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REVIEW ARTICLE

Public Health Reporting in the China's TV News: A Case Study of Early Stage of COVID-19 Outbreak

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ABSTRACT

The initial outbreak of COVID-19 in Wuhan in December 2019 prompting swift nationwide measures. Amidst the escalating crisis has contribute to China enforced temporary closures and exit controls in Hubei province, a pivotal move in curbing the virus's spread on January 23, 2020. This paper aims to explore the role of CCTV News, as the "mouthpiece" of the Party and the government in shaping public opinion during the COVID-19 epidemic. This preliminary study utilizes content analysis methods to examine the framework of COVID-19 news coverage, with a focus on a specialized TV news program aired between January 20 and February 20, 2020. The findings show how positive publicity and humanistic care initiatives have been instrumental in stabilizing public sentiment and effectively conveying China's perspective amidst the crisis. Subsequently, on January 28, 2020, the Publicity Department of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television coordinated the programming of national satellite TV programs prioritizing epidemic prevention and control coverage, curtailing entertainment programming, and issuing comprehensive programming guidelines to all 36 satellite TV stations. This concerted effort is seen as a strategic shift that has significantly increased the dissemination of information, addressed public concerns, and steered public opinion in support of the nation's fight against the epidemic.

Contribution/Originality: This study analyzes the role of Chinese TV news during COVID-19, using new content analysis methods. It uniquely investigates provincial media alignment with party directives, finding that special COVID-19 programs significantly shaped public opinion and documented strategies supporting government directives during the crisis.

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1. Introduction

At the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic ravaged the world The COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan eventually has escalated into a global crisis, captivating national and international attention, leaving an indelible mark on history (Elabiyi, Adenola, & Hasan, 2020). The pandemic disrupted societal norms and sparked widespread fear and uncertainty. The media assumed a pivotal role in providing reliable information and guiding public opinion especially in China (Chen, 2016).

In China, the outbreak coincided with the 2020 Chinese New Year and the annual Spring Festival travel surge, which complicated efforts to contain the virus amid mass migrations and disruptions to production and transportation (Xie et al., 2020). The movement of people and factory closures during the holiday period posed significant challenges for epidemic prevention, as well as the production and delivery of essential supplies. According to Verma (2020), the public's daily life was disrupted, with public attention shifting towards COVID-19, a new and unfamiliar disease, and Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak. In response, China's national satellite TV networks launched a coordinated effort, focusing on extensive coverage of prevention and control measures. Entertainment programming was scaled back to prioritize the dissemination of crucial information and address public concerns (Chen, 2017). Questions about the disease and the possibility of infection became widespread on social media. Faced with this sudden wave of public concern and the collective search for accurate information, the media was called upon to fulfill its social responsibilities and provide reliable coverage (Yue, 2012).

In the initial phase of the outbreak, citizen journalists took the lead in uncovering and publicizing information about the epidemic (Yang et al., 2020). By late December 2019, doctors in Wuhan, at the frontline of public health, began noticing cases of pneumonia of unknown origin. They shared their findings and initial virus test results within internal WeChat groups. Shortly thereafter, reports of "patients with pneumonia of unknown cause, suspected to be SARS, in Wuhan" started circulating online (Luan & Zhang, 2020). On December 30, 2019, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission's Medical Administration and Medical Administration Department issued an urgent notice regarding the management of pneumonia of unknown cause, marking the first public acknowledgment of COVID-19.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, information related to the epidemic has been the focus of daily news in various TV media. On the one hand, it reports the latest information on COVID-19, including policy decisions, achievements against the epidemic and protective measures, to satisfy the public's right to know and safeguard people's lives, health and safety; on the other hand, it reports the outstanding figures and touching stories emerging in the fight against the epidemic, to guide the media and strengthen social cohesion (Qu, 2019).

1.1. Research Objectives

i. To identify and evaluate the strategies used by Chinese TV news outlets, particularly party-affiliated media like China Media Group, in framing and reporting COVID-19 developments, emphasizing their function as governmental and Party mouthpieces during the early stages of the pandemic.

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ii. To assess how provincial, municipal, and county-level TV news media in China align with and respond to directives issued by central party media, particularly in shaping public opinion and the dissemination of health-related information during the COVID-19 crisis.
iii. To investigate the content, format, and frequency of special COVID-19 programs aired by CCTV News 1 + 1 and regional TV news outlets, and analyze their effectiveness in addressing key concerns of the pandemic, such as public health guidance, government measures, and crisis management.

1.2. Research Question

i. How did Chinese TV news outlets, particularly party-affiliated media like China Media Group, construct narratives and frame information regarding the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how did these narratives align with Party and government policies?
ii. What thematic and discursive patterns emerged in the coverage of COVID-19 by Chinese TV news outlets, and how did these patterns reflect or reinforce governmental priorities and public health messaging?
iii. What roles did Chinese TV news media play in the dissemination of COVID-19-related information, specifically in the context of shaping public opinion, providing updates on governmental directives, and offering guidance on preventive measures during the initial outbreak?

2. Literature review

Scholars have extensively researched the news framing and content analysis of public health crises reported on television. A study examining media coverage of the 2003 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak by the Associated Press and Xinhua News Agency identified four key framing dimensions within the reporting (Gui, 2021). These dimensions include the attribution of responsibility to the Chinese and other governments, the economic and financial impacts of SARS, human interest frames that evoke emotional responses or highlight personal stories, and the severity frame, which emphasizes the seriousness, risks, and importance of the SARS pandemic (Beaudoin, 2007).

COVID-19 is a significant public health crisis that has garnered widespread attention due to its prolonged impact and global reach. It has also become a focal point for academic research, with numerous related studies emerging. In the field of television journalism and communication, research on COVID-19 has primarily centered on several key areas. The pandemic, which originated in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, initially led to Chinese government sources being viewed as crucial for information. Globally, people turned to these sources for updates. Some Western scholars argue that English-language news broadcasts from authoritarian states like China, Turkey, Iran, and Russia effectively create and disseminate COVID-19-related content on social media, reaching a broad international audience (Zeng, 2013). These state-run news agencies wield considerable influence over their viewership. However, much of this health reporting is perceived as biased and misleading, as it often politicizes the pandemic by criticizing democratic systems, promoting their own leadership, and endorsing conspiracy theories (Bright et al., 2020).

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One is a case study as the main TV news research, the current for Chinese TV news to "news broadcast" as the case study is relatively more, such as discussed "news broadcast" is one of the most representative of China, the mainstream media, it for COVID-19 outbreak of media reports not only test the ability of the media to public health emergencies, also tested the news broadcast fusion results in recent years. The visual campaign framework is a construction strategy of "visual campaign framework" with the visual framework of the visual campaign framework " in the News Network as an example (Xu et al., 2020). To create a "battle sense" through the combination of object, behaviour, scene and other elements to stimulate the emotion and memory related to the battle and the viewer; to make sense from emotion to understanding the sense (Du & Jiang, 2022).

The second is content analysis and research. For example, stood from the perspective of the people in the Common Perspective and Experience expression of TV News Media narrative, take CCTV News epidemic report, analysed the epidemic way of CCTV news, discussed how to tell the anti-epidemic story of TV news media reports, and how to mobilize users to participate.

At present, the research on COVID-19 reports in China is relatively abundant. However, the existing research has relatively little discussion on the media landscape in China in the early stage of the outbreak, which cannot be discussed at the overall level of TV news.

3. Research methods

This study employs qualitative research methods, including longitudinal observation and content analysis, to investigate the framework of COVID-19 news coverage. It focuses on a specialized TV news program that aired from January 20 to February 20, 2020, highlighting television coverage in China during the initial stages of the pandemic. The primary emphasis is on state-level media, such as CCTV, which is directly administered by the Chinese government. CCTV is selected for its prominent and authoritative position in the Chinese media landscape.

Beyond state-level media, provincial TV networks in China also closely followed the updates on the COVID-19 outbreak. These networks synchronized their news coverage with the state-level media, particularly in the early stages of the pandemic. The study found that state-level television outlets were the first to disseminate news of the novel coronavirus, officially confirming the outbreak and playing a key role in shaping the public's understanding of the pandemic.

Based on the Chinese government's white paper, "China's Actions to Fight COVID-19," the outbreak can be divided into five key stages. The first phase (December 27, 2019, to January 19, 2020) was marked by the initial response to the outbreak, while the second phase (January 20 to February 20, 2020) involved containing the virus's spread. This study focuses on the second phase as a critical period for TV media coverage of the outbreak.

To complement the observational approach, content analysis was conducted to delve into the media messages, interpreting various textual elements such as text, images, and symbols. This method aims to uncover underlying meanings and the motives behind media content. Textual analysis explores both the surface-level features of media reports and their deeper structural meanings, shedding light on the implicit intentions and

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effects within the news content. Furthermore, the study employed face validity checks by professionals in China to enhance its overall reliability and validity.

4. Findings

4.1. News 1+1 by the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee (CPC)

Based on researcher observation, The China Media Group (CMG) is a major international media organization in China, functioning at the ministerial level directly under the State Council and led by the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee. One of its key programs, *News 1+1*, is an in-depth news commentary show on CCTV's News Channel. This program focuses on current affairs, policies, public topics, and emergencies, selecting the most relevant and timely news topics of the day for discussion.

On January 15, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission issued a notice addressing questions about the COVID-19 outbreak. Later that day, *News 1+1* aired a live episode titled "COVID-19 Epidemic: Prevention and Control in Progress!" On January 20, the show featured Zhong Nanshan, the head of the National Health Commission's expert group, to respond to public concerns. From that point onward, *News 1+1* closely followed the epidemic, engaging experts and decision-makers in each episode to provide analysis and discuss countermeasures.

The program distinguishes itself from traditional news formats by incorporating live broadcasts and a new "news observer" concept. The "1+1" format features a host and a news observer engaging in dialogue. Initially, Bai Yansong, Dong Qian, or Li Xiaomeng co-hosted the show, but it later adopted a single-host format, moving to a "news + commentary" model. The show provides real-time live commentary, offering in-depth analysis of the complex background behind the news, aiming to uncover the truth, and presenting it with clarity and precision. Unlike *Global Vision*, *News 1+1* focuses on domestic news events. Since its debut, it has garnered praise from viewers and attention from other media outlets.

Between January 20 and February 20, 2020, *News 1+1* aired 24 episodes, each running approximately 20 minutes. Table 1 highlights how *News 1+1* played a key role in China's media response to COVID-19 by closely following government directives and providing expert analysis. From early leadership by Xi Jinping, who prioritized public health, to the lockdown of Wuhan on January 23, the program synchronized its coverage with critical government actions. By featuring experts like Zhong Nanshan and focusing on both national and local responses, *News 1+1* helped the public understand and navigate the evolving pandemic, offering timely updates and clear explanations of the outbreak and control measures.

On January 23,2020, at 2 am on January 23, Wuhan Novel Coronavirus pneumonia epidemic prevention and control headquarters issued Notice No.1: from 10:00 on January 23, the city bus, subway, ferry, long-distance passenger transport will be suspended; the airport and railway station channel temporarily closed. The passageway from Han was temporarily closed, and the battle of Wuhan was fully upgraded. In the early stage of the epidemic report, the main content was in Wuhan, the first place where the epidemic was concentrated.

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Table 1: Overall situation of China News theme by CPC

Order Number (n)	Themes	Number Of News Reports (n)	Proportion
1	The CPC Central Committee has led the fight against the epidemic	2	0.83%
2	Local governments and government departments are fighting the epidemic	1	0.04%
3	Epidemic analysis	10	41.6%
4	Epidemic response	10	41.6%
5	Regular news programs	1	0.04%

Third outbreak analysis: this kind of content is mainly about will be coronavirus pneumonia outbreak dynamic information reports, such programs since January 27,2020 "news 1 + 1" series, in the news 1 + 1 program through attachment authoritative experts and policy makers to help you make the outbreak analysis, analysis and related countermeasures.

Fourth epidemic response: This category of content is combined with the epidemic analysis and report content of the epidemic, and based on the form of authoritative experts and decision makers to accurately report the implementation of the epidemic prevention and control. On February 6,2020, the epidemic response was classified for the first time, focusing on the current situation of the epidemic in Suizhou, Ezhou and Qianjiang, Hubei province, and the mayor of Suizhou explained detailed measures for the epidemic response via video link.

4.2. Special Programs depends on province TV stations

Table 2 shows how different TV stations react on CPC news by different special programs on COVID-19. Provincial TV stations belong to regional local TV stations, and both state TV stations are subordinate to the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television. There are currently 37 provincial TV stations in China, and 12 have launched special programs for COVID-19.

Table 2: Special programs depend on the China TV stations

China TV Stations	COVID-19 Special Programs
Hubei TV	Fight the Epidemic as United", and "Changjiang News"
Zhejiang TV	"Unity is strength epidemic prevention and control" live
Hunan TV	"Special Time to Fight the Epidemic"
Dongfang TV	forming four news broadcast bands in the morning, noon, evening and prime time
Jiangsu TV	"News Eye" has opened a column titled "Scientific Prevention and Control Study together

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Shenzhen TV	Deep Vision News and Live streaming of Hong Kong, Macao, Macao and Taiwan
Guangdong TV	40 minutes of the epidemic prevention and control special report
Dongnan TV	“Unity”
Hainan TV	"prevention and control COVID-19 all media special live",
Jilin TV	"unity is strength to overcome difficulties"
Henan TV	15 minutes rolling broadcast "we fight" disease ", public channel add" people 315 "outbreak special section, news broadcast" yu wide news "
Jiang Xi TV	"Jiangxi News Network", "Fighting the epidemic", "Party Flag" and "Flying in the front line" in "Jiangxi News Network" and "News Night"

4.2.1. Hubei TV

Hubei TV is part of the Hubei Radio and Television Station network, serving as a crucial media outlet in the region. During the critical period of the COVID-19 outbreak in early 2020, Hubei Satellite TV took proactive steps to inform and unite the public. On January 23, 2020, amidst escalating concerns over the epidemic, Hubei Satellite TV launched a dedicated special report titled "Fight the Epidemic as United". This initiative was complemented by the "Changjiang News" program, which was broadcast jointly at 22:30, forming a pivotal evening news segment. The primary goal was to intensify public awareness and engagement in epidemic prevention and control efforts. By consolidating resources and focusing on timely and accurate reporting, Hubei TV played a crucial role in disseminating vital information, fostering community solidarity, and supporting public health measures during a challenging period.

4.2.2. Zhejiang TV

Zhejiang TV, officially known as the Zhejiang Radio and Television Group Satellite TV Channel and nicknamed "Blueberries," is a comprehensive satellite TV channel under the Zhejiang Radio and Television Group. In response to the growing COVID-19 crisis in early 2020, Zhejiang TV took swift action to inform the public and promote collective efforts in combating the virus. On January 26, 2020, the channel launched a special live broadcast titled "Unity Live," aimed at fostering solidarity and raising awareness about the pandemic. Additionally, starting from January 26, the channel aired a daily rolling broadcast of live news, titled "Unity is Strength: Epidemic Prevention and Control," with five updates per day. This initiative was designed to provide continuous and up-to-date coverage on the evolving situation, offering the public critical information on preventive measures, health guidelines, and the overall status of the epidemic, thus contributing to the region's coordinated response efforts.

4.2.3. Hunan TV

Hunan TV, operated by Hunan Radio and Television and Mango Media Co., Ltd., is a comprehensive television channel that played a key role in public communication during the COVID-19 outbreak. From January 21, 2020, to February 2, 2020, Hunan Satellite TV aired a special segment of its program "News Truth" every Tuesday to Friday, spanning two consecutive days per week. The segment was dedicated to educating the audience about COVID-19 prevention through a scientific lens. It provided viewers with accurate

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information about the virus, offering correct preventive measures to ensure public health and safety. The program emphasized the importance of relying on authoritative sources to eliminate public panic and promote scientific approaches to prevention.

In addition, Hunan TV introduced a special program titled "Special Time to Fight the Epidemic," which was broadcast daily during prime time at 19:30. Each episode lasted 10 minutes, providing up-to-date information on the latest developments in epidemic prevention and control efforts across the nation. This initiative ensured that the public stayed informed, empowering them to act responsibly and remain vigilant during the health crisis.

4.2.4. Dongfang TV

Dongfang TV, officially known as the Dragon TV Channel of Shanghai Radio and TV Station, is a popular satellite TV channel under Shanghai Radio and TV Station and Shanghai Culture, Radio, Film, and Television Group Co., Ltd. (SMG). It is also known by its nickname, "Tomato Station." Launched on October 23, 2003, Dragon TV has established itself as a prominent platform for news and entertainment.

In response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dragon TV swiftly adjusted its programming to meet the urgent need for timely and accurate information. The channel expanded its news coverage, launching a special "COVID-19 Special Report" during prime time at 21:30. This initiative created a robust news framework, ensuring that viewers could access critical updates throughout the day. The network established four dedicated news broadcast segments airing in the morning, noon, evening, and prime time, providing continuous and comprehensive coverage of the evolving pandemic. This strategic move helped keep the public informed and reassured during a period of widespread uncertainty.

4.2.5. Jiangsu TV

Jiangsu TV, also known by its nickname "Litchi," is the satellite channel of Jiangsu Radio and Television Group. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Jiangsu TV rapidly adapted its programming to provide comprehensive coverage and public health guidance. Starting on January 27, 2020, in addition to its regular news programs, such as "Jiangsu News" and "Evening News," the channel introduced a new midday news program titled "Unity is Strength: Win the Epidemic Prevention and Control War Special Report." This addition established an all-day news cycle, with broadcasts in the morning, midday, and evening, ensuring that audiences were consistently updated with vital information about the pandemic.

Further enhancing its efforts to inform the public, Jiangsu TV's program "News Eye" launched a special segment on January 30 called "Scientific Prevention and Control Study Together." This segment featured authoritative popular science videos and interviews with experts, aimed at providing accurate information, dispelling rumors, and addressing public doubts regarding the virus. Through these initiatives, Jiangsu TV played an important role in delivering timely and reliable information to support the public's understanding and confidence in the fight against COVID-19.

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4.2.6. Shenzhen TV

Shenzhen TV, the satellite TV channel of Shenzhen Radio, Film, and Television Group, took swift action to inform the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of its efforts, the channel launched a daily special report titled "Fighting the Epidemic," which aired at 11:50 PM for 50 minutes. This special report featured live connections with reporters on the front lines of epidemic prevention and control, providing real-time updates and firsthand insights into the ongoing efforts to combat the virus.

Additionally, Shenzhen TV expanded its news coverage by incorporating special reports into programs like "Deep Vision News" and live streaming broadcasts focused on Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. These reports dedicated full attention to the pandemic, ensuring that viewers were kept informed about the latest developments, preventive measures, and regional efforts to control the spread of COVID-19. Through these comprehensive initiatives, Shenzhen TV played a critical role in disseminating timely, accurate information and keeping the public aware of ongoing efforts in the fight against the epidemic.

4.2.7. Guangdong TV

Guangdong TV, officially known as Guangdong Radio and Television Satellite Channel and formerly known as Guangdong TV Lingnan, is a comprehensive satellite TV channel. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Guangdong TV, along with its affiliated channels—Guangdong Pearl River, Guangdong News, Guangdong Public, Southern Satellite TV, and Guangdong Economic Science and Education Channel—launched a 40-minute special report on epidemic prevention and control. This special aired every night at 19:30, following the prime-time CCTV News Broadcast.

The special report provided in-depth coverage on the latest developments regarding the pandemic, including preventive measures, health guidelines, and updates on regional and national efforts to contain the virus. By aligning their broadcast time with CCTV's news program, the channels ensured that viewers received consistent, authoritative information during prime time. This coordinated approach across multiple channels strengthened public awareness and reinforced Guangdong TV's role in delivering crucial information to help combat the spread of COVID-19.

4.2.8. Dongnan TV

Dongnan TV, formerly known as Fujian Satellite TV Southeast TV and also known as Fujian Satellite TV or Seagull TV, is the satellite TV channel of Fujian Radio, Film, and Television Group. It is the only television media in Fujian Province with full coverage across mainland China and significant influence overseas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dongnan TV played a key role in disseminating crucial information to the public.

To enhance its coverage of the pandemic, Southeast TV introduced two special reports titled "Unity," which aired daily at 10:00 AM and 16:00 PM. These reports were dedicated to providing continuous updates on the epidemic, promptly releasing authoritative information, and educating the public on scientific methods for preventing the novel coronavirus. Additionally, the program actively responded to public concerns, addressing questions and providing clarity on the evolving situation. Through these

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efforts, Dongnan TV ensured that both local and international audiences were well-informed and equipped to navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic.

4.2.9. Hainan TV

Hainan TV, officially known as Hainan Radio and Television Satellite Channel, is a comprehensive satellite TV channel that played an essential role in informing the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each day at 12:00 noon, Hainan TV broadcast a 60-minute live program titled "Prevention and Control of COVID-19: All-Media Special Live." This program focused on the prevention and control efforts related to the COVID-19 outbreak, both in Hainan and across the nation.

The live broadcast provided authoritative and accurate information about the ongoing situation in Hainan, ensuring that viewers received timely updates on local and national efforts to manage the crisis. Through this special live segment, Hainan TV aimed to deliver verified news, educate the public on preventive measures, and foster a sense of collective responsibility in combating the spread of the virus.

4.2.10. Jilin TV

Jilin TV, officially known as Jilin Radio and Television Satellite Channel, is a key satellite TV channel in Jilin Province. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Jilin TV launched a special program titled "Unity is Strength to Overcome Difficulties" across its seven channels. This initiative aimed to provide comprehensive coverage of epidemic prevention and control efforts.

To enhance the effectiveness of their coverage, Jilin TV established five key groups: the Propaganda and Data Collection Group, the Commentary Group, the Distribution and Materials Group, the Program Forecast Group, and the Task Implementation Group. These groups were responsible for ensuring that the tasks related to epidemic coverage were executed efficiently and that accurate information was disseminated to the public.

In addition to the special program, Jilin TV utilized its prominent news programs to focus on epidemic prevention and control. Programs such as "Jilin News Broadcast," "News Morning Post," "Urban Channel Watch City," "Public News Channel First," "Jilin News Comprehensive Radio 738 Early News," and "Traffic Radio Free Early Rush" prominently featured updates on the pandemic. These key news programs allocated significant space to report on the latest developments, preventive measures, and public health guidelines, ensuring that viewers were well-informed about the ongoing efforts to manage the crisis.

4.2.11. Henan TV

Henan TV, formerly known as Henan TV First Program and now officially recognized as Henan Radio and Television Satellite Channel, is a prominent media outlet in Henan Province. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Henan TV undertook significant efforts to keep the public informed and engaged.

The channel rolled out continuous coverage by broadcasting a special program titled "We Fight the Disease" every 15 minutes. This rolling broadcast was designed to provide

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frequent updates on the pandemic, ensuring that viewers received timely and relevant information.

In addition to this, Henan TV enhanced its public service with a special section on "People 315," focusing on the outbreak and related public concerns. The channel also included pandemic-related coverage in its regular news programs, such as "Yu Wide News," among others, which were broadcast live to offer real-time updates and insights into the evolving situation. Through these initiatives, Henan TV played a crucial role in disseminating vital information and supporting the community during the health crisis.

4.2.12. Jiangxi TV

Jiangxi TV, officially known as Jiangxi Radio and TV Station Satellite Channel and nicknamed "Chili Station," is a comprehensive satellite TV channel under Jiangxi Radio and TV Station. To address the COVID-19 pandemic, Jiangxi TV rapidly expanded its programming starting January 20, 2020.

The channel introduced several new columns, including "Jiangxi News Network," "Fighting the Epidemic," "Party Flag," and "Flying in the Front Line." These segments were designed to provide in-depth coverage of the pandemic, highlighting local and national efforts to combat the virus, and offering updates from the frontline.

In addition to these new columns, Jiangxi TV increased its news broadcasting frequency. Starting January 26, the channel added three additional news broadcasts at 12 PM, 2 PM, and 4 PM. This expansion ensured that viewers had access to timely and comprehensive updates throughout the day, reinforcing the channel's commitment to keeping the public informed during the health crisis.

5. Discussion

The study acknowledges the limitation of TV channels due to the sampling sizes. While based on observation and content analysis, after summarizing the experience of dealing with public emergencies in the past, this study find that the news media pay special attention to the following two points for better public opinion guidance: one is to release authoritative and true information and tell the audience what the truth is; the second is to constantly verify the information source to prevent the spread of rumors and avoid causing secondary public opinion disasters. According to Table 1, News 1+1 for TV news in the early days of COVID-19 focusing on epidemic analysis and epidemic response. First, fully meet the public's cognitive needs for the COVID-19 outbreak, In the special news report of the first issue of News 1 + 1 on January 20,2020, Academician Zhong Nanshan, head of the High-level expert group of the National Health Commission, We asked questions and questions about the difference between the COVID-19 virus and other viruses, whether it will transmit it from human to human, and how to respond to it, Academician Zhong Nanshan introduced the basic situation of the epidemic and released the judgment of the novel coronavirus from human to human transmission for the first time. Secondly, strengthen information interpretation to enhance the professionalism and effectiveness of news reports. The program-guiding role of this point can be seen very intuitively from the epidemic analysis. In the news report of epidemic analysis in News 1 + 1 on February 3, 2020, the National Health Commission reported the national data by February 24, 2020, and presented it in the form of data news. Through TV news,

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let the audience clear the current confirmed cases nationwide, and improve the professionalism and effectiveness of news reports.

Other than that, On January 20, 2020, Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, President of China and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, made important instructions on epidemic prevention and control, stating that party committees and governments at all levels and relevant departments should put the safety and health of the people first (Ding, 2020). On the same day, Academician Zhong Nanshan confirmed that "human-to-human transmission of novel coronavirus". Local governments have launched a level-I response to major public health emergencies. For provincial TV stations, COVID-19 is a sudden, life-and-death test. The test quickly penetrated into the political position, mechanism, talent, editing and broadcasting ability, provincial satelliteTV are well-prepared (Mao, 2021).

Under the coordination of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, satelliteTV stations across the country have strengthened epidemic prevention and control reports and reduced entertainment programs. Provincial satelliteTV stations in Hubei, Hunan, Zhejiang, Anhui, Chongqing and Shandong provinces have all set up live news programs and special reports on the fight against the epidemic. Hunan and Zhejiang provinces have canceled variety shows scheduled to be broadcast during the Spring Festival, such as "Happy Camp," "Ace to Ace," "New Voice," and "Roaming," to comprehensively strengthen epidemic prevention and control reports. As mentioned above, Hubei satelliteTV launched a special report titled "Unity against the Epidemic"; Zhejiang satellite TV launched a live news broadcast of "Unity for Epidemic prevention and Control". During the epidemic prevention and control period, the Publicity Department of the General Administration of China led the deployment of radio and television organizations to strengthen the news and publicity of epidemic prevention and control. 34 provincial satellite TV stations quickly adjusted their programs and launched more than 40 live news and special programs such as "United Together to Fight the Epidemic". It includes local news reports on epidemic prevention and control, and adds special programs on film and television news (Du & Jiang, 2022).

Following the footsteps of the State Administration of Radio, Film, Film and Television, provincial satellite TV stations grasped the unified guidance of national public opinion through TV news, and effectively achieved timely and effective news and information transmission in the early stage of the COVID-19 outbreak. For example, Guangdong satellite TV held a special publicity meeting on epidemic prevention and control before the Spring Festival to make special arrangements for epidemic prevention and control publicity. On the 30th eve of the Spring Festival, Guangdong satelliteTV urgently launched the emergency news publicity and information release plan, timely adjusted the typesetting of the Spring Festival program, and opened a number of live broadcast sections to strengthen the news commentary.

Other than that, Hubei satellite TV not only targeted the epidemic prevention and control in Wuhan, Hubei and the whole country, but also opened the whole TV channels and radio channels, realizing the multi-time simultaneous live broadcast of the whole station, which is the first time in the history of Hubei radio and television. In addition, on February 11,2020, Hubei satellite TV adjusted again, adding four more periods every day to broadcast the special program of CCTV news channel and the "Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism of The State Council", and the total broadcast time increased to 650 minutes (Zheng et al., 2022). In this paper within the scope of research time, it can

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be seen that the provincial TV followed national television, through the broadcast form direct national television news content, do national television news content and provincial TV news content consistency, reveal national TV news authority, reflect the provincial TV news public opinion direction and national TV news unity. From January 20 to February 20 / 20,2020, the audience will have a deep understanding of the epidemic prevention and control situation. At the same time, provincial satellite TV stations use live broadcasting to enhance the audience to understand the truth of epidemic prevention and control, and enhance the public's awareness of epidemic prevention and control.

6. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as a critical global health crisis, necessitating comprehensive research and analysis. The COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as a critical global health crisis, necessitating comprehensive research and analysis. This paper focuses on the early stages of the pandemic, with a particular emphasis on the period from January 20 to February 20, 2020, as directed by the State Council of China and coordinated by the Publicity Department of the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television.

The study primarily examines the national TV news program "News 1 + 1" as a representative sample, providing insights into the broader landscape of provincial TV news coverage. Analysis reveals that both national and provincial TV news outlets adeptly cater to audience preferences, emphasizing positive news coverage sourced from official information channels. Notably, the adoption of live broadcasting formats enhances the authenticity and relatability of news reports, fostering greater public engagement.

In summary, the findings underscore the crucial role played by China's national and provincial TV news networks in disseminating accurate information during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through effective reporting mechanisms and public engagement strategies, these media outlets have contributed to raising public awareness, shaping positive public discourse, and facilitating effective social governance amidst the challenges posed by the pandemic.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors reported no conflicts of interest for this work and declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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