

## Research on Network Public Opinion Control Mechanism of Emergencies in Colleges and Universities

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### Abstract

Starting from the phenomenon of network public opinion caused by emergencies in Colleges and universities, this paper analyzed the current situation, problems and causes of the current management and control mechanism in colleges and universities. In view of the problems, it puts forward some suggestions on the construction of network public opinion control mechanism system, including information collection and processing pre-judgment mechanism, control subject coordination mechanism, pre-warning, in-process communication and guidance, post reflection and accountability mechanism etc.

### Keywords

Emergencies; Network public opinion; Control mechanism.

### 1. Origin and Concept Definition of the Problem

Emergencies in colleges and universities refer to those that occur on or off campus, with college teachers, students and employees as the main body of the event. As a sensitive issue occurs suddenly, it causes or may be quickly concerned in a short time. With the progress of this event, it quickly evolves into a large-scale event that may cause casualties and heavy property losses and endanger the image and reputation of the University [1].

The Internet could become a new front of public opinion. On the one hand, college students were the main force of Chinese netizens, and they were also active users of WeChat, micro-blog, microphone, and fast hands. The Internet had become the main channel for college teachers and students to express their opinions and spread their opinions. Affected by a large number of student Internet users, emergencies are easy to spread quickly through the network, and even derive a series of related events. On the other hand, the University was a sacred and pure place, which was very easy to attract public attention. The speed and opening of the Internet made the public participation greatly increase. Once the online public opinion encountered an emergency in a university, it would definitely arouse the public's sensitive nerves, and its spreading speed would also be flabbergasted.

Network public opinion of emergencies in colleges and universities is the sum of various emotions, attitudes and opinions expressed and spread through the Internet [2]. Once the network public opinion breaks out, it will spread instantly, and the risk of being out of control will increase. Once the butterfly effect occurs, a very small thing will also trigger heated discussion among netizens and evolve into network public opinion. The response of network public opinion is becoming the concentrated embodiment of the governance ability of colleges and universities.

## 2. Empirical Analysis of Individual Cases

In July 2020, the punishment of "staying on probation" in the rape case of A student surnamed Nu of Zhejiang University was changed to "expulsion" after the public opinion was caused. On August 1, the topic of "the student surnamed Nu was expelled" had less than ten hours of reading, with a reading volume of nearly 500 million. Educational equity is a very sensitive hot topic, which is easy to cause empathy effect and wide-ranging attention [3].

In the face of this question, Zhejiang University's response was painless and did not answer the point. During this period, all kinds of malicious speculation spread wantonly, and negative public opinion heated up step by step. The credibility of Zhejiang University has declined, and the reputation loss is even more hard to estimate.

In December 2019, Fengsheng Qian an associate professor of Shanghai University of Finance and economics, reported the sexual harassment incident. At 9:00 p.m. on the night of online reporting, Shanghai University of Finance and economics, issued a notice, and reported the punishment results of investigation and dismissal within a week. Fengsheng Qian also lost his qualification as an associate professor and teacher. Whether in terms of processing time and results, the attitude of truly solving problems and zero tolerance for teachers' ethics and style helped the school quickly get out of the vortex of public opinion. Network supervision promoted the open and fair settlement of emergencies and won unanimous praise for the school.

## 3. Analysis on the Current Situation and Problems of Network Public Opinion Control of Emergencies in Colleges and Universities

In 2020, there has 1.319 billion Internet users and more than 40 million college students in China. Network is a double-edged sword in implementing the fundamental task of Building Morality and cultivating people in Colleges and universities. Emergencies cause the attention of large-scale network groups and network public opinion, which can supervise the work of colleges and universities, truly and accurately reflect events, resolve crises and even improve the social reputation of colleges and universities. It may also lead to the fermentation of negative public opinion, derive the risk of "public opinion coercion", and bring great negative impact.

In fact, official account, administrative micro blog, public address and other new media construction have been attached great importance to by all universities. Generally, various emergency plans are also formulated to reduce the occurrence of crisis, and the investigation of various risks and hidden dangers is carried out regularly and irregularly, including the monitoring of network public opinion, in order to control the development direction of network public opinion and other hidden dangers, occupy the initiative in emergency control and reduce public opinion crisis, but there are still some problems and phenomena.

Firstly, the role of "gatekeeper" is weakened. Campus network information generally has strict audit control. However, today's network communication environment has changed, and the network information with the characteristics of immediacy, interactivity, nonlinearity and magnanimity spreads very fast. A lot of network public opinion in Colleges and universities originates from inside the school and forms public opinion outside the school. However, colleges and universities generally pay attention to inside the school and ignore outside supervision, or lack effective outside monitoring means, which further enhances the uncontrollability of network public opinion.

Secondly, the management and control system of public opinion in Colleges and universities has not changed its thinking, focusing on blocking rather than dredging. In the control of Internet public opinion, seeking truth from facts and making public information can positively

guide public opinion and be easier to understand and support. However, some schools still stay in the early days of the traditional media era and the Internet era, follow the old way and continue to use old preaching [4]. When an emergency occurs, the first response is often to block the news or simply remedy it. Such a response is aimed at the parties themselves, but the main body of network public opinion is the majority of netizens. Today, with the rapid development of the network, blocking is like hiding one's ears and stealing a bell. Such behavior is bound to lag behind passively. Even if it is successful for a while, the silence of the media does not mean that people do not pay attention. When it is open, public opinion is the time of outbreak.

Thirdly, the network public opinion control system is not perfect and the subject responsibility is not clear. Some colleges and universities have neither pre-warning and monitoring system nor separate departments for network public opinion control, and the construction of professional team is weak. Relevant staff are also considered or temporarily deployed, and their responsibilities are unclear due to unclear functions and powers. It has nothing to do with yourself. Naturally, it hangs high and lacks human, material and technical means. It is often tired of practical work and lack of reflection and experience summary. It is often a headache, a doctor, and forget the pain when the scar is good.

Fourthly, the change of the main body of network communication, college students have a strong sense of innovation and accept new things quickly, but the media literacy needs to be improved. In the face of network anonymity, the rules that can effectively restrict all kinds of real and traditional media have lost their effectiveness. The influence of traffic and network, and the deliberate guidance of network opinion leaders or media are easy to make students have emotional resonance, resulting in their network behavior more perceptual than rational, and make some extreme remarks to form public opinion.

#### **4. Mechanism Reconstruction Based on the Evolution of University Emergency Network**

Network public opinion events in Colleges and universities have certain stages: the initial incubation period of the event forms the onset period of network public opinion and the decline period of public opinion gradually declining until disappearing. Build corresponding public opinion control mechanism for each stage of network public opinion, and give timely feedback and response at different stages of public opinion events, which can better deal with sudden network public opinion in Colleges and universities. In addition, in view of the current situation and problems of network public opinion control of emergencies in Colleges and universities, in order to better deal with network public opinion, we should adhere to five basic principles: collaborative governance; People oriented; Open and fair; Dynamic multidimensional; The combination of prevention and treatment is as follows:

##### **4.1. Incubation Period: Prevention First and Prevention Combined**

This stage refers to the initial stage of the event, which is only known by a small part and has not been widely spread. For this stage, prevention is still the main and prevention is combined, the following mechanisms need to be established.

Firstly, we need to improve the information collection and processing mechanism, including information collection, processing, transmission, feedback and so on. The prime time for colleges and universities to deal with major online public opinion is four hours, 24 hours to release news in time, and 48 hours to respond to general public opinion. The key to resolve network public opinion is time, but the time to solve the crisis depends on whether we can fully grasp the dynamics of students. Once there are any signs of danger among students, they can

be found in time. If the relevant departments are involved and handled in time and properly, the explosive spread of the event can be avoided.

Secondly, establish a multi department collaborative management and control mechanism, including management team and platform construction collaboration, school department class four level management collaboration, functional department and teaching department collaboration, teacher team and student cadres and student associations collaboration. Generally, the main body of network public opinion control is the party and government office, publicity and other departments, but the front-line staff of students such as teachers and counselors who best understand the dynamics of students. The departments most likely to cause students' disputes in Colleges and universities are those involving students' interests, such as logistics, student management and so on. For so many departments, if the information is closed and each fights its own way, the result must be the shifting of responsibility and the wrangling among each other. Therefore, the best choice is to have the awareness of subject collaborative governance, strengthen contact and information sharing, and form a joint force.

Finally, establish a pre-warning mechanism, including information monitoring and alarm mechanism, functional department rapid response mechanism and emergency response mechanism. In order to maintain the safety and stability of the school, colleges and universities will touch and eliminate the possible hidden dangers of the school and solve the problems in time to resolve the hidden dangers. However, there are also some problems that are difficult to solve, or emergencies may cause network public opinion, so it is necessary to strengthen monitoring and formulate emergency handling measures. The handling process and respective responsibilities can be clarified. If there are problems, start the emergency mechanism according to the established process to resolve the crisis in time.

#### **4.2. Attack Period: Dynamic Multi-dimensional, Collaborative Governance**

Due to the untimely handling of events or improper handling methods, a large number of students spread relevant information through the network platform, thus forming a more obvious tendency of network public opinion or deriving a series of other events, making the attention of events rise rapidly and even develop into a state of out of control.

Colleges and universities should grasp the initiative of network public opinion management, establish an in-process communication and guidance mechanism, and strengthen guidance and monitoring. Including online and offline interaction mechanism, event tracking and release mechanism, opinion leader public opinion guidance mechanism, etc. Adhere to people-oriented, maintain close communication with the parties involved in the incident, deal with the incident fairly and publish the progress of the incident publicly on the official network platform in time, so as to make Internet users understand the truth of the incident, eliminate misunderstandings and avoid the vicious dissemination of distorting the truth.

Multi system collaborative management and control in Colleges and universities, but only one voice department is needed. The information sharing among departments also needs to establish the coordination mechanism of other systems, including the coordination of internal mechanisms in Colleges and universities, the coordination between different teams in Colleges and universities, etc. Gather information from all aspects, release unified news and opinions, and all departments of the university work together to deal with public opinion.

#### **4.3. Recession: Reflection and Improvement**

With the fact becoming clear, the event being effectively controlled or handled, and the shift of public attention over time, the network public opinion of the event gradually declined until it disappeared. Colleges and universities timely disclose the event handling results, the management deeply reflects on it, and further improve the relevant control system. At this stage,

it is necessary to establish the post reflection accountability mechanism, including the post reflection summary mechanism, accountability reward and punishment mechanism.

When public opinion recedes, various experiences and problems need to be summarized and reflected, and reward and punishment procedures should be started. Only when rights, responsibilities and interests have a sense of responsibility and crisis, can we reflect on rectification and improvement. Otherwise, improving the quality of work will always be empty talk.

## 5. Conclusion

Summarize the network public opinion control in response to emergencies. The thinking of university managers needs to change. When greater efforts are made to invest in the human, material and technology required to ensure the control, it is also necessary to establish and improve the public opinion control mechanism, so as to achieve the goal of ensuring the safety of emergency campus and improving the ability of network public opinion management and control.

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