Analysis of Emergency Management of the Internet Public Opinion on Public Emergencies

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Abstract: With the continuous development and progress of China's economy and society, the government also attaches more and more important to the enthusiasm and initiative of the public to participate in political life. As China is in a period of transition, various conflicts are highlighted, and the rapid development of Internet technology makes it easy to attract the large-scale attention of netizens and quickly form a strong public opinion field after the occurrence of public emergencies. Hence, how to effectively respond to and guide Internet public opinion on public emergencies has become one of the critical issues that governments at all levels need to address. This paper takes public emergencies as the research object and discusses their concepts and characteristics from the theoretical point of view; explains the current situation of the Internet public opinion on public emergencies in China and its causes; focuses on analyzing the problems and causes of the current emergency disposal of the Internet public opinion on public emergencies in China; and finally proposes specific measures to improve the construction of the emergency management system of the Internet public opinion on public emergencies in China.

Keywords: public emergencies; emergency management; internet public opinion

1. Introduction

In the era of new media, Internet technology is constantly developing, and people have higher requirements for the speed and way of information dissemination. In this context, various social media platforms and short video APPs have emerged and rapidly spread, becoming important channels and platforms for people to obtain news and information, express their personal opinions and communicate and interact. However, at the same time, it also brings great challenges to government departments in responding to unexpected public events. How to quickly and effectively guide online public opinion, protect the legitimate rights and interests of the public, and maintain social stability and harmony has become one of the urgent issues to be solved by governments at all levels. In this paper, we will start from the current shortcomings of online public opinion on public emergencies in China, and discuss the causes and corresponding strategies in depth, in order to provide a reference basis for relevant research.

2. Overview of emergency management of the Internet public opinion on public emergencies

2.1 Concept of the Internet public opinion on public emergencies

Internet public opinion refers to the sum of public sentiment, attitudes and opinions on a specific topic. It includes both positive aspects and possible negative ones. Specifically, online public opinion on public emergencies mainly includes the following aspects: first, information about the public emergencies themselves; second, information on various aspects related to the events, such as policies, measures, effectiveness, etc.; third, emotions, attitudes and opinions expressed in response to such information; and fourth, rumors or untrue information about the public emergencies. In order to grasp and guide online public opinion in a timely manner, a set of scientific and reasonable monitoring and early warning mechanism for online public opinion needs to be established. It is also necessary to strengthen the communication and cooperation with the news media, so as to jointly do a good job in controlling the network public opinion of public emergencies.[1]
2.2 Characteristics of Internet public opinion on public emergencies

(1) Fast propagation speed
In the Internet era, information is transmitted very quickly, especially for sudden public events. Internet users can post what they see or hear through social media platforms such as Weibo and WeChat, and these messages are easily forwarded and spread in large numbers.

(2) Widespread influence
Due to the global nature of the Internet, anyone can be a recipient and publisher of news. Moreover, with the popularity of mobile devices and the continuous improvement of wireless network technology, more and more people are able to learn about major and minor events around the world anytime and anywhere. This makes sudden public events not only limited to a certain region or country, but may spread around the world instantly and attract more people's attention.

(3) High emotional volatility
Compared with traditional media, information delivery in the new media environment is faster and more convenient, but at the same time there are also some problems. For example, many people may choose to believe certain untrue news circulating online due to curiosity or other reasons, leading to biased social opinions. In addition, during sudden public events, the public is often in a high state of tension and psychological stress, and their emotions are easily disturbed by external factors and fluctuate.

(4) The phenomenon of group polarization is obvious
On the Internet, users interact and communicate more frequently with each other, and it is easy for them to resonate and identify with each other. When a hot topic triggers a lively discussion, the views and positions therein are easily further strengthened, thus forming a collective attitude tendency.[2]

2.3 Components of the Internet public opinion on public emergencies

(1) Subject elements
Various groups or individuals involved in expressing their opinions and views in the Internet. These include people with different identities and roles, such as the government, the media, experts and scholars, and ordinary Internet users.

(2) Object elements
All kinds of information and content disseminated on the Internet. Here includes both traditional forms of information such as text, pictures and videos, and also covers various types of information transmitted in emerging media forms such as microblogs, WeChat public numbers and forums and postings.

(3) Mediator elements
The specific carriers and platforms used to carry, transmit and spread the above two types of information. For example, social networking platforms, blogs, news clients, short video platforms and so on have become important tools for carrying online public opinion.

(4) Environmental and institutional elements
It mainly refers to two aspects, namely, environment and system. The environment element includes natural environment and social environment. The institutional element refers to a series of rules and regulations and laws and regulations formulated for the above three aspects.

2.4 Evolutionary process of the Internet public opinion on public emergencies

Online public opinion on emergency public events can be divided into four stages: latent period, outbreak period, spreading period and mitigation period. The latent period is when the event has just been discovered or has not yet attracted widespread attention; the outbreak period is when online discussions and emotional fluctuations reach a peak and may trigger group behavior in reality; the spreading period is when a large number of users start to publish or forward relevant information, further promoting the rise of topic fervor; and the remission period is when the hotspots fade away and netizens' attention returns to the event itself.[3]

3. Problems of emergency management of the Internet public opinion on public emergencies

3.1 A single subject of emergency management of the Internet public opinion on public emergencies

In the current government-led public emergencies in China, party and government organs at all levels, public security organs and propaganda departments generally form specialized response agencies to handle related matters. However, this "single-center" model often leads to poor information transmission or loopholes, and is not able to guide public sentiment and resolve conflicts in a timely and effective manner. In addition, for some private organizations or individuals to form their own public opinion field, there is also a lack of corresponding regulation and guidance measures, which makes it difficult to play its proper role.

3.2 Unsound emergency management mechanism of the Internet public opinion on public emergencies

In the current public emergencies in China, a perfect mechanism has not yet been formed for the emergency management of online public opinion. Although government departments have started to pay attention to the construction of this aspect, there are still many shortcomings in the process of practice. Firstly, there is a lack of unified planning and coordination, and various functional departments have not established effective communication channels for information sharing and cooperation; secondly, the relevant laws and regulations are not perfect, and the legislation for emergency management of online public opinion is still in a blank state, so there is no way to follow and no rules to follow, which makes it difficult to operate in practice. In addition, some local governments are not fully aware of the importance of emergency management of online public opinion and tend to regard it as a secondary task or a
formalism, which inevitably leads to many loopholes in practice.

3.3 Backward technical means of emergency management of the Internet public opinion on public emergencies

At present, the network public opinion monitoring and early warning system used in China to respond to public emergencies is still relatively weak. Although government departments have established corresponding mechanisms for information collection, collation and research and judgment, these mechanisms are often difficult to play a practical role due to the lack of advanced technical support. At the same time, some local governments do not supervise the new media platforms effectively, which leads to the massive spread of false news, further triggering public discontent and forming secondary disasters. In addition, the rapid response capability for online public opinion crisis needs to be improved.

3.4 Imperfect laws and regulations on emergency management of the Internet public opinion on public emergencies

In the current emergency management of online public opinion on public emergencies in China, the relevant laws and regulations are not perfect. Although there are a series of laws and regulations such as the "Emergency Response Law of the People's Republic of China", they focus more on the division of responsibilities of government departments, information disclosure and public participation, and lack specific regulations that are more targeted. In addition, since it involves the coordination and balance of interests among many subjects, some contradictions and conflicts will inevitably arise in the process of practical operation, which also brings certain difficulties to the emergency management of public opinion on the Internet.

4. Improvement measures for emergency management of the Internet public opinion on public emergencies

4.1 Sound monitoring and early warning system for Internet public opinion

First, the government should collect and organize relevant network information resources through advanced technical means such as big data and make effective classification and screening, so as to provide strong support for the follow-up work. Secondly, we should develop corresponding monitoring programs and index systems for different types of public emergencies, so as to discover potential risk points and control them in a timely manner. Finally, real-time monitoring and data analysis should be carried out using multiple channels and platforms to form a comprehensive, accurate and dynamic network public opinion monitoring and early warning situation map so as to better guide practical operations.[4]

4.2 Improve the mechanism for releasing information on the Internet public opinion

First, the government should establish a sound press spokesman system and various information release platforms to respond to social concerns in a timely manner and enhance interactive communication with the public. Secondly, the government should strengthen the construction of online public opinion monitoring system, improve technical means, realize all-round monitoring, and quickly discover and grasp the dynamics of hot issues. Once again, the role of mainstream media should be given full play to guide the direction of online public opinion through authoritative voices and prevent negative sentiments from taking the opportunity to incite. Finally, the government should pay attention to the influence of opinion leaders and actively cultivate a group of experts, scholars or famous people with a sense of responsibility and credibility as "Big V", so that they can become a bridge of communication between the government and the public.

In addition, it is necessary to further regulate the registration and use of social media accounts such as microblogs and WeChat, and to strictly control the content related to national security, confidentiality and commercial secrets to ensure a clean and healthy network environment.

4.3 Strengthen the awareness of the Internet public opinion crisis

In the era of new media, everyone can become the publisher and disseminator of information. Therefore, government departments should strengthen their understanding of the importance of public opinion guidance and continuously improve their ability to deal with various risk challenges. It is also necessary to enhance the public's awareness of network security through various means so that they can better protect their personal privacy and related rights from infringement. In addition, government departments should also establish and improve the corresponding legal and regulatory system, and increase the punishment, so as to effectively reduce the probability of illegal acts of cyber crime. Finally, government departments should cooperate with all sectors of society to form an all-round, multi-level and wide-area network opinion monitoring mechanism to find problems and solve them in time to ensure the healthy and orderly development of the network environment.

4.4 Strengthen the construction of the Internet public opinion team

In responding to and dealing with online public opinion, the public sector needs a professional and efficient talent team as support. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on training and upgrading relevant staff members to improve their business ability level. On the one hand, their theoretical knowledge should be enhanced by organizing regular learning and exchange activities; on the other hand,
practical exercises should be emphasized so that these staff members can really "stand" on the front line of actual problems to deal with them. In addition, there are many ways to enrich and strengthen the network public opinion team, such as introducing outstanding talents to create a high-quality and professional team. At the same time, effective coordination mechanisms should be established among government departments to form a joint effort to do a good job in monitoring, warning and guiding online public opinion.

5. Conclusion

This study composes and summarizes a number of major public emergencies that have occurred in China in recent years, and finds that in such events, the inadequate response of government departments and related institutions and the lack of timely and transparent information disclosure are the main reasons for the loss of control of online public opinion. Therefore, the communication and cooperation mechanism between the government and the media should be strengthened; the spokesman system should be improved to respond to public concerns in a timely manner; a sound social stability risk assessment mechanism for major decisions should be established to improve the early warning capability; and the media literacy of netizens should be further improved to enhance their ability to distinguish right from wrong. Only in this way can we effectively prevent and resolve the negative impacts caused by various public emergencies and maintain the harmonious and stable development of society.

References