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Research on Government Guidance of Online Public Opinion in the Short Video Era: Post-print

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Abstract

Objective: In recent years, the rise of short-video platforms has drawn increasing attention from government departments to this field's development. As a novel and effective information dissemination channel, government-affairs short videos provide substantial convenience for governance work. **Methods:** This article examines the current development status of government platforms in the short-video era, delineates the evolutionary characteristics of online public opinion, and explores the dilemmas in guiding online public opinion during this period. **Results:** The development of online public opinion constitutes a major challenge for social governance; its guidance has become an urgent priority in current government management, necessitating proactive enhancement of online public opinion guidance in the short-video era. **Conclusion:** Finally, it proposes countermeasures including strengthening risk prevention and control awareness, establishing an online public opinion analysis and judgment system, and building a trust mechanism between government and citizens, aiming to enhance governmental credibility and leadership.

Full Text

Research on Government Online Public Opinion Guidance in the Short Video Era

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Abstract

[Purpose] In recent years, the rise of short video platforms has gradually drawn government departments' attention to this domain. As a new and effective

channel for information dissemination, government short videos offer numerous conveniences for governance work. **[Method]** This article examines the current development status of government platforms in the short video era, analyzes the evolutionary characteristics of online public opinion, and explores the dilemmas faced in guiding online public opinion during this period. **[Results]** The development of online public opinion represents a major challenge for social governance, making public opinion guidance an urgent priority in current government administration. Consequently, there is an even greater need to actively improve online public opinion guidance in the short video era. **[Conclusion]** Finally, the paper proposes countermeasures including strengthening risk prevention awareness, establishing public opinion analysis and assessment systems, and building trust mechanisms between officials and citizens, aiming to enhance government credibility and leadership.

Keywords: Government short videos; Online public opinion; Information dissemination; Risk prevention and control

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The proliferation of the internet and the emergence of new social media have transformed traditional information dissemination patterns. The proliferation of short video applications has provided governments with additional channels for participating in online public opinion guidance. As a novel information dissemination medium, short videos have gradually become an important platform for public political participation and expression of public sentiment. However, the rapid information dissemination speed and high degree of content freedom on short video platforms make irrational behavior possible, potentially leading to rumors, emergencies, and mass incidents that cause online public opinion to spiral out of control. Therefore, an in-depth exploration of government online public opinion guidance mechanisms in the short video era holds practical significance for promoting social harmony and stability.

1. Characteristics of Government Short Video Platforms

1.1 Diversification of Government Short Video Content With the rapid development of internet technology and short videos in new media, public demand for government new media has grown daily. The “title + lengthy text” format on “WeChat, Weibo, and news client” platforms has gradually caused user fatigue, and these platforms lack interactive communication with netizens, leaving most public opinions and demands unanswered. With the emergence of government TikTok and government Kuaishou accounts, short video dissemination methods on “two micros and one end” have changed traditional information dissemination by incorporating videos, music, and other forms with eye-catching

titles, enabling netizens to more directly grasp the core information. By leveraging short video users' spare time and closely monitoring user needs, government departments can more accurately provide information. The combination of "two micros and one shake" (WeChat, Weibo, and TikTok) with government short videos has brought a new pattern to government new media communication.

1.2 Enhanced Visual Effects of Government Information In the past, government departments relied on traditional media such as newspapers to release information that was often obscure and difficult to understand. Short videos, by setting straightforward and comprehensible titles and topics, enable users to more intuitively understand government information. Through carefully designed titles, storylines, and highlight clips, government departments break traditional information frameworks, emphasize core content, and make videos more attractive, focusing on capturing users' visual effects to enhance information transmission effectiveness. This achieves the purpose of delivering government information while meeting user needs. With the release of a series of interesting and relaxed promotional and explanatory videos, public perception of the government has gradually changed, with more people willing to communicate with the government through social platforms, thereby indirectly improving the government's image.

1.3 Faster Information Dissemination Through Short Videos Short videos convey complex event information to users through concise and understandable text, which not only enhances public understanding of events but also accelerates information dissemination speed. By combining government promotional content with emergencies, hot events, and controversial issues, short videos better demonstrate the government's stance. The rapid dissemination and rich content coverage of short video platforms enable users to more conveniently access the latest information. Once public opinion events occur, platform users can easily obtain information, facilitating better understanding of public opinion dynamics among online users. Additionally, by combining text, images, and music, short videos more intuitively display content to users, who can directly view important information upon opening the platform, accelerating relevant information dissemination.

2. Evolutionary Characteristics of Online Public Opinion in the Short Video Era

Online public opinion on short video platforms exhibits cyclical development characteristics. As time changes, public opinion evolves accordingly. Following the stages of generation, outbreak, decline, and stabilization, the evolution of public opinion can be viewed as a complete lifecycle process. This paper divides the evolution cycle into four stages: formation period, outbreak period, decline period, and stabilization period, which together constitute the lifecycle of online public opinion, as shown in [Figure 1: see original paper].

2.1 Formation Period of Public Opinion In the initial formation stage, online public opinion spreads relatively slowly with relatively low influence. Due to limited release time on short video platforms, public opinion-related content is difficult to widely forward and comment on, keeping the influence of online public opinion at a low level. With the decentralized transmission of information content on short video platforms, users focus more on content that interests them or aligns with their values, resulting in greater instability in online public opinion development trends. When new public opinion hotspots emerge, users successively receive relevant dynamic information pushes, forming viewpoints and comments on events aggregated across major platforms. These messages rapidly diffuse through cyberspace in a short period, causing event public opinion to develop geometrically and ultimately triggering “butterfly effect” incidents. If emergent events cannot be discovered, analyzed, and guided during this period, public opinion storms may occur, causing extremely serious negative impacts on society.

2.2 Outbreak Period of Public Opinion Following the formation period, online public opinion, after platform dissemination and media publicity, reaches its peak heat. Users’ cognitive tendencies and emotional trajectories toward events rapidly permeate, and public opinion reaches a “peak period.” Through the precise distribution mechanism of internet big data, short video platforms quickly gather users with different values and interests, further accelerating public opinion dissemination efficiency. As the outbreak period arrives, users develop cognitive biases toward public opinion, and the “spiral of silence effect” continuously strengthens. Simultaneously, user participation across short video platforms gradually becomes active. In discussions of highly concerned public opinion events, users’ herd mentality drives public opinion orientation toward certain directions, while other viewpoints may be ignored. At this point, minority opinions are easily overlooked before majority opinions, exacerbating disagreements and increasing the difficulty of public opinion guidance.

2.3 Decline Period of Public Opinion As time passes, the intervention of government or other regulatory agencies reduces the volume of online public opinion, restricts dissemination channels, and gradually decreases its heat. When the attention on hot events declines or shifts, and they can no longer generate new information or strong appeal, public opinion on short video platforms shows a declining trend [2]. Meanwhile, the continuous spread of online public opinion also subjects netizens’ posting permissions on short video platforms to certain restrictions. Due to information complexity, administrators must strictly review video content based on laws, regulations, or social ethics, and take action against subjects publishing false or negatively influential public opinion to prevent the development of specific online public opinion until its eventual decline. The decline period is a critical period for whether the public opinion guidance mechanism can function effectively and an important indicator for evaluating its effectiveness.

2.4 Stabilization Period of Public Opinion As the heat of online public opinion subsides, public opinion enters the stabilization period, during which not only does the heat decline, but the possibility of conclusion emerges. This does not indicate that the online event has ended, but rather that attention has been diverted to other hot online events, and the old online event is gradually forgotten by the public and media as the focus of public and media attention shifts to new social hotspots.

3. Problems in Government Online Public Opinion Guidance in the Short Video Era

While expanding public 知情权 (right to know), online public opinion also poses risks to maintaining social public order. Short video platforms provide a new way for the public to participate in government management, promoting the development of democratic politics. However, since government departments cannot comprehensively supervise public opinion trends on short video platforms, the proliferation of false information makes negative and one-sided public opinion the main obstacle to government guidance, seriously damaging government credibility. Therefore, guiding online public opinion in the short video era faces considerable challenges, with issues such as false information proliferation and inadequate government supervision being difficulties in government public opinion management.

3.1 Outdated Government Public Opinion Early Warning Plans A major characteristic of short video platforms is the faster information fermentation speed. After online public opinion occurs, if the government cannot formulate sound early warning plans, timely analyze and assess public opinion, and provide guidance, public opinion may ferment into a crisis event. The 2015 “Qingdao Sky-High Seafood Price” incident became an unbearable “burden” for Qingdao’s tourism industry due to the lack of specific response measures by the local government at that time. The 2021 “Sanya Sea Urchin Scam” incident, where consumers posted videos complaining that the involved merchant had “sea urchins with little roe and swapped lobsters,” prompted the governor of Hainan Province to promptly hold an online press conference after the incident occurred. However, the government agencies operating government short videos had lagging information responses and imperfect guidance systems, ultimately generating certain negative impacts on Hainan’s tourism industry. In the above incidents, the local governments precisely lacked experience in online public opinion management, insufficient ability to analyze and assess public opinion, and inadequate understanding of the dissemination patterns and control of public opinion events, resulting in rapid heated discussions on short video platforms once public opinion spread. The development and dissemination logic of government short videos in the early stage of public opinion differs from that of “two micros and one end,” and traditional early warning plans and guidance mechanisms can no longer meet the operational needs of government short videos.

3.2 Inadequate Government Public Opinion Supervision In the short video era of freedom of speech, netizens can casually post exposure videos, making information acquisition more convenient and information dissemination faster. Once false information is distorted and amplified during dissemination, pseudo-public opinion rapidly spreads through cyberspace. As in the case of “a sanitation worker in a certain province claiming to have had her teaching position replaced for 26 years,” three days after a major influencer uploaded the video, voices of “condemnation and questioning the government” continuously emerged, with public opinion siding with the sanitation worker. Particularly amid the wave of nationwide condemnation over college entrance exam replacement incidents, various emotions of sympathy, support, and endorsement continuously spread. The government released investigation results only after a week. At this point, responding after public opinion had already caused significant impact meant missing the optimal period for public opinion disposal. The intensity of supervision determines the speed of public opinion pacification. Over the past few years, multiple public opinion outbreaks have been related to inadequate supervision by government monitoring platforms during the golden time. Once false pseudo-public opinion spreads, the normal and peaceful public opinion ecology is broken, subsequently affecting government decision-making, interfering with social governance, and causing online public opinion to increasingly deviate from the real voice of the people [3].

3.3 Improper Government Response to Public Demands The popularity of short videos requires the government not only to undertake the work of releasing event details and progress when facing online public opinion outbreaks but also to bear the responsibility of responding to public demands. Once responses are improper, emergent events or mass incidents may occur. On September 15, 2022, after the “Guizhou Major Bus Rollover Incident,” the internet was in an uproar, with intense public negative emotions strongly condemning the local government’s negligence in late-night transfer operations. Subsequently, the Guizhou Provincial People’s Government released videos confirming the incident’s authenticity and announcing casualty numbers, which intensified public criticism. Afterwards, official accounts from various provinces released the event details on Weibo, TikTok, Kuaishou, and other platforms, completely detonating the public opinion field. Although the Guizhou Provincial People’s Government later announced the incident handling results, including suspending relevant government personnel involved in the case, its credibility was weakened. Government responses after public opinion occurrences should possess certain completeness, and when guiding online public opinion, they should focus on addressing netizens’ demands to avoid creating an opposition between the public and the government.

4. Countermeasures for Government Online Public Opinion Guidance in the Short Video Era

4.1 Strengthen Public Opinion Risk Prevention and Control Awareness Accompanying the uncontrollable factors in public opinion development in the short video era, strengthening risk prevention and control is the focus of correctly guiding online public opinion work. Government personnel should prioritize risk prevention, accurately identify risk sources, and establish a sound risk management system. The arrival of emergent events requires government personnel to maintain risk prevention and control awareness at all times, especially when facing the initial stage of public opinion, to timely assess the emergency status and report it, facilitating subsequent improvement of public opinion early warning plans. Simultaneously, regarding online public opinion outbreaks, the government should establish a comprehensive public opinion guidance mechanism. Finally, the government should improve its ability to use big data for monitoring and early warning of online public opinion, focus on hot controversial points discussed by the public according to the cyclical development of public opinion, ensure clear situations and feasible response plans, and eliminate problems that may trigger public opinion outbreaks during the formation stage.

4.2 Establish Public Opinion Analysis and Assessment Systems Precise analysis, timely response, and preventing the spread of public opinion are necessary conditions for current government short video public opinion management. To effectively control public opinion development, the “golden 24-hour” principle is considered essential. First, increase the emphasis on monitoring and early warning. Inadequate supervision during the initial stage of public opinion is the main reason for subsequent uncontrollable outbreaks. Current government online public opinion guidance must rely on relevant personnel and equipment to timely supervise and control public opinion development from the initial dissemination stage, and launch monitoring within the golden 24 hours according to the dissemination heat of short videos. Through precise information capture technology, quickly and effectively extract keywords from videos across the entire network, and use text mining technology for association analysis and cluster analysis to understand public opinion development trends, thereby better identifying “pseudo-public opinion” and issuing timely warnings for effective responses. Finally, collect public opinion information through big data and modern algorithm technologies, establish specialized indicator systems to determine whether it constitutes public opinion, then set up a graded response mechanism through mathematical models to perfect the public opinion response system.

4.3 Establish Trust Mechanisms When online public opinion is surrounded by negative emotions, the government should provide emotional guidance and attach importance to public voices when the demands of vulnerable groups are neglected. First, timely disclose information. Government official video accounts should orderly announce event progress when handling emergent sit-

uations at each stage of public opinion, and promptly respond to public focus points. Second, “fish out silent voices.” Accompanying public opinion outbreaks is a sharp increase in short video quantity. The government should collect more public feedback regarding videos with few clicks that are easily overlooked, and accurately grasp public opinion dynamics. Actively communicate with the public to let the government understand what people think and want, and guide the public to express their real thoughts. Simultaneously, strengthen publicity and education to make the public resist the spread of false information and avoid forming a herd mentality. Finally, establish trust mechanisms. To effectively curb malicious dissemination of false videos, malicious defamation, and other undesirable behaviors, establish a supervision and governance system of “blockchain + network governance.” Blockchain technology can effectively trace data, enabling netizens to receive internal and external public supervision when posting videos, ensuring standardized netizen behavior. For the public who maliciously spread false information, punishment should be accompanied by warnings to enhance public trust in the government [4].

The arrival of the short video era makes it even more important for the government to reasonably guide the development of online public opinion. Currently, government departments need improvement in supervising information and responding to public demands. This paper explores problems existing in government departments’ participation in online public opinion guidance on short video platforms, hoping that government departments can respond more quickly to public focus points, eliminate public doubts, timely guide netizen emotions, correctly participate in online public opinion governance, and ultimately enrich and perfect research on government online public opinion guidance.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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