

The Impact of Early Comment Settings on the Diffusion and Interaction of Low-Information Comments: A Case Study of Weibo and Xiaohongshu

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Abstract. Social media networks have fast changing recommendation systems residing on algorithms. The use of comment box is becoming a very necessary space of interaction. Although it has little in common with the initial post and does not present much information, numerous comments appear early or remain at the top. This influences the way posts are understood by the users and their interaction with them. Based on this, the research paper will focus on entertainment related posts on Weibo and Xiaohongshu. It examines the connection between early and conspicuous and low-information comment and later comments and overall engagement. Posts that were gathered within thirty days were used to observe. Special care was taken of the highest rated ten comments to each post. Comments were not to be regarded as independent texts. They were compared according to position, type of content and reactions of the users. Comparison of early and later comments showed there was a difference between the two platforms. Low-information comments also tend to get more likes on Xiaohongshu. The more evident opinion is the comment posted in Weibo, it is more likely to gain attention. These trends suggest that initial remarks are related to the course of further arguments. They determine the course of development of the comment section.

Keywords: Low-information comments, early comments, bandwagon effect, platform.

1. Introduction

The social media platforms keep growing. The comment sections have become slowly important areas where users communicate and consult. With the increase in the volume of interaction, one question persists, and it is a large number of comments that are not directly related to the contents of the post. They do not give constructive comments to the writers. Through observation, these low-information comments seem to fall into two main categories. One of them is playful comments focused on jokes or memes. Most of them have nothing much to do with the posting itself. The other type shifts the topic gradually under the influence of emotional manifestation or life experience of individuals. The two types also tend to occupy pride of place in comments sections though they differ in their formats. The comments with the useful information, factual explanations, or definite opinions are pushed into background. The users have less possibility to find the information about

the post relevant in its theme. As a result, comment sections in terms of discussing and sharing information do not have much value.

This is not a random occurrence. User behavior and platform mechanics are mutually supported in a circular process. This is increasingly becoming observable. Initial comments are more noticeable per se. Though this is no intent, it tends to shape the way future users use it. Eventually, this method leads to homogenization of the discussions in comment boxes. The tone of the discussion is a critical aspect that needs to be understood the way the top remarks influence it. This is the reason why information spreads within the social media and provides valuable information regarding the improvement of comment content and the administration of the platform.

This paper examines the potential motivating influences of comments made by low information and considers how they propagate on different platforms. To compare the difference between variations in platform architecture as they influence the direction of comments, one can use Weibo and Xiaohongshu.

The data processing phase involved a mixture of manual annotation and literature review in this study. We have examined the past research work and clarified relevant concepts. The basic statistical analysis was utilized to examine authentic postings and comments. This method ensured that discussions remained grounded in the actual interactions patterns in the real world by preventing abstraction conjecture and speculation. The current research is in a quest to set whether the special status of early comments has any implications to the total composition of comment sections. It discusses more in detail the mechanism and the potential implications of this phenomenon. To accomplish this we put into consideration several factors. These are the number of comments, the type of content and the order that they are published. We analyzed data and conducted cross-platform analysis. We considered relevant theories. Resting on these remarks, the paper discusses the consequences that could be had on the quality of communications in comment sections.

2. Literature review

2.1. Poor quality of comment section and low-information comments

Since the emergence of social media as a dominant force in the flow of information has also been accompanied by the development of comment section as a new vital space, where users share their attitudes and emotions. Nonetheless, numerous researches have established that a significant percentage of online comments are off topic, highly emotional or limited in information and do not follow the information displayed in the original post too closely [1]. Past studies done on news comments have also identified that almost forty percent of user responses have nothing to do with the factual information on the article. These remarks are usually presented in a form of such short emotional response or social gestures. This has not only decreased the density of information that is discussed, but also undermined the feedback value of the content creators and the platforms [2].

The research with further development in accordance with psychological communication theoretical basis advocates that comment fields are not merely aggregations of individualized views. Rather they are dynamic systems heavily dependent on emotions, group situation, and sequence of comment display. Comments made early have high chances to be discussed later as references.

The effects of emotional contagion coupled with social norms are that with the use of previous comments, the user can tend to follow the presented attitudes and styles. Consequently, subsequent remarks tend to be similar in comparison to the preceding remarks [3]. It is possible under this positional effect that the general standard of the content on the comment section can be molded very early. Moreover, studies have also found that comments posted early, when prioritized by the

algorithm systems of platforms, not only become better seen but also affect subsequent stages of the engagement and the expression patterns [4].

2.2. Low-information comments and their effects research

Simultaneously, studies on the same direction have also investigated the categorization, detection and the impact of low-information comments commonly known as low information comments (LIC). At the textual level, technical studies are mainly geared on identifying irrelevant content, noisy comments, and low-value expressions. These articles demonstrate that LIC represent a high proportion of remarks on most sites and may disrupt the perception of the leading theme of a post by the users [5]. The other direction of research turns to focus on the behavioral impacts of LIC. The quality of discussion is likely to deteriorate when the number of the low-information comments is high. This increases the chances of emotional discourse, ineffective interaction and off-topic content in the comment sections [6]. The combination of these results can lead to the idea that LIC can cause slow erosion of the discussion spaces structure. Nonetheless, no empirical data covers the question of whether early LIC gain magnification is strengthened by the use of ranking mechanisms.

2.3. Differences in platforms, bandwagon effect, and research gap

The additional examination indicates that variations between local social media and international media are valuable in discovering how low-information remarks work. Using the examples of Weibo and Xiaohongshu, the existing literature has revealed that Weibo is predisposed towards paying attention to the trending topics, emotionally inclined content, and talking about the events happening in the society. The group influences and content circulation speed is more likely to influence users on this platform, and the structures of interaction are mostly predetermined by weak social ties [7]. Xiaohongshu, on the other hand, exhibits a greater lifestyle attribute and a better sense of community culture. More attention of users is given to sharing the experience, being emotional, and sharing common values of the community. It results in an increased speed of interaction and an elevated degree of emotional engagement on comment sections [8]. They may vary in the operation of low-information comments across platforms because of dissimilarities in the mechanisms of the platform and cultural recording [9]. It is seen, however, that on Xiaohongshu where emotional expression and sense of community are more significant, initial comments will be more likely to establish a common emotional framework of expression that will be discussed in the future. As an example, within the framework of Weibo, where communication proceeds with rapidity and there is more of rough discussion, judgemental or clear opinion is more prone to be liked. It implies that the bandwagon effect can be also considered one of the most important factors of the interpretation of comment behavior under various platforms. The current experiments demonstrate that as individuals observe some categories of comments that receive more likes, they will follow the manner of expression and the course of the content. With majority of the early comments being the low-information comments, then it can be expected that these comments will create a commonly held pool of reference before complete realization of effects by like and click mechanisms may occur. This provides future users with a relatively standardized collection of expressions to adhere to, and serves to further increase the visibility benefit of low-information comments. Information cascade theory posit that when information is limited or the cost of making independent judgments is great, users have a tendency of overrelying on information that is introduced at an early stage. This mechanism may direct to path dependence and finding unanimity among users [10].

As we have seen in our discussion above, there are several variables that cause low-information remarks in comment areas. They may turn to be less conspicuous or be more conspicuous. These factors are engagement rules on the platform, the nature of information contained in each comment, and the sequence of display of the top comments. One of the key practical implications of current research remains to be discussed: Are low-information comments more advantaged in their positioning than more informative communications on actual platforms when early and late commentaries belong to the same post? Is this advantageous in relation to platform?

In order to reduce this gap, the current study takes the first five comments and the last five comments as the primary structural division of the comment section. The analysis is concentrated on the quotient of the early low-information comments, their ranking position and the interaction performance of the subsequent comments. Besides this, a comparison of Weibo with Xiaohongshu is made to investigate whether the amplification effect by low-information comments is different at different sites and consistent with the theoretical expectation.

3. Research questions and methodology

3.1. Research questions

Depending on the current literature in the comment ranking processes and patterns of expression, the present researches concentrate on the impacts of the position of comments in real platforms contexts, specifically paying attention to the initial comments.

In the first question, would content and language of later comments change in response to the high proportion of the first five comments being low-information comments (LIC)? Second, are LIC compared to non-LIC more likely to comment when at the same position at the ranking, have interaction, i.e., likes, thus resulting in differences of visibility? Third, do these possible positional effects provide consistent results between Weibo and Xiaohongshu, or do they exhibit different trends as a result of platform structure and interaction rate differences?

3.2. Research method

The present investigation literature was collected and annotated manually by weibo and Xiaohongshu post data. Being focused on issues concerned with entertainment, the statistics reflect the material that was published within the last thirty days. The proposed research questions were answered using this strategy. We decided to use the manual approach. The high role of semantic judgment and contextual awareness identifies low information comments. Automated models often exhibit better error rates when using text of different platforms. This is specifically so when applied to texts of different platforms. Weibo is very different and Xiaohongshu. The difference is shown in display forms, ranking logic and organizational structure of comments. Comparisons between the two platforms will be more meaningful with manually matching samples which will be a more practical and reliable tool.

Specifically, 10-15 posts in each platform were selected to be subjects of this study. A top ten of the most popular comments per post was noted. The highest ranking and bottom five comments were then distinguished. All the comments were annotated using consistent criteria. These comments added the number of likes a comment had obtained, in the comment thread and whether it was a low-information comment (LIC). It was due to this methodic way of organizing data that the study was in a position to make comparisons regarding the presentation of LICs and non-LICs within the

same post. It also simplified the examination of the influence of earlier commentaries on the matter of subsequent discussions.

On the whole, the relationship between these variables has been studied better because we have selected the right samples. These are all exchanges of comment ranking, the types of content and engagement trends on different platforms. Also, they provide the data base needed to research whether initial comments can become the basis of subsequent dialogues.

4. Result

Table 1. Proportion of low-information comments in early and later comments (top five vs. bottom five)

Platform	Number of Posts	Total Early Comments (Top 5 per Post)	Number of Early LIC	Proportion of Early LIC	Average Ranking Position of Early LIC (1–5)	Total Later Comments (Bottom 5 per Post)	Number of Later LIC	Proportion of Later LIC
Xiaohongshu	15	75	49	65.3%	2.6	75	38	50.7%
Weibo	10	50	18	30.0%	3.2	50	17	34.0%

Table 1 demonstrates the major differences between Xiaohongshu and Weibo. These differences are reflected in the percentage of low-information comments in the early and the late stages. The comments that are made about Xiaohongshu are usually less formal and highly intensive. The percentage of low information remark accounts to over 60 percent of the comment total and this is prominent in the early comment section. Weibo on the other has relatively lower information comments on both early and late comment processes. This means there is higher tendency to express individual beliefs. On Xiaohongshu the low information remarks on the initial stage can be observed better when we are at the first interaction level as the comments are ranked higher.

Table 2. Average number of likes for LIC and non-LIC comments

Platform	Total Number of Comments	Average Likes(LIC)	Average Like (Non-LIC)
Xiaohongshu	150	255.3	123.6
Weibo	100	121.4	337.5

Table 2 shows the variations in the average counts of likes. These numbers reflect data regarding low-information and non-low-information remarks on different sites. The non-low-information comments on Xiaohongshu were slightly less popular, on average, than the low-information ones. This however did not happen on Weibo. The number of likes on non-low-information comments is significantly larger than that of low-information comments. This contrasting pattern depicts that there are different like distributions between the two platforms. Together with the information of Table 1, these results demonstrate platform-level differences. Such differences are manifested in the interactions of different kinds of comments.

5. Discussion

The outcomes show the evident difference between Xiaohongshu and Weibo in regards to the interaction preferences and comment structure. In Xiaohongshu, the ratio of low-information comments continues to be relatively high at the beginning of comment positions as well as subsequent comment position. Such comments will also have a higher likelihood of getting more likes and higher positions in comments ranked within the first five comments. This indicates that softer and emotional expression has an increased upper hand in the comment platform in this platform and can have cumulative exposure effects at a younger age. By contrast, the percentage of low-information comments on Weibo is less, and its interaction performance is worse than that of comments having more definite positions. This is citing a greater focus on the information exchange, expression of attitudes, and discussion density on this platform. In the situation of Weibo, there is a tendency to engage more with comments that give an opinion, position, or any other information. Consequently, it seems that the impact of low-information comments is restricted less in the course of information circulation.

The two platform differences identified above directly influence the leading role played by the initial comments. Such low information comments were quite common during the initial stages of Xiaohongshu. These remarks have a strong structural relationship with the subsequent remarks. This implies that there could be an early emotive pattern that could be created due to the early and informal expression style. They could affect the overall mood of the comment section. The initial low-informed posts on Weibo did not make much impact on the composition of subsequent posts. Their influence is less easily accumulated in terms of interactions. Weibo is mainly used as a source of information. Long-lasting effect will not be created in case the interactions are used exclusively.

These results indicate that the phenomenon of low information comments is mostly context dependent. The sharing and replication of low-information comments go up on platforms where atmosphere and a casual interaction are prioritized. Information-oriented environments restrict their effects. This can lead to the fact that, regardless of the situation of overcrowding information, the useful material is even lower in such comments. Consequently, the negative distribution of valuable knowledge will be inverted.

According to those findings, the platform might have to modify their way of sorting and displaying comments. Such changes are to be based on the positioning of the platform and how the users interact. Xiaohongshu focuses on emotional appeal and content of lifestyle. A limit on the number of low-information remarks that should be posted in the early stages can allow to sustain a casual interaction environment. In the transition period between the early and later comments, the more substantive comments should be given greater visibility which may help to raise the information density. This also assists in the minimization of lightweight comments prevailing over the course of time in the comment section.

Sharing of opinions is one of the primary features of the platforms such as Weibo. In their ranking systems, the comments that are more informational should be rated higher. This ensures that low-value comments do not grab centre stage when high profile real-time events take place. At the same time it enhances the efficiency of the users to extract valuable information in quick scan times. The balance in techniques of comment management should be the quality of the information and overall tone of discourse. They should be flexible to adjust according to the times they have to be and suit different situations. Scoring systems, based on the different types of content may help improve the experience of the user and reduce the chances of individuals with only one narrative controlling comment boards.

6. Conclusion

The initial comment systems of Weibo and Xiaohongshu differed heavily based on the analysis of the comment data in the two websites as presented in this study. The low-information comments had a relatively higher proportion of all the comments on Xiaohongshu. These comments were more likely to get interaction in the initial stages of the site. In contrast, users of Weibo wanted to use more detailed comments and specific opinions. Consequently, the platform did not have as much influence on comments containing less information. These findings suggest that high information low comments are not necessarily dominant. This depends on the environment of the platform and its effect on them. It is also very important in terms of user involvement preference and ranking systems. Accordingly, the influence of low-information comments depends heavily on the environment of a specific platform.

The given research has introduced a new perspective on the creation of comment structures on social media. Platform presentation of information is defined by the sorting logic. Also, its effect on the way people communicate and express themselves is indirect. Such variations demonstrate to researchers the flaw of simplified approaches to expression in numerous situations of media. It causes one to reflect more on the process of introducing a balance between the visibility of information and its quality in comment sections. This paper sets the significance of platform characteristics in shaping the processes of interaction among people in a broader perspective. It can also be used as a reference point on the future discussions on content management and techniques of maximizing interaction.

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