

## 受眾心目中的傳媒公信力：研究評析

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### 摘要

傳播學對公眾如何看待傳媒公信力問題的探討大多基於三個前提：一、公信力的內涵具有普世性；二、受眾對傳媒表現的判斷是理性的，且公信力是其中一個重要標準；三、信任傳媒是公民政治參與的一個必要條件。本文對這三個假設在文獻中所佔的核心地位逐一做出評析並提出質疑，同時指出過往研究對傳媒公信力的測量存有疏漏，使得一些人為製造出的觀察結果被錯誤地當成了顯著的研究發現。其中最為突出的問題是在調查問卷中公信力概念出現過早，從而引發啟動效應將受訪者對隨後問題的回答局限在了狹窄的與傳媒規範和社會期望值相關的指標上。針對上述評析中提出的部分問題，我們採用面對面的形式，對24名香港報紙讀者進行了深度訪談。研究發現：一、傳媒公信力幾乎完全存在於受眾意識之外，處於休眠狀態；二、受訪者最經常閱讀的報紙並非是他們心目中最具公信力的報紙，人們對此反差做出多種「馬後砲」解釋，目的明顯是為了消滅認知不協調以達到心理平衡；三、受眾對傳媒的評價感性多於理性。本文對研究發現的理論含義作出了詳細的探討。

關鍵詞：傳媒公信力、香港報紙、政治參與、休眠觀念、信任

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## Media Credibility in the Public Mind: A Critique

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### Abstract

This study contests the three main assumptions that precede traditional studies of public perceptions of media credibility: (1) universally shared meaning of credibility; (2) audience rational evaluation of media performance using credibility as a core criterion; and (3) perceived credibility as a necessary condition for political participation. In building the case against the centrality of perceived media credibility in political communication scholarship, this critique also draws academic attention to the possibility that much of the findings in existing literature may be a methodological artifact because respondents have been primed to narrow their assessment of media within a set of normative and socially desirable measures. To address some of these issues, we conducted a face-to-face depth interview on 24 Hong Kong newspaper readers. We found that when unprimed, (1) credibility has minimum salience or is dormant in the public mind; (2) interviewees were quick to elicit post hoc rationalization strategies to achieve balance and reduce dissonance created by the gap between the paper they read most often and the paper they deem to be the most credible; (3) people seldom rely fully on rational routes of reasoning to assess media. Theoretical implications are discussed.

**Keywords:** Media credibility, Hong Kong newspaper, political participation, dormant perceptions, trust

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