradually increasing (Chen et al., 2017). Therefore, in China, public opinion will impact the government responsiveness, and the proportion is gradually increasing.

Before the widespread use of the Internet, Chinese citizens could communicate with the government through formal channels and express their wishes and demands, such as by writing reports. (Fang & Hong, 2020). However, the wide application of Internet technology, especially social media, have broadened the channels for citizens to express their wishes and needs. The speed and efficiency with which the government responds to citizens have also been greatly improved (Wang & Driscoll, 2019). In March 2023, the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) released the 51st Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, which shows that by December 2022, the number of Chinese netizens has reached 1.067 billion, and the Internet penetration rate has reached 75.6% from 25.5% in 2009. The total number of mobile network terminal connections reached 3.528 billion households from 338 million in 2009. Mobile Internet access is still the main driving force for the growth of Internet users (CNNIC, 2023).

On hand, at the public participation level. The popularity of the Internet and mobile networks means that citizens have easier access to social media. Furthermore, when it comes to a particular incident, social media users have become companions rather than simple disseminators or receivers of information (Liu & Zhang, 2020); they share information and even discuss government issues together. Whether the coping strategy is appropriate, whether the response of some relevant departments or relevant officials is appropriate, their status is equal.

At the same time, social media is also conducive to collecting group discussion results and feedback information on a particular matter. In order to make a comprehensive measurement and evaluation of the incident.

And on the other hand, at the supervision level. The Citizens can also conduct more convenient citizen participation and participate in topic discussions through social media. The pressure formed by social media will prompt local government to respond more quickly and efficiently, especially when there are disputes. When an incident has a relatively significant social impact, social media pressure will prompt the government to respond to public doubts quickly (Zhang et al., 2020) and disclose the comprehensive investigation information of the relevant incident as soon as possible.

Because the online platform provides a channel for citizens to communicate with the upper-level government where they are located to increase the chances of the government responding, some citizens will also establish contact with the upper-level government or even the central government to urge the local government to respond (Su & Meng, 2016; Li & Shang, 2020). In addition, social media can also enhance the effectiveness of the central government's supervision of local governments.

However, more is needed to have the two elements of central government pressure and social media influence to expand the influence of an incident on social media. Social media has much information every day, and the popularity of incident discussions is thus very uncertain. They are even accused of being a breeding ground for disinformation (Mahalingham et al., 2023). In addition, because the government's public relations capabilities are also constantly improving, social media is not a public welfare organization and many social media platforms are also competing with government management, legal provisions, and business owners. For example, on China's social media Weibo, social incidents that rush to the top of the search which called ‘shang re sou’ (上热搜) may become highly discussed social incidents, but it is also possible to reduce the hot level through government or corporate public relations.

Hence, there come to the Research Question 1: What role does social media play in facilitating government responsiveness?

2.2 Traditional News Media and Government Responsiveness

Since massive information on social media, how can more and more public discussion be focused on some social incidents to get government responsiveness? This paper argues that traditional news media will also play a key role in the process of government responsiveness in China.

Incidents that are highly discussed on social media need to be reported by Traditional News Media with traditional influence. The influence of Traditional News Media will further strengthen the influence of public discussions on the local government, thus causing the local government to response (Liu & Pavličević, 2018).
In the Oxford Dictionary, it refers to an event that is either unpleasant or unusual. However, the choice of events covered in this article may have been intended to be neither unpleasant nor unusual. So more emphasis is placed on the distinction between different words, for example between event, accident, and incident. According to traditional usage, an event is more focused on the occurrence of something arranged, such as a party or a festival, while an accident is more inclined to the occurrence of a bad event, but an incident can be used for the non-arranged occurrence of an event that is not necessarily bad. So this paper finally chooses to use incident to refer to a sudden and influential event in society. It can be an event that causes some damage or an event that causes no damage.

Studies have shown that the expression of appeals tending to collectivism is more likely to cause government responsiveness than the expression of appeals inclined to individualism. At the same time, expressing proper and legal appeals is easier to obtain government responsiveness than pure emotional expression (Li & Liu, 2009; Sutherns & Olivier, 2021). Because of professionalism, Traditional News Media can present comprehensive information on incidents more quickly, making it easy for citizens to form systematic opinions in social media discussions, further strengthening the possibility of the government responsiveness.

There is a strong relationship between news media reports and government responsiveness. It showed that the more news media reports, the more significant news media coverage and circulation, and the greater the possibility of government responsiveness (Parida et al., 2022). In addition to these elements, the citizens' knowledge is also an essential factor leading to the government's responsiveness. The higher the education level of citizens, the more effective and targeted they can participate in public affairs discussions, and the easier it is for the government to respond (Zhang et al., 2020). Furthermore, government responsiveness is not only related to elections. Targeted and systematic discussion results in citizen participation being more likely to obtain government responsiveness, while trivial, disorganized, or completely self-talking citizens' participation is not easy to get a government response (Su & Meng, 2016; Ai et al., 2022).

Therefore, the traditional news media can make up for the chaotic and disordered information provided by social media, thereby providing more orderly, comprehensive and systematic viewpoint information, and promoting the government responsiveness.

The tremendous ability of social media to attract audiences has attracted traditional media, which have registered accounts in social media in large numbers, viewing social media as a channel to disseminate information and attract audiences. In China, many traditional media have begun to promote cooperation with social media, and each of them has created influential accounts in social media. For example, they are reforming their media outlets or setting up new media centers. The purpose is to expand the influence of traditional media accounts in social media.

When a social incident occurs, traditional news media use their professional knowledge to select incidents suitable for coverage and report professionally, and these systematic reports in social media are more able to attract audience's attention and discussion than other fragmented and scattered information. The influence of traditional media brings out more authentic details of a social incident, further increasing the discussion of that incident. The role played by traditional media is similar to that of a broker.

The concept of broker role comes from the theory of social network analysis, the so-called broker role refers to the role of linking actors that may not be linked together to facilitate the flow of non-redundant information, i.e., linking the roles in weak ties to facilitate the flow of information between them. A broker has the following advantages. First, it can acquire information quickly, and the information it acquires is relatively balanced and not lopsided. Secondly, it can control the information flow between different actors in a weak link, and without a connection similar to the broker role, the connection between the various actors will be very scattered (Eom et al., 2018), and the traditional media plays this kind role.

When a social incident occurs, the traditional media, through the reporting of these incidents, plays the role of broker in social media, making the role of the weakened actors stronger, or making the role of the strengthened actors weaker, so that the truth of the social incidents presented in the social media becomes clearer, which in turn facilitates the government responsiveness.

Through professional reporting, traditional news media can highlight the key points in social incidents, remove some misleading information, weaken unimportant information, and play the role of broker, which means that traditional news media effectively link three different social roles (Broer & Pröschel, 2022): bridging (linking actors or issues that have not yet been linked); linking (turning a weakened or marginalized actor into a prominent one); bonding (strengthening or weakening the existing connection of actors or issues).

Here come to the Research Question 2: What role do the Traditional News Media play in facilitating government responsiveness?
3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts the case study of qualitative research, and the method used to collect data is the interview method combined with second material analysis. (Gustafsson, 2017; Conde, 2021). Based on the research question, in order to explore roles of social media, traditional news media in facilitating the government responsiveness, the researchers believe that multiple case studies are more suitable for this study than single case. And to make the data more reliable, the paper uses interview method explores what the roles of Social Media and Traditional News Media play in the process of government responsiveness (RQ1 and RQ2).

3.1.1 Case Selection

This study selected Sina Weibo, one of the largest social media in China, which was established in 2009 and changed the name to Weibo in March 2014 as the research object. China held the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and proposed to strengthen the guidance of online public opinion in 2017. Since 2018, governments at all levels in China have paid more and more attention to the guidance of online public opinion. Therefore, this study selected three cases with the highest discussion during 2018-2022.

According to the annual reports released by Weibo and the People's Public Opinion Research Office, the incident with the highest number of postings was selected among the social incidents involving local government responsiveness. Moreover, the three cases are Hongmao Medicinal Liquor Case in 2018, Wuhan temporarily closed the passage from Han case in 2020, and Tangshan Barbecue Restaurant Beating Case in 2022.

3.1.2 Data Collection

In order to explore the Research Question 1 and 2, this article adopts the method of in-depth interviews. The interviewees are all staffs who have an educational background in journalism and are still engaged in the journalism industry or journalism-related occupations in other industries. And the criteria for selecting participants: firstly, they must have received systematic training in journalism or related programme. This is because professionals can more accurately describe the problems that arise in the interaction between traditional news media and social media. Secondly, they should have worked in the media or related industries for more than three years, so that their practical experience can make them describe the relationship between traditional news media and social media, as well as their respective advantages, more closely to reality. According to this standard, this study recruited 25 participants willing to be interviewed on social media Weibo though a post, and 21 finally participated. The number of participants is enough for this study according to the required numbers of participants of qualitative interview (Guest et al., 2006). Among them are 11 people in the first group (refer to Table 1) and 10 in the second group (refer to Table 2). The interview process was conducted via WeChat.

Table 1. Participants Work in News Media List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journalists</th>
<th>Outlet</th>
<th>Outlet Description</th>
<th>Employment Status (Staff or Freelance)</th>
<th>Years in Journalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J1</td>
<td>Gong Ren Daily News</td>
<td>Traditional media News</td>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J2</td>
<td>Beijing Daily News</td>
<td>Traditional media News</td>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J3</td>
<td>Foshan Daily News</td>
<td>Traditional media News</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J4</td>
<td>Shandong TV</td>
<td>Traditional media News</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J5</td>
<td>Lin Fen Daily News</td>
<td>Traditional media News</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J6</td>
<td>Tencent News</td>
<td>Social media news channel</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J7</td>
<td>Henan Broadcasting System</td>
<td>Social media news channel</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J8</td>
<td>Lvliang Broadcasting system</td>
<td>Social media news channel</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J9</td>
<td>QingDao Broadcasting Cultural Channel</td>
<td>Social media news channel</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J10</td>
<td>Yingxiang Internet</td>
<td>Social media news channel</td>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J11</td>
<td>Shanxi TV</td>
<td>Traditional media News</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Participants Work in Various Industry Related to News Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Employment Status (Staff or Part-time)</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>University Public Relation Department</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Zhongda Public Relation Department</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Jiuran Public Relation Department</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Jiahuan Public Relation Department</td>
<td>Internet Technology</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Zhonggong Educational Company</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Yangguang Organization</td>
<td>Non-profit Organization</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Haier Company</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Snow Culture Company</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>Linghui Communication Company</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P10</td>
<td>Shangwang Internet Technology Company</td>
<td>Internet Technology</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.3 Data Analysis

According to the collected interview data, the researchers used Atlas.ti to code the data automatically. Two coders carried out the coding process. According to the results of the automatic coding, the keywords of role for social media and traditional news media in the government responsiveness process was obtained. The vocabulary cloud maps can be seen in the Figure 1 and Figure 2. The development of public social incidents on the Internet into three stages: initiation, development, and fading (Liu and Li, 2022). Hence, there will be three phases for cases to analyze.

Figure 1. Cloud Map for Social Media

Figure 2. Cloud Map for NNMJs

4. Results

4.1 The Roles of Social Media and Traditional Media

According to Figures 1 and 2, it is determined that social media play the functions of fajiao (发酵), Liuliang (流量), and Jiandu (监督), which means the functions of information aggregation, network flow and supervision. While the functions of traditional new media mainly are Zhenshi (真实), Quanwei (权威), Yulun (舆论), Jiandu (监督), Zhuanye (专业), which means truth, authority, public opinion, supervision and professionalism.

16 interviewees agreed that social media played a significant role in promoting government responsiveness, such as one journalist said:

A-1: "All governments are afraid of being exposed online, fearing the influence will be bad. The power of social media is too huge. When some information spreads quickly on them, the government responds quickly."

But 15 interviewees also acknowledge that social media has a lot of mixed problems, such as one interviewee said:

B-3: "We have to wait for more news media to explore truth, for relevant people to offer something in multiple ways, and more often have to wait for authoritative media or official replies. Because there are so many confusing and misleading messages on social media."

17 interviewees believed that the Traditional News Media, especially the big ones, were reliable in reporting, such as two interviewees said:

A-7: "The information provided by major news media is basically logical, and can clearly explain some of the audience’s doubts about the incident, and they are authoritative and generally trustworthy."

B-8: "It is generally difficult for large news media to provide false reports, because there are too many news media that can report on the same incident. Once a false report is provided, it is easy to be abandoned by the audience. The risk is too high."

According to the results, it is learnt that the interviewees basically believe that social media plays the role of expanding influence and information gathering in facilitating the government’s response process, while traditional media mainly...
plays the role of professional reporting and monitoring. The traditional media, while playing a professional role, removes falsehoods and reports the details of the truth, playing the role of an economist in the process.

4.2 Hongmao Medicinal Liquor Case in 2018

Hongmao Medicinal Wine is a health-preserving alcoholic drink in China. On April 13, 2018, the traditional news media Red Star News published an article on its WeChat social platform with the title "Guangzhou doctor posted a post saying 'Hongmao medicinal wine is poison' and was arrested by the police across provinces for allegedly damaging the reputation of the product". Discussions and reposts quickly formed on Weibo. Social media play the role of information aggregation in the first phase.

In the second phase, at 9:12 on April 18, 2018, netizen @lessaly0514 posted on Weibo, claiming that he was Liu Xuan, the wife of Guangzhou doctor Tan Qindong. Further confirming the authenticity of the incident, Beijing News quickly reported it, which attracted more people's attention. Traditional News Media plays a role of professionalism. On April 15, the Public Security Bureau of Liangcheng County, Inner Mongolia, which carried out inter-provincial arrests, responded to the incident on its official Weibo, saying that the arrests were carried out only after receiving a report, and confirmed that the reason for the arrests was that in December 2017, Tan Wrote an article titled "Chinese Divine Liquor Hongmao Medicinal Wine", Poison from Heaven", because it received more than 2,000 hits and more than 100,000 likes, it was reported by Hongmao Medicinal Liquor Company as a crime of 'damaging the reputation of the product'.

The police in Liangcheng, Inner Mongolia then arrested the author of the article from Guangzhou. However, the statement aroused more attention and discussion from netizens, such as why the case was directly classified as a criminal case. Whether the crime of damaging commodity reputation mentioned by the company is true, and whether it is directly related to the article written by Tan. TNM such as Securities Times published a long report on April 16 that Bao Hongsheng, the actual power holder of Dihongmao Liquor, had many doubts about his family history. Weibo played the role of information aggregation, making it easier for netizens to understand and discuss the process of the case by sharing details related to the case. TNM played the role of broker, highlighting the main questions in the case and the actors who played a major role. Such as by highlighting the Hongmao Liquor company and Bao Hongsheng, the actual person in power, and also questioning the Liangcheng County Public Security Bureau in Inner Mongolia who carried out the arrest task.

At 15:00 on April 17, the Procuratorate of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region issued a notice on Weibo ordering the case to be returned for supplementary investigation. At the same time, the Ministry of Public Security has enabled Inner Mongolia's public security organs to carry out verification work following the law. At 18:00 on April 17, Tan Qindong was released on bail pending trial and walked out of the Liangcheng County Detention Center.

In the third phase, TNM and social media play a role of supervision to question the Liangcheng County Public Security Bureau in Inner Mongolia and the Hongmao Pharmaceutical Liquor Company.

4.3 Wuhan Lockdown Case in 2020

The first phase of the case. Social media play role of information aggregation. Around January 20-23, 2020, the tag “Escape from Wuhan” appeared on Weibo. At that time, the Covid-19 epidemic had just broken out in Wuhan with unknown named virus, and was supposed to have phenomenon of human-to-human transmission. For a while, it aroused the whole country's attention because the Chinese New Year was approaching, and Weibo was full of information about a certain virus spreading rapidly in Wuhan. However, it was hard to tell whether they were true or not. At 2:00 on January 23, 2020, Wuhan City announced that Wuhan will close the Li-Han channel at 10:00 on January 23, 2020.

In the second phase, TNM caused panic throughout the country because it was rumored that the virus spreading in Wuhan was unknown and very contagious. During this phase, TNM played roles of professionalism by reporting a lot of details of the virus. The People's Daily and Xinhua News Agency all shifted the focus of their reports to Wuhan's closure of the city. Most of the reports focused on some questions needed to be solved. Such as, What is the virus? Why do Wuhan need to close the city? Is there any specific medicine to treat the virus?

After the closure of Wuhan, the whole country entered the stage of epidemic prevention. Many TV channels launched anti-epidemic programs. On January 28, the Face-to-Face connected with the mayor of Wuhan to make a detailed report on the cause and effect of the closure of Wuhan. These reports have promoted awareness of epidemic prevention and calmed the anxiety of the public. In this process, TNM played the role of professionalism by showing authority and truth of the reports. Such as used the combination of pictures and texts, video, live video to make the epidemic prevention measures more detailed to the public. Letting the public gradually understand the new virus, the importance of wearing masks, washing hands frequently, and disinfecting, and the necessity of home isolation. At the same time, it also explained the logistical and material support during the home isolation period to stabilize the mood of the masses.

Social media have given full play to role of information aggregation and information transmission, so that various problems during the closure of the city can be paid attention to and resolved promptly. In January 22, the footage of Hubei Jingshi in which a woman host named Yuenan wearing a mask broadcasting news became a hot search on Weibo because
Chinese people have yet to realize the importance of wearing a mask. The explanation is to demonstrate to the audience the importance of wearing mask.

4.4 Tangshan Barbecue Restaurant Beating Case in 2022

At around 2 am on June 10, 2022, multiple customers clashed in a barbecue restaurant in Tangshan City, Hebei Province. At around 10 am on June 10, 2022, a video of the incident was uploaded to Weibo by netizens, because the video showed such an intense fight that attracted the attention of many netizens to forward or comment. But whether the content is true or not is yet to be verified. In the first phase, social media Weibo plays a role of information aggregation.

In the second phase, TNM such as The Paper reprinted the video at 16:27 on June 10 and pointed out in the report that it had been confirmed that the local police station had dispatched the police. Subsequently, more media joined the report, and more relevant details were exposed. Including the cause of the incident, the identity of the assailant, and whether they were all arrested. The TNM play the role of confirming the information through multiple sources and played the role of professionalism by showing truth and giving information sources from authorities.

At this stage, the Lubei Branch of the Tangshan Public Security Bureau, which is in charge of the jurisdiction, responded at 17:50 on June 10, 2022, saying that it was arresting the relevant assailants.

Later, more questions were pointed to the Lubei Branch of the Tangshan Public Security Bureau, including whether the police dispatch time was later than the supposed one, whether there was any malfeasance by public officials within the branch. During this process, social media played the role of information aggregation and netflow hub by providing much information to help the audience to figure out the whole story of the incident. TNM played the function of broker by highlighting the main actor by reporting the identities, jobs, and family information of the nine suspects in the incident; and the key to highlighting the incident is whether the gang was involved; and whether there were key public officials who acted as the umbrella for the nine suspects. For example, on June 14, 2022, CCTV.com issued six questions, including how to characterize the persons involved, how to sentence the persons involved, whether the persons involved have a criminal record, how to sentence the persons involved if they have a criminal record, what compensation should the victim receive, and whether bystanders should be punished and condemned.

In the third phase, TNM such as People’s Daily Online reported and commented on the incident, fulfilling their role of supervising local governments. On June 21, the Hebei Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection and Supervision reported the progress of the investigation into the beating incident. At the same time, five public officials including the director of the Lubei Branch of the Tangshan Public Security Bureau were investigated.

5. Discussion for Future Research

In the three selected cases, Weibo, as a social media, has indeed played the role of information aggregation and dissemination. Social media can indeed use advantages to promote government responsiveness. This is consistent with the findings of previous research supported the social media could make significant influence in the process of government responsiveness (Gao et al., 2018). However, this study found that social media does not necessarily promote the government responsiveness in any incident, and perhaps there are more important factor that play a role together with social media in the process of promoting the response, such as TNM, which can make a certain contributor with social media to get government responsiveness.

The analysis of the three cases and interviews also proves that TNM do play relatively significant roles and broker role with linking, bonding, and bridging. Meanwhile, this study points out that in countries with proper networks situation such as China, social media and news media are very closely connected. However, the research site selected for this study is China, so more research is needed to explore whether the role played by TNM can also be applied to incidents in other countries. The selected cases are only three, although they are representative, but more cases and quantitative studies are needed to explore the validity and feasibility of its findings. Meanwhile, the cases chosen were events with a relatively large social impact within a certain timeframe. As for how the relationship between social media and traditional news media is in other types of incidents, and what roles social media and traditional news media assume in them, more research is needed to explore.

6. Conclusion

Therefore, this paper argues that in China, local governments are mainly responsible for government responsiveness. In the process of promoting govern government responsiveness, not all social incidents presented in social media will be responded to by the government, but social media can indeed promote the speed and efficiency of government response in some cases, and usually only social incidents that have formed a certain influence in social media will be responded to by the government. Social media is more of an information aggregation platform, and although there is a lot of information in social media, it is also complex and fragmented, and is a breeding ground for false information and rumours. And traditional news media play its professional characteristics, functioning its professional, authoritative, and supervising characteristics to put forward the truth of social incidents and focus that waiting for the government responsiveness. In
the process, the traditional news media played the role of the broker. Thus, social media and traditional news media work together to facilitate the government responsiveness.

Acknowledgments
We greatly appreciate the valuable contributions of all participants for interview. We would also like to thank Education Department of Shanxi Province Foundation and every team member who took the time to participate in this study.

Authors contributions
Dr. Yuan was responsible for study design and revising. Dr. Aishah and Dr. Yuan was responsible for data collection. Dr. Yuan drafted the manuscript. Dr Mastura and Dr. Diyana revised it. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Funding
This work was supported by Education Department of Shanxi Province Foundation, China[project number 2023W182].

Competing interests
The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent
Obtained.

Ethics approval
The Publication Ethics Committee of the Redfame Publishing.
The journal’s policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review
Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement
The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement
No additional data are available.

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