

Framing Conflicts between “Expert Advice” and Public Interpretations: A Study of Youth Survival Pressure Topics on Weibo

Shiyan Wang

Yuzhong Campus, Lanzhou University, Lanzhou City, Gansu Province, 730106, China

2557544602@qq.com

ABSTRACT

Under the background of social change, the pressure of young people’s survival is becoming more and more obvious. As a leading new media platform, Weibo has become the main battlefield where “expert advice” collides with young people’s understanding (even often conflicts). In the final analysis, this discourse difference is actually a conflict of different thinking frames.

Based on framing theory, this study uses frame analysis as the main method to analyze five hot topics related to young people’s survival pressure from 2023 to 2025. Each topic has more than 10 million readings and more than 10,000 discussions. The study systematically compares the discourse frameworks adopted by experts and the public (mainly young users), and further discusses the hidden value conflicts behind these frameworks.

It is found that expert discussion is mainly influenced by macro-rational orientation, and four frameworks are most commonly used, including individual responsibility. The public discussion pays more attention to life experience, mainly using the frameworks of critical resistance, structural attribution and survival realism. The two sides are obviously opposed in many aspects, and the root of the conflict is actually the difference of three layers of values. This research enriches the academic achievements in related fields, expands the application of framing theory, and also provides ideas for reducing discussion opposition and promoting a more constructive public discussion environment.

Keywords: Expert Discourse; Framing Analysis; Social Media; Youth Survival Pressure.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the social transformation in China entering a deeper and more complicated stage, young people are facing more and more survival pressures, such as fierce competition in the workplace, pressure to buy a house, and anxiety about getting married and having children. These problems have gradually become the social topics that everyone is most concerned about. As a representative of new online media, Weibo has become the core platform for everyone to discuss these issues because of its fast topic spread, high public participation and various discussion forms, and it is also the place where more people pay attention to these issues.

In this context, there is a persistent and sharp disagreement between “expert advice” (that is, experts’ constructive opinions on public issues) and young people’s views. Sometimes, expert advice is regarded as divorced from reality, which arouses people’s suspicion and even stigmatizes the word “expert” (Bao, 2023) ^[1]. Behind this is actually the difference in expression between experts and ordinary people.

Although the existing research has looked at some problems, such as expert mistakes, online quarreling conversations, and why people believe experts (Hu, 2024; Shen, 2024) ^{[5][9]}, but they did not focus on a specific social problem, nor did they analyze what different statements experts and ordinary people used in specific things.

Therefore, this study takes the survival pressure of young people as an example to answer the following main questions: What do experts and ordinary people say when they talk about the pressure of young people in Weibo, a new media? What are the characteristics of these statements, and what are the hidden conflicts of values?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Expert Discourse

Experts are those who know a lot and have rich experience in a certain professional field (Bao, 2023) ^[1]. According to their professional knowledge and practical experience, they express their views on public issues, including explanation, judgment and prediction. These are expert discourse. Expert advice is a more practical and operational part of expert discourse, which refers to the explanatory and guiding opinions given by experts on public issues and things that everyone cares about in society. Expert advice belongs to the field of culture and knowledge. In the social transformation and historical changes, it has become an important force affecting our production and daily life (Bao, 2023) ^[1].

Now, expert advice is mainly spread through traditional news media or new media platforms like Weibo. Especially in Weibo, discussions are often labeled with “experts’ suggestions” or “experts’ names”. These labels are like the marks of topics, which organize related public topics. This kind of discussion with labels is one of the main forms of expert discussion in the new media environment.

2.2 Framing Theory

Frame theory was first put forward by anthropologist Gregory Bateson, and later in 1974, Erving Goffman brought it into cultural sociology in his book *“Frame Analysis”*. Goffman imagines frame as a cognitive structure through which people organize and understand social experiences. He says that it is like an “explanatory framework”, like an invisible lens, which shapes the way people understand social reality (Goffman, 1974) ^[4]. In other words, we or organizations will rely on the existing cognitive structure in our minds to sort out and understand information.

Entman further emphasized the process of framing in 1993, pointing out that its core role is selection and prominence. So framing itself is a very subjective process, because different people or groups may use different frame when dealing with the same problem, which depends on their respective cognitive direction and value standpoint.

As a research method based on text analysis, frame analysis can help us understand how words are related to broader social meanings, and these relationships are always changing (Pan, 2006) ^[7]. It is widely used in the study of public issues, policy communication and social disputes.

When studying public issues, frame analysis focuses on how the media construct issues by choosing topics and ways of speaking, thus influencing people’s opinions. Research shows that the framework of the media is related to the types of questions and who they choose to listen to (Maesele & Schuurman, 2008) ^[6]. Mainstream media often reflect macro policy orientation, so they tend to use a more progressive or positive framework (Wang & Zeng, 2015) ^[12], while the reporting mode of elite media may be more single, and the interpretation of local mass media may be more diverse and flexible (Maesele et al., 2008) ^[6].

Policy issues are often packaged as “economic rationality”, “social equity” or “national security”, which makes it easier for everyone to support and makes decision-making more reasonable (Entman, 1993) ^[2]. Sometimes, the policy framework will mix state affairs with personal concerns, and combine the official truth with the ideas of ordinary people (Ge & Liao, 2026) ^[3].

However, experts who study social disputes have found that different people will argue with each other and influence everyone with various sayings, such as “progress”, “harm” and “concern”. They also found that whoever has the information may control the voice of the media (Maesele et al., 2008) ^[6].

2.3 Expert Discourse, Public Discourse, and the Communication of Public Issues

Expert discourse is an important part of authoritative discourse. Based on professional knowledge system and academic ability, it can give rational explanations and professional judgments on public issues. In the traditional media environment, expert discourse relies on the endorsement of institutional media to achieve a top-down and one-way communication mode, and it is difficult for the public to have the opportunity to question or respond.

However, on the new media platform like Weibo, experts’ condescending way of speaking has lost the effect of traditional media to help “filter”. There is a growing gap between what experts say and the real life of ordinary people. When experts’ words don’t match everyone’s fears, it may lead to collective confrontation in new media and sow the seeds of quarrel (Shen, 2024) ^[9].

In contrast, the discussion of ordinary people is more grounded, and the actual feelings are still emotional. Starting from their own lives, they care about things related to their own interests and talk about public issues in a personal way. On Weibo, with the functions of comment, forwarding and topic interaction, fragmentary personal opinions can quickly get together. After these opinions are held together, public issues can be turned into hot spots of social concern (Zhang, 2021)^[13]. The feelings hidden in these discussions-such as anxiety, weakness, anger, and irony-are not only ways to help us understand society, but also intermediaries for everyone to act together (Papacharissi, 2015)^[8]. This is actually a bottom-up communication method based on everyone's real life and feelings.

Generally speaking, the way experts talk to ordinary people is very different from the logic behind them, and this difference has become more obvious in the discussion on the pressure of young people's lives in Weibo. As a result, "expert advice" is often not in line with everyone's understanding, which is what we want to find out most in this study.

2.4 Research Questions

Most of the existing studies focus on topics such as biotechnology or policy effects, and pay relatively little attention to specific social problems. Moreover, the research on expert discourse or expert symbolic authority usually uses critical discourse analysis to find out the reasons and characteristics of antagonistic public discussion.

In view of these shortcomings, this study takes experts' suggestions on young people's survival pressure as the research object, trying to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What frameworks did experts use to discuss the survival pressure of young people?

RQ2: What frameworks did the public use to discuss the survival pressure of young people?

RQ3: What is the difference between the framework used by experts and the public?

RQ4: What value conflicts are hidden behind the frame conflicts between experts and public discourse?

3. METHODS

3.1 Data Sources and Sample Selection

The object of this study is the posts related to young people's survival pressure in hot topics related to expert advice on Weibo platform. We find these topics by keyword combination "expert advice & young people" and "expert name & young people". The screening criteria require that these topics must be: (1) the content is closely related to the survival pressure of young people; (2) Appeared between 2023 and 2025; (3) More than 10 million views and more than 10,000 discussions; (4) Including clearly identifiable expert sources as the initiator of the discussion.

According to these standards, we selected five topics: # Experts say that young people's low wages may be due to their lack of ability #; # Experts say that the high cost of childbirth is not the main reason why young people are unwilling to have children #; # Experts say that young people should not save more than hope #; # Experts say that renting a house does not affect young people's marriage and childbirth #; # Experts suggest that young people should pay their wages to help their parents in their hometown pay their pensions #.

For the analysis of expert discourse, we take the original post published by experts under each topic as the main text. For public discourse, we collected all the first-level comments, reposts from experts' original post, and all the posts in the corresponding topic pages, and sorted them by popularity. When the number of first-level comments is not enough, we will add second-level comments.

After removing repeated posts, irrelevant content and irrational or meaningless expressions, we adopted the method of stratified sampling. We selected 500 or 300 posts for each topic according to the proportion distribution of the total number of posts and comment types under each topic. The final data set includes five expert posts and 1900 public posts for analysis.

3.2 Frame Identification and Coding Procedure

We regard every Weibo post as an analysis unit. According to the step guide proposed by Van Gorp (2010)^[11], frame identification is carried out in two steps. First of all, according to the basic logic, value orientation and discussion position, we carried out theme coding and spindle coding, and found out the relevant framework by inductive method. This process led us to find eleven different frameworks, and then we organized them into a framework table.

Then, based on the results of the inductive stage, we made a deductive framework analysis. These eleven secondary frames are further classified into four main overall frames, so that we can more clearly see the conflict of views between experts and ordinary people in the discussion.

Considering that in the new media environment, the discussion on Weibo is often fragmentary, emotional and colloquial, we are particularly careful when coding. We carefully examined the posts and comments, removed those meaningless fragmentary expressions, but kept the core discussion content. This not only ensures the accuracy of frame recognition, but also takes into account the expression characteristics of new media discussions.

For posts that may involve multiple topics, we carefully read the text content to determine what each post mainly cares about and what the core meaning is. Each post ends up in only one main frame. Therefore, in this study, there is no cross-classification of frames (Shi & Wang, 2019) ^[10], as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Frame Classification and Descriptions.

Primary Frame	Secondary Frame	Description
Attribution Logic	Individual Responsibility	Attributes youth-related issues to individual factors (e.g., ability, choices, values), emphasizing the individual's direct responsibility for outcomes.
	Structural Attribution	Attributes youth-related issues to external factors such as social structure, institutional design, macro-environment, and market mechanisms, emphasizing systemic constraints on individuals.
	Developmentalism	Prioritizes “development” as the core value, emphasizing career advancement and long-term future growth, and advocating the sacrifice of certain immediate needs for the sake of development.
Value Orientation	Economic Rationality	Centers on economic logic such as “cost–benefit” analysis and “utility maximization,” evaluating behavior in terms of economic costs, practical returns, and rational choice.
	Ethics of Responsibility	Takes “ethical responsibility” as the core value, assessing issues in terms of individuals' responsibilities toward themselves, their families, and society, and emphasizing the fulfillment of such obligations.
	Questioning Experts	Raises doubts about the rationality, practical applicability, and factual accuracy of expert advice, representing a relatively moderate form of discursive opposition to experts.
Discursive Stance	Critical Resistance	Engages in in-depth critique of the underlying logic, value orientation, and perceived detachment from reality within the discourse, often accompanied by attitudinal or behavioral resistance.
	Individual Rights	Advocates for individual autonomy—such as the right to choose, the right to development, and the right to voice—opposing excessive interference with or judgment of personal choices.
	Survival Reality	Focuses on individuals' immediate living conditions, material necessities, and practical difficulties (e.g., housing, income, childrearing costs), grounding analysis in lived experience.
Reality Consideration	Generational Differences	Examines intergenerational differences in values, interests, needs, and living conditions, highlighting generational conflicts and cognitive divergences in youth-related issues.
	Gender Perspective	Analyzes differentiated experiences and needs in youth-related issues from the perspectives of gender differences, gendered structural constraints, and gender rights protection.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Frames in Expert Discourse

According to the analysis of the text of experts' suggestions in five Weibo topics about young people's survival pressure, the experts' words mainly use only one secondary framework in each topic. The construction of the framework mainly focuses on two aspects: attribution logic and value orientation.

On the level of attribution logic, experts' words emphasize personal responsibility more than structural restrictions. The survival pressure of young people is mostly attributed to personal factors, rather than broader systemic or institutional problems.

At the level of value orientation, experts' words are mainly embodied in the framework of economic rationality and developmentalism, emphasizing rational decision-making at the macro level and giving priority to long-term development.

At the same time, what experts say always carries a feeling of "I am an authority". They don't care much about how to interact with others in the discussion, and they don't consider all kinds of actual situations in reality. Generally speaking, the core mode of expert discourse has an obvious feature, that is, it is often divorced from our personal real life feelings, but pays more attention to those macro and professional truths (see Table 2).

Table 2. Frames in Expert Advice Discourse.

Topic	Expert Frame	Representative Statement
#Experts Claim Low Salaries Among Young People May Reflect Insufficient Ability#	Individual Responsibility Frame	"Few young people engage in self-reflection. It may be that their professional competence and individual capability are insufficient, which explains their relatively low salaries."
#Experts Claim High Childbearing Costs Are Not the Primary Reason Young People Avoid Having Children#	Generational Differences Frame	"In the past, people believed that marriage and childbearing made life and family complete, with children at the center of family life. Today, young people's lives are centered more on the self."
#Experts Claim Young People Should Not Compete in Savings but in Hope#	Economic Rationality Frame	"Savings are not young people's comparative advantage... It may be difficult to establish yourself in Beijing, Shanghai, or Guangzhou, but you could consider moving to emerging first-tier cities."
#Experts Claim Renting Does Not Prevent Young People from Marrying and Having Children#	Developmentalism Frame	"You've just graduated from university or completed postgraduate studies, yet you allow yourself to be constrained by housing... Young people should travel light and avoid unnecessary burdens... What is wrong with renting?"
#Experts Suggest Young People Contribute to Pension Funds for Their Parents in Their Hometowns#	Economic Rationality Frame	"Under the current pension system, there is limited room to increase funding through higher contributions or taxation. If we wish to raise additional funds, contributors must feel that increased payments bring tangible benefits... There remains significant potential to expand employee pension coverage among young flexible workers."

4.2 Frames in Public Discourse

Public discussion is characterized by diversity and realistic orientation. It covers four main frame dimensions, including attribution logic, value orientation, discourse position and practical consideration, among which Critical Resistance, Structural Attribution and Survival Reality are the most prominent sub-frames.

Different from expert discussions, the public is more inclined to blame the survival pressure of young people on external factors, such as uneven distribution of resources, class solidification, system design and so on. Public discussion pays more attention to the immediate survival needs of individuals, which is in sharp contrast with the development orientation of expert discussion and directly challenges the experts' emphasis on personal responsibility.

Although there are differences in the proportion of the framework of different topics, the public discussion has always focused on the life experiences and specific survival difficulties of young people (see Table 3).

Table 3. Frames in Public Discourse.

Topic	Public Frame	Representative Statement	Proportion (%)
#Experts Claim Low Salaries Among Young People May Reflect Insufficient Ability#	Critical Resistance Frame	“Quite skilled at gaslighting. Why not compare with young people in Europe and the U.S.? Comparing only with worse situations is like slapping someone to tears and then blaming them for being too sensitive.”	39.60
	Questioning Experts Frame	“Perhaps high expert salaries are also problematic. The threshold for becoming an economist seems quite low.”	31.20
	Structural Attribution Frame	“Prices keep rising while wages remain low. Resources are distributed unequally and concentrated in the hands of a few.”	29.20
	Critical Resistance Frame	“Those in high positions show no concern for the people but instead blame them. If not self-centered, should we center our lives around you?”	32.80
	Questioning Experts Frame	“The expert claims to understand again—yet cannot even see through appearances to the essence.”	22.40
	Structural Attribution Frame	“If widening wealth gaps and high economic costs cannot be changed, are we supposed to change people’s values instead?”	16.40
#Experts Claim High Childbearing Costs Are Not the Primary Reason Young People Avoid Having Children#	Survival Reality Frame	“From a practical standpoint, the main issue is lack of money—and time. I earn 9,000 RMB a month in Wuhan; that’s not enough to support a family.”	18.00
	Gender Perspective Frame	“Improve women’s status and workplace protections. If marriage and children benefit women, they will naturally be more willing to have children.”	5.20
	Ethics of Responsibility Frame	“If I had money, I’d be willing to have children. Having several without money is irresponsible—are you asking children to starve with you?”	1.60
	Individual Rights Frame	“If having children is a personal responsibility, then respect personal choice. Do young people not have the right to decide whether to have children?”	3.60
	Critical Resistance Frame	“Do you even have savings? Would you move to the countryside? Don’t give irresponsible advice. Without savings, where does hope come from? Expert advice should be taken in reverse.”	35.33
	Questioning Experts Frame	“What kind of expert is he? Do you even understand the employment environment in Chengdu?”	20.00
#Experts Claim Young People Should Not Compete in Savings but in Hope#	Survival Reality Frame	“When I was young, I pursued ‘hope’ instead of savings—moving between study and work. In the end, I finished my studies and had nothing. Without savings, how can one buy a house, a car, marry, or raise children?”	22.67
	Structural Attribution Frame	“With class solidification in today’s society, is there really hope? Stop misleading ordinary people.”	12.00
	Individual Rights Frame	“You’re no longer young, yet you define what young people should do. If you want to give advice, try living like young people for a few years first.”	10.00

Table 3. (continued) Frames in Public Discourse.

Topic	Public Frame	Representative Statement	Proportion (%)
#Experts Claim Renting Does Not Prevent Young People from Marrying and Having Children#	Questioning Experts Frame	“Where do these so-called experts come from? How can someone like this be called an expert? They have no idea how ordinary people live.”	30.67
	Structural Attribution Frame	“In a society marked by class solidification and concentrated resources, how difficult is it for ordinary people to build a future?”	21.33
	Critical Resistance Frame	“This is like saying ‘let them eat cake.’ It’s easy to speak without understanding reality. These so-called experts should remain silent.”	20.00
	Survival Reality Frame	“What about children’s schooling? Without property or household registration, how can children attend school?”	17.33
	Economic Rationality Frame	“Monthly infant formula alone costs 3,000 RMB.”	7.33
	Gender Perspective Frame	“If career comes first, then perhaps don’t have children—how are working mothers supposed to survive in the workplace?”	3.33
	Critical Resistance Frame	“I just want to ask—can experts actually hear the voices of the people?”	36.67
#Experts Suggest Young People Contribute to Pension Funds for Their Parents in Their Hometowns#	Structural Attribution Frame	“We are already supporting them ourselves. Is it too late to rely on additional contributions? The issue with pensions is not insufficiency, but inequality.”	29.33
	Economic Rationality Frame	“If you have money, just give it directly. Why involve intermediaries? This feels like squeezing money from ordinary people.”	20.00
	Survival Reality Frame	“Young people’s salaries barely cover basic living expenses. If elderly parents have no other income, medical and pension costs fall on their children—and flexible employment income is unstable.”	14.00

4.3 Comparison of Expert and Public Discourse Frames

In all four main dimensions, the discussion between experts and the public about the survival pressure of young people shows great differences. Generally speaking, this contrast can be regarded as the obvious opposition between macro rationality and personal life experience, professional authority and grassroots suspicion, long-term development and immediate survival.

On the level of attribution logic, expert discussion mainly follows the direction of personal responsibility. The reason of young people’s survival pressure is largely attributed to personal factors. Young people are encouraged to reflect on their own shortcomings and emphasize the importance of self-adjustment and personal efforts. Structural factors, such as unequal resource distribution, class solidification and institutional defects, have been relatively diluted. In contrast, public discussion pays more attention to structural issues. It directly refutes the individual responsibility emphasized by experts, and thinks that the difficulties of employment, housing, marriage and childbirth are caused by the macro-social environment and social system, not the inability of young people. This difference shows that the two sides have completely different views on the root causes of young people’s life stress.

In terms of values, the expert discussion mainly focuses on development and economic rationality, and pays more attention to macro rational choice and long-term development goals. Experts always emphasize “long-term interests” and “overall rationality”, and advocate that young people should sacrifice some immediate survival needs for future development. For example, experts suggest that young people give up the goal of settling in first-tier cities and choose rational development in emerging cities instead; Encourage them to “travel light”, give up the pursuit of savings, and rent a house instead of buying a house to reduce the burden; It is also suggested to contribute to the pension system according to economic logic, with the aim of optimizing the system. These proposals all embody the values of “sacrificing the present for the future”.

In contrast, public discussion pays more attention to survival reality and individual rationality. They pay more attention to meeting the immediate needs of survival and regard “survival first” as the core value. For young people, savings, housing and stable income are the prerequisites for basic survival; Without these guarantees, long-term development is considered out of reach. Therefore, the public will resist the expert advice that they think is “ignoring the present and talking about the future”, and will also judge whether the expert advice is feasible according to their own economic situation. The value order of the two sides is fundamentally different.

When it comes to the way of speaking, experts always speak with a sense of neutrality and authority. Like “teachers”, they express their opinions in an objective tone and with an authoritative position. They don’t care much about whether their suggestions are too far away from the real life of young people, or whether they respond to everyone’s reasonable worries and criticisms. Their words always maintain a professional and authoritative attitude.

And the public discussion, it is completely a confrontational attitude. It is full of the tone of “questioning experts” and “criticizing and resisting”, mainly to challenge the practice of experts monopolizing the right to speak. As a direct receiver of young people’s survival pressure, the public is very resistant to suggestions that make people feel ungrounded, superficial or one-sided. They express their dissatisfaction through satire, questioning and criticism-not only arguing whether the expert’s suggestion is reasonable or not, but also questioning the expert’s professional ability and their position. This has formed an atmosphere of public discussion, directly against the authority of experts.

When discussing the actual situation, experts mainly use the framework of “generational differences” to speak, which shows that their perspective is narrow and a little out of touch with the real life experience of young people. When explaining the pressure of young people’s survival, experts always pay attention to the changes in cultural concepts of different generations-such as the changes in their views on marriage, childbirth and lifestyle-but often ignore the specific situations that young people are facing now, such as income level, living expenses and how difficult it is to find a job. Moreover, the experts’ statements have basically not mentioned such aspects as gender perspective and regional differences, so their analysis is of little use in practice.

Different from the discussion of experts, our ordinary people’s chat is closer to real life and we think more comprehensively. These topics come from everyone’s daily experience, mainly around the actual life difficulties. For example, we will not only worry about urgent material problems such as income, housing and raising children, but also take into account the fact that people of different ages think differently, men and women are unequal and young people in different places are in different situations. Therefore, what we are talking about is closer to the reality and can better reflect the real needs of young people. In this way, there is a big gap between the views of experts and our views in real life.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It’s very important to find out the differences between experts and ordinary people when discussing public issues, and what conflicts of values lie behind these differences. We have studied the hot topics about young people’s life stress in Weibo, found out what fixed routines experts and ordinary people have, compared their differences, and found out the value conflicts behind these routines.

It is found that ordinary people often use the two routines of “criticizing and resisting” and “questioning experts”, which is quite similar to the previous study that “experts’ failure” leads to more confrontational remarks on the Internet (Shen, 2024) ^[9]. However, our research this time is more detailed, and we have found out which routines are used to express antagonistic remarks in the new media environment, so that we can see more clearly how this resistance is manifested.

Moreover, this study confirms the existence of “contextual detachment” in expert advice discourse. Experts always like to describe structural and institutional problems as personal adaptation, which is consistent with previous research findings-experts suggest that being divorced from social reality will lead to a decline in public trust (Hu, 2024) ^[5]. More specifically,

this study shows that this separation is reflected in ignoring personal life experience and overemphasizing macro-level rationality.

Experts and ordinary people discuss in different ways, which actually reflects a deeper conflict of values. These core conflicts can be summarized into three aspects.

First of all, there is a conflict between macro rationality and personal life experience. Experts pay more attention to the development of the whole society and system optimization, and insist on professional rationality, but ignore the survival pressure and emotional needs of young people. They regard the survival pressure of young people as a normal phenomenon of social development, and believe that it should be solved by personal adjustment and long-term planning. Ordinary people, on the other hand, pay more attention to the actual life experience and emphasize the need to alleviate the immediate difficulties and meet specific personal needs. What experts call “macro-rationality” is ungrounded to ordinary people. This opposition between macro-rationality and micro-experience has become the main reason for the conflict of views between the two sides.

Second, there is a conflict of values between professional authority and individual rights. Experts rely on professional knowledge to construct discussions from an authoritative perspective, emphasizing the rationality and guiding role of their suggestions. There is a hidden value that tends to be dominated by experts in this discussion. But the public pays more attention to individual rights-such as the right to speak, the right to develop, and the right to make their own decisions. Through “critical resistance” and “questioning experts”, public discussion challenges the monopoly of authority and emphasizes that personal expression is reasonable (Shen, 2024) ^[9]. This tension between authority-centered and autonomy-centered values intensifies the frame conflict and echoes the broader phenomenon that expert symbols are stigmatized in contemporary society.

Third, there is a conflict of values between development priority and survival priority. The developmentalist framing used by experts pays more attention to long-term development and encourages young people to give up their current survival needs for future careers, such as housing or savings. But the Survival Reality frame used by the public is more concerned with the immediate living conditions. Everyone thinks that long-term development is impossible without solving the practical problems of income, housing and raising children first. This fundamental difference in values makes it difficult for both sides to reach an agreement, which is also an obvious manifestation of framing conflict.

Although this research has contributed, it also has some shortcomings. First of all, the analysis only pays attention to five main topics on Weibo platform, and does not include social media that other young people like to use, such as Douyin or Xiaohongshu. The limited sample range may affect the universality of the research results. Secondly, although the study found the differences between experts and the public in the framework, it did not investigate how these framework conflicts changed dynamically with time in the new media environment, nor did it deeply explore the mechanism of the diffusion and intensification of these conflicts. Thirdly, the analysis of value conflict mainly stays at the macro level, without considering the diversity of different groups of young people (such as differences in education, region or occupation), and these factors may affect the differences in framework practice.

Considering these limitations, future research can be carried out in three directions. First of all, expanding the scope of analysis to include more platforms and broader topics will make the research results more reliable and universal. Secondly, future research can focus on the dynamic changes of framing conflicts, add the time dimension, and see how experts and the public’s frames interact, argue and change, so as to reveal the communication mechanism behind Framing Conflicts. Thirdly, taking into account the young people’s demographic characteristics, we can study the differences in the use of frame and value conflicts among different social groups in more detail, deepen our understanding of the public discussion of youth survival pressure, and provide more targeted suggestions for reducing the discursive polarization.

REFERENCES

- [1] Bao, Y. (2023). The transformation and reflection of expert symbolism in the context of new media, *Youth Journalist*, (14), 110-112. <https://doi.org/10.15997/j.cnki.qnjz.2023.14.040>.
- [2] Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>.

- [3] Ge, B., & Liao, Z. (2026). Discursive framing construction and transformation of the Western Plan from the perspective of constructive journalism *Youth Exploration*, (01), 80-90. <https://doi.org/10.13583/j.cnki.issn1004-3780.2026.01.007>.
- [4] Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harvard University Press.
- [5] Hu, X. (2024). A study on influencing factors of trust in experts in the social media field, Master's thesis, Shandong University, <https://doi.org/10.27272/d.cnki.gshdu.2024.003607>.
- [6] Maesele, P., & Schuurman, D. (2008). Biotechnology and the popular press in Northern Belgium. *Science Communication*, 29, 435-471.
- [7] Pan, Z. (2006). Frame analysis: A field in urgent need of theoretical clarification, *Communication & Society*, (1), 17-46.
- [8] Papacharissi, Z. (2015). *Affective publics: Sentiment, technology, and politics*. Oxford University Press.
- [9] Shen, R. (2024). The generation and application of online confrontational discourse in the context of expert failure, Master's thesis, Zhejiang University of Media and Communications <https://doi.org/10.27852/d.cnki.gzjcm.2024.000061>.
- [10] Shi, A., & Wang, P. (2019). Fragmented news frames: Dual discourses of “poverty alleviation” and “human rights” in The New York Times’ China-related coverage, *Journalism University*, (05), 1-12, 116. <https://doi.org/10.20050/j.cnki.xwdx.2019.05.004>.
- [11] Van Gorp, B. (2010). Strategies to take subjectivity out of framing analysis. *Work & Stress*, 24(1), 84-109.
- [12] Wang, Y., & Zeng, F. (2015). Rumor clarification and public empowerment: The role of social media in risk communication, *Contemporary Communication*, (02), 14-18.
- [13] Zhang, Z. (2021). Issue construction and the social construction of online events, *Academic Research*, (09), 49-55, 177.