

Practice and Exploration of Public Opinion Supervision and Guidance under the Horizon of New Media

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Abstract: This article first expounds on the transformation of the public opinion communication system from the era of traditional media to the era of new media, as well as the characteristics of public opinion communication and the importance of regulation and guidance from the perspective of new media. It summarizes the characteristics of public opinion communication in the era of new media, and then analyzes the research results of previous studies. In the era of new media, the communication mechanism of public opinion has undergone changes, with more emphasis on online dissemination rather than being limited to traditional print media. This article will explore and study the characteristics of public opinion communication in the era of new media, and propose relevant strategies and institutional mechanisms for social public opinion regulation and guidance from a practical perspective.

Keywords: public opinion guidance, public opinion regulation, new media public opinion, new media era, public opinion monitoring

1. Introduction

In the literary work “Offering to Minister Qiao” by Tang Dynasty writer Zhong Li, it is mentioned that “public opinion yearns for upright officials.” Since then, the term “public opinion” has entered people’s field of vision. In the era of traditional media, social dissemination of information was limited by technology and could only be spread through mediums such as print media, making it susceptible to interference and guidance. However, in the modern new media environment, online public opinion gathers numerous hot, spontaneous, and demanding events, often rapidly fermenting and becoming the focus of widespread attention and discussion among netizens [1]. In terms of current social applications, the two major social platforms with usage rates of 84.3% and 38.7% among internet users are WeChat Moments and Weibo [2]. Due to its characteristics of aggregation, conformity, and amplification, negative information within public opinion is more likely to form negative sentiments, thus affecting various aspects of society and politics. Therefore, effective public opinion guidance in the era of new media is of significant importance to society. The lag in mass communication gives rise to communication barriers, and certain sudden, explosive information becomes public opinion. By utilizing timely feedback from new media, these communication barriers can be weakened or eliminated, achieving effective public opinion guidance. Hence, this paper aims to investigate the current status of social public opinion monitoring and management, analyze the existing problems and drawbacks, and explore new paths and methods for social public opinion

analysis and guidance using the advantages of new media, thereby enhancing the governance capabilities of social public opinion management.

2. Summary Analysis of Public Opinion Communication and Guidance in the Era of New Media

2.1. Characteristics of Public Opinion Communication from the Perspective of New Media

2.1.1. Dual-channel Communication with Offline Assistance to Online - Fast and Extensive

Diffusion is one of the main characteristics of public opinion, and in the era of new media, its influence is further strengthened. Social public opinion, carried by various new media platforms, quickly spreads online. With the continuous development of the internet, diverse communication methods and media have accelerated the speed and expanded the scope of information dissemination. Moreover, due to the interactivity of new media, netizens can engage in information exchange and sharing on communication platforms, resulting in a wider dissemination of public opinion. Of course, we can also make good use of this interactivity to further weaken communication barriers and exercise control and guidance over public opinion. Under the theory of “double contingency”, conflicts and confrontations in viewpoints may arise due to differences in knowledge level and professional competence between the two parties, thereby amplifying the spread of public opinion and increasing the difficulty of management and guidance.

2.1.2. Abundance and Diversity of Online Public Opinion - High Difficulty and Poor Effectiveness

Currently, new media users have varying levels of literacy and professional competence. The perspectives expressed by individuals on the internet differ greatly, often lacking specialized content knowledge and rational thinking, resulting in a lack of authenticity in the content they publish. At the same time, the interactivity and timeliness of new media break the temporal and spatial boundaries between communicators and recipients, increasing the risk of source authenticity and exacerbating the difficulties and risks in public opinion control.

2.1.3. Lagging Early Warning Response Mechanism - Slow Reaction and Difficult Management

[3]In traditional media, public opinion was easier to manage and guide due to technological limitations. However, in the contemporary society under the backdrop of the new media era, the fast dissemination speed, wide scope, and diverse content of new media have caused the traditional mechanism of authoritative news release by traditional media to lose a significant portion of its original effectiveness. In the era of self-media, everyone can be a voice, and the general public often believes in opinions from opinion leaders around them. Yet, the professional competence of these opinion leaders still needs to be examined. Establishing an effective mechanism for public opinion monitoring and regulation in the new media environment has become a widely discussed issue among scholars in the field.

2.2. Analysis of the Current Situation of Public Opinion Guidance

2.2.1. Analysis of Contemporary Public Opinion Guidance Theories

Traditionally, public opinion guidance refers to the conscious use of various media and communication channels to influence the information dissemination process of individual

consciousness, behavior, emotions, judgments, etc. This process can take place within different social units such as individuals, companies, and organizations. Its goal is to change perceptions of certain issues, activities, etc. through a series of information dissemination methods in order to achieve certain objectives, such as the implementation of policies, activities, and issues.

2.2.2. Research on Public Opinion Guidance in Traditional Media

In the era of traditional media, information dissemination was relatively limited, mainly relying on print media. Compared to new media, traditional media had slower dissemination speed, narrower reach, and a single choice of medium, making it easier to regulate. In China, there is a relatively mature theoretical system for public opinion guidance through traditional media, including political propaganda, advertising, and public relations. However, with the rise of new media, the methods of public opinion guidance have undergone significant changes.

2.2.3. Research on Public Opinion Guidance in New Media

From the perspective of new media, especially social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Facebook, Twitter, and short video platforms like TikTok, they have become the main channels for information dissemination. Researchers have mainly studied strategies for public opinion guidance in new media, user profiles on new media platforms, and fake information. However, there are still some shortcomings in the institutional mechanisms for handling public opinion emergencies. In their book “Blur: How to Know What’s True in the Age of Information Overload”, Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel discuss how individuals as the subjects in the social communication system of the new media era should determine the truthfulness of information, but they do not comprehensively address how the institutional systems at the societal level should be adjusted.

2.3. Global Public Opinion Control and Guidance in the Context of New Media

When it comes to public opinion guidance from the perspective of new media, there are several issues with existing research:

- (1) The theoretical system is still incomplete and not comprehensive.
- (2) Cross-cultural research still has limitations.
- (3) The research is predominantly theoretical, lacking practical experience.

This paper aims to fill the gaps and shortcomings in existing research, and through sociological and communication research methods, delve into the institutional mechanisms of public opinion guidance in the new media environment. It also proposes a theory of public opinion guidance in the new media, guiding nations, societies, and media practitioners to better address the challenges of public opinion in the new media environment. Additionally, through the means of cross-cultural research, it analyzes the communication mechanisms between different countries and cultures, aiming to establish a more harmonious international society.

3. Under the Perspective of New Media, Exploring the Guidance Path of Public Opinion Regulation

3.1. Emphasizing the Construction of Feedback Channels

Scholar Rosenhauer believes that crises pose a serious threat to the fundamental values and behavioral norms of a social system, and in situations of high time pressure and uncertainty, critical decisions must be made. Public opinion crises occur when crises happen from the perspective of public opinion and have a high social impact. If not guided in a timely manner, they can affect social stability. In the social communication system, the lack of timely and sufficient feedback has caused a

“communication gap”, and the “communication gap” has been further expanded due to the “double contingency” of social communication, resulting in the spread of public opinion. To effectively regulate and guide public opinion through feedback channels, it is necessary to establish opinion leaders and maintain the diversification, smoothness, and convenience of feedback channels. Opinion leaders play a crucial role in influencing group opinions and [4] acting as a bridge between the government and the public, serving as one of the feedback channels. Opinion leaders can use their influential followers to produce specialized content, leverage their high acceptance among the audience, form a common social understanding, and control and guide public opinion.

Maintaining smooth feedback channels means listening to the voices of the audience in the social communication system, reducing the probability of authority information being absent, and maintaining the audience’s sense of information security, thereby reducing the generation and development of public opinion from the source. The diversification of feedback channels means that the government can use social media combined with big data analysis, cloud computing, and comprehensive analysis of social hotspots to understand the demands of the masses and guide and control public opinion from both the generation and dissemination perspectives in the social communication system.

3.2. Construction of a Theoretical System of New Media Public Opinion Guidance in a Multicultural Context

Considering different countries, regions, and ethnicities, there are different cultures. As the economic foundation determines the superstructure, different economic systems lead to significant differences in communication systems. From the perspective of new media and international communication, effective public opinion guidance and control require an analysis of specific problems based on the specific national conditions and culture of each country. This involves finding the interests and sensitive points of the audience, using social media such as Facebook and YouTube combined with big data and artificial intelligence for comprehensive analysis of the audience’s information needs, and integrating authoritative content from local opinion leaders for effective public opinion control and guidance.

3.3. Construction of University Public Opinion Platforms in a Globalized Context

In the traditional media environment, elites hold the power of discourse, and official public opinion platforms represented by governments and schools can provide natural legitimacy for universities. However, in the complex network environment, this situation has fundamentally changed [5]. In the era of new media, student information sources have become diverse and complex. Student affairs workers play an important role in ideological and political education by collecting, analyzing, and guiding public opinion [6]. However, students generally lack the ability to filter and discern information. Coupled with the “filter bubble” caused by algorithms, when opinions and viewpoints collide without the school’s authoritative information release, public opinion can arise. From the perspective of the audience, guiding university public opinion in the era of new media primarily involves focusing on cultivating the overall qualities of students and strengthening their independent information filtering and discernment abilities. At the same time, from the perspective of communication channels, universities should focus on cultivating opinion leaders among students, acting as a voice for student groups, and collecting information faster, more accurately, and more comprehensively. Universities should also control and guide public opinion from the source of the social communication system by releasing information.

4. Conclusion

This paper analyzed and studied the issues related to public opinion guidance and regulation in the era of new media. Through literature review and theoretical analysis, it summarized and supplemented previous viewpoints, and proposed some problems, solutions, and establishment of relevant institutional mechanisms regarding public opinion guidance and regulation in the era of new media. The following are the key points summarized in this paper:

(1) In the era of new media, the public opinion management mechanisms established based on traditional media are no longer effective, and there is a need for a new media-based public opinion guidance system.

(2) To effectively guide and regulate public opinion in the era of new media, it is necessary to construct theoretical systems that take into account different cultural systems and communication systems.

(3) As influential institutions in society, universities need to focus on public opinion guidance and management from the perspectives of opinion leaders and smooth feedback channels.

In summary, this paper conducted in-depth research and analysis on public opinion guidance and regulation in the new media environment, absorbing and summarizing previous viewpoints, and providing valuable insights and suggestions. Through this paper, a better understanding of the characteristics and strategies of public opinion guidance in the era of new media can be gained, enabling society and governments to effectively manage and guide public opinion, maintaining social stability and harmony. From a theoretical perspective, the viewpoints proposed in this paper are not comprehensive and sufficient in some aspects. Future research can complement this paper by focusing on practical actions and theories at a deeper level, integrating social practice and providing a more comprehensive understanding of public opinion guidance in the new media era.

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