

# Strategies and Effectiveness of Government Public Opinion Guidance in the Crisis Communication Perspective: The Case of Wuhan City Closure in a Sudden Public Incident

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**Abstract.** With the development of the Internet era, the new media environment has also given rise to new forms of crises. Sudden public events always become the focus of public opinion on the Internet and spread rapidly across the network, spreading to a large area within a short period time, making it difficult for the government to guide public opinion and posing a serious threat to the image, survival and development of the government. Taking the sudden public event "Wuhan City Closure" as an example, this paper compares the public opinion guidance strategies and effects of the relevant media, considers positive public relations and image restoration theories as to the three-level coding standards for the construction of rooted theory, and uses qualitative research methods to investigate the government's public opinion guidance strategies and effects in the context of crisis communication.

**Keywords:** Crisis communication; Positive public relations; Image restoration; Rooting theory.

## 1. Introduction

After the outbreak of the new pneumonia epidemic, President Xi Jinping made important arrangements such as "doing a good job of propaganda, education and public opinion guidance" and "better strengthening confidence, warming the hearts of the people and gathering the hearts of the people", etc. For the press release of professional information on the epidemic, comprehensive, timely and scientific is the basic requirement. requirements. At present, the situation of the epidemic prevention and control is still complex and serious, and the work of publicity and public opinion guidance on epidemic prevention and control has not yet been completed, and crisis communication of public emergencies has become an important proposition. From a practical point of view, China still needs to improve the interface mechanism between central and local departments. This study is rooted in organisational image restoration strategies and positive public relations theory, and provides a comprehensive analytical framework for addressing the issue of government image restoration, i.e. 'from crises to strategy choices'.

At the same time, this paper will comprehensively consider the different types of subjects that may be guided by public opinion in the process of crisis communication of public emergencies, analyse and explain the strategies and effects of government public opinion guidance in the context of crisis communication, explore the strategies and effects of government public opinion guidance, adopt various strategies to shape positive public relations, and adopt image restoration strategies to enhance its credibility in the areas of public opinion monitoring and diagnosis, crisis prevention and identification, public labelling and relationship management, communication, and public relations. It also proposes improvement measures in the areas of monitoring and judging public opinion, crisis prevention and identification, public labelling and relationship management, diversified presentation of communication content, and comprehensive use of communication strategies, to better build a responsible and responsive government.

## 2. Review of Literature

As a typical position of government public opinion guidance, the strategy and effect of government public opinion guidance under the crisis communication perspectives have become an important topic

of research in the academic field. For a government in crisis, it needs to adopt appropriate crisis communication strategies to communicate with the public to build positive public relations and shape the government's image. The researcher will review the content and results of previous studies from three perspectives: crisis communication, government public opinion guidance and research on sudden public events, and sort out the academic space to be added and improved, to establish the scope and direction of this paper.

## **2.1 Research on crisis events and crisis communication management mechanisms**

"A crisis is a state of affairs in which the fundamental objectives of the decision-maker are threatened and the response time of the subject is limited, and the crisis must be threatening, urgent and unexpected. In public relations, crisis communication refers to how to adopt mass communication and other means to effectively control the information dissemination activities of the society in response to the crisis phenomenon, to intervening and influencing the crisis management process through the laws of social communication and news communication, so that the crisis can be transformed for the better. From the perspective of media image repair in crisis communication, Li Jiamin (2020) uses case and theoretical analysis to analyse the coping strategies of the Xi'an municipal government and Aokai Electric Co., and discusses what media strategies the government should adopt to resolve the crisis and carry out image repair to solve the problems related to the crisis event. Wang Baolu (2016) and Wang Cailing (2018) explored the image repair strategies and communication effects in the process of corporate crisis communication in the new media environment, based on the media efficacy theory of Yixing Wu. These articles all use a specific event as an entry point, and after outlining the event, they explain the communicators, audiences and strategic effects in the crisis communication process one by one, with a more focused analysis of objects and more specific analysis of crisis communication events, but the emphasis on specific research methods is somewhat lacking.

## **2.2 Research on government public opinion guidance**

Public opinion guidance, also known as opinion direction, is the evaluation and guidance of social opinion, using public opinion to guide people's subjective intentions and then influence their subsequent behaviour. The crisis has created a great dilemma for the communication and repair of the government's image, as well as the building of the government's credibility. The starting point and ultimate goal of government image restoration lie in gaining public recognition and media support, which is also the starting point of the government's public opinion guidance.

From the perspective of the big data era, Shen Lin and Li Chen (2020) analyse how government departments can make comprehensive use of big data technology, artificial intelligence, social media and other emerging media tools to build an image after a crisis event; Li Fugui, Xu Guochong and Cui Longxia (2017) also discuss the challenges and problems brought by the government crisis PR model based on the characteristics of the big data era. From the perspective of social media context, Ding Jie (2021) and He Danni (2016) analyse and deconstruct two cases the Yunnan government's "hide and seek" incident and the Wenzhou government's Qian Yunhui incident, supported by Marxist reflection theory, image repair theory and media effectiveness theory. Through the analysis and deconstruction of the Yunnan government's "hide and seek" incident and the Wenzhou government's Qian Yunhui incident, we analyse the new paradigm of public relations dialogue in the context of social media, and prove the effectiveness of image repair strategies and media effectiveness theory.

## **2.3 Research on sudden public events**

Sudden public events refer to social crises that erupt rapidly within a short period time and have a certain degree of universality. Sudden public events have three characteristics: suddenness, universality and unconventionality. With the development of the social economy, various public emergencies are becoming more and more frequent. These public emergencies not only put people's lives and property safety at risk, but also cause certain damage to normal social stability, and if public

emergencies are not governed after they occur, they will cause the image of many local governments to be damaged in the governance of public emergencies. In the study of sudden public events, from the perspective of the necessity and significance of local government image enhancement, Zhao Sheng (2018) explored the basic connotation of sudden public events and government image, and outlined the characteristics of sudden public events. Yuan Jun and Feng Shang-ye's (2013) and their duo's study of four different types of sudden public events, including the Beijing rainstorm, the dynamic train accident, the cadmium pollution in Longjiang, and the Ningbo PX incident, is an example of using content analysis to explore the laws of different cases, arguing that current sudden public events in China still follow the "enhanced support, transcendence, correction" This is an example of the use of content analysis to explore different case patterns, arguing that the "disaster-happy" restoration strategy is still being used in China, and that it is instructive in terms of research methodology. Another part of the research on sudden public events introduces academic theoretical perspectives such as the knowledge gap and media efficacy to care for the analysis of public opinion on crisis communication, increasing the degree of theoretical fit, research credibility and authority. For example, Zhao Yang (2013) makes a comprehensive study and assessment of case studies of media behaviour and effectiveness in the context of the effectiveness of media repair during public opinion crises in the judiciary, taking into account the occurrence of major public opinion events involving the judiciary.

The above studies on crisis communication reveal that although there are different focuses on the strategies and effects of government public opinion guidance, the theoretical frameworks and points of reference can be summarized into four areas: the characteristics and mechanisms of the crisis communication process, the causes and risks and impacts of the current public opinion, the strategies and effects of government public opinion guidance, and the process of a sudden public event. research. Therefore, there is still room to improve the academic analysis of crisis communication strategies, and a more complete research system has not yet been formed for the communication mechanisms of individual crisis events, and the application of qualitative research methods is relatively thin. In addition, the discussion of sudden public events is often a lagging study after the public opinion storm has passed, and its significance for deepening public opinion guidance work, repairing the government's image and managing the network ecological environment has not been fully exploited.

To sum up, this paper takes the sudden public event "Wuhan City Closure" as an example, compares the relevant media's public opinion guidance, and explores the government's public opinion guidance strategies and effects in the context of crisis communication, as well as providing an experience for subsequent scholars with this time-lapse study. At the same time, this paper will consider the various subjects who may be guided by public opinion in the process of crisis communication of sudden public events, and analyse and explain the strategies and effects of government public opinion guidance in the context of crisis communication from different perspectives, such as media practitioners, scholars from universities in the field of journalism and communication, and university students with certain media literacy, in an attempt to make an innovative addition to the academic gap in the study of crisis communication mechanisms in China. This study is an attempt to add to the academic gap in the study of crisis communication mechanisms in China.

### **3. Research Methodology and Data Collection**

#### **3.1 Research design**

The purpose of this paper is to explore the strategies and effects of government public opinion guidance in the context of crisis communication, and to consider this issue as an exploratory study. Through comparing and summarizing multiple core categories, we finally obtain the core categories and the relationship between them, test the current situation of implementing the strategies and effects of governmental opinion guidance in the field of crisis communication in China, and analyze and explain the strategies and effects. The study will also analyse and explain its strategies and effects.

### 3.2 Interviewees

In the current crisis communication field, the transmitters and recipients of public opinion and their researchers are often all. Therefore, we choose these three groups of people related to the field as the interviewees. In this paper, we choose media practitioners related to the government's public opinion guidance work, scholars in the field of journalism and communication in universities, and university students with certain media literacy, all of whom are highly sensitive to public opinion events and have extremely high attention to and profound understanding of changes in the field of sudden public events, government announcements and public opinion trends. In this paper, nine respondents with typical characteristics were selected, as shown in the table.

**Table 1.** List of basic information of the interviewees

| No. | Gender | Age          | Occupation             | Date of interview |
|-----|--------|--------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| A1  | Male   | 20 years old | University student     | 14 March 2022     |
| A2  | Female | 21 years old | University student     | 14 March 2022     |
| A3  | Female | 23 years old | University student     | 19 March 2022     |
| B1  | Female | 42 years old | High school academic   | 16 March 2022     |
| B2  | Male   | 48 years old | High school academic   | 18 March 2022     |
| B3  | Female | 45 years old | High school academic   | 20 March 2022     |
| C1  | Male   | 36 years old | Frontline media worker | 17 March 2022     |
| C2  | Male   | 40 years old | Frontline media worker | 18 March 2022     |
| C3  | Male   | 32 years old | Frontline media worker | 16 March 2022     |

## 4. Category refinement and model construction

### 4.1 Open-ended coding

The first round of coding of the original interview data, i.e. open coding, will label any codable data in the transcripts with a conceptualization that reflects the content of the data in terms of concepts and categories, and re-synthesise them by constantly comparing and breaking down the established data and abstracted concepts. Through open coding, the data is divided into different class books, which helps in further observation of the research questions, and the author iterates on the resulting concepts and their categories, considering positive public relations and image restoration theories as tertiary coding criteria for constructing a rooted theory.

**Table 2.** Scope of open coding

| Initial Scope              | Original Record                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Crisis Identification      | A1: Pro-lifers breaking the news can gain public sentiment and opinion for the central government, but it is a public opinion event for the local government. A2: The local government forcibly suppressed things in the early stage. B2: The sudden event oxidizes sensitive topics and does a good job of assessing the risk of public opinion at the budding stage. C2: Crisis missteps include delayed information release, avoiding media interviews, blocking information dissemination, and releasing wrong information.                                       |
| Environment Identification | A1: Society has matured epidemic prevention policies and measures, and precise epidemic prevention is constantly implemented. B1: Departments are linked to respond quickly to public opinion, and there are strict principles for handling public opinion in general. A2: The overall public opinion environment is one of affirmation of government measures and trust in medical technology. C3: The CPC Central Committee press release system is established, and open government affairs are implemented to respond to social concerns and improve credibility. |
| Communication Strategy     | B1: Opinion leaders speak effectively. C1: Short videos, public numbers sent simultaneously, timely coverage; The "Golden Four Hours" principle. A3: Epidemic press conferences, official websites of local health committees, mainstream media. B2:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                        | Principle of synchronising media services and management, party committees and government building with a mature media liaison mechanism, and expert interpretation mechanism.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Media Strategy         | B1:Public opinion is basically controlled in the hands of the government and mainstream media, together with the combination of self-media breaking news + rapid follow-up by mainstream media + government disposal of those responsible.C1:Clarify the truth and mainstream media speak out.B2:Media outside the region have the responsibility of monitoring.B2:Strengthen the construction of a team of online commentators and seek support from higher-level party committees and governments.C3:Media integration reports, breaking and documentary news is client first, newspapers follow up with in-depth reports.                      |
| Content Presentation   | B1:The current reporting is more directive and prescriptive, requiring a balance between propaganda and reporting facts.C1: Present the facts according to the truth and report fairly.B2: The Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee put forward the "great spirit of resistance", reflecting the superiority of the Party's decisions and social system.C2: Follow the plan designated by the higher propaganda department to implement the focus and public information. A3: The "cloud supervisor" slow live experience. B3: Truthful and accurate, using data to speak.                                                         |
| Communication Skills   | A1: The words of experts sometimes have more symbolic meaning than practical significance and can serve to dispel rumours. C1: Do not over-politicise things and do not fragment livelihood issues. A2: The media reports news from a neutral perspective, without leading or inciting, or taking things out of context, the news must be objective, truthful, fair and timely in responding to issues and giving care and support to the people with temperature. C3: The fate of personalities and the city's the intersection of personal destiny and urban development.                                                                       |
| Crisis Management      | A1: The government will announce on the prevention of epidemics. B1: Public opinion must not damage the image of the central government or affect ideology, or violate the law. C1: The government will have a plan for crisis management in advance, and will grasp the "timing and effectiveness". B2: The handling of the incident and the guidance of public opinion will be carried out simultaneously, with the mainstream media being coordinated, a press conference held, a three-tier review mechanism adopted, and the agenda strengthened. The government has adopted a three-tier vetting mechanism and strengthened agenda setting. |
| Public Trust           | A1:Medical experts like Zhong Nanshan are opinion leaders who guide the public and soothe their anxiety.C1:Create a credible platform.A2:Make information about the epidemic public, build up the trust of the government and the public, and lay a good foundation for the masses.A3:University students support the decisions of the Party Central Committee and the government, and mobilise people's enthusiasm to fight the epidemic.B3:There is no need to report only good news but bad news, two-sided tips.                                                                                                                              |
| Positive Comeback      | A3: The media should follow up on the report. Information transparency in epidemic prevention work is inherently a duty and needs to be monitored by the community. B2: Straightforwardly strengthen leadership building, strengthen the construction of public opinion guidance teams, strengthen the construction of systems and mechanisms, and focus on the construction of new media platforms. B3: Hold press conferences to deal with unexpected situations.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Inability to Control   | A1: The outbreak of the epidemic led to the Shuanghuanglian incident, in which the media disseminated information without verification, causing public panic and looting, and also accusing the public of being blind. B2: Induced information led to the emergence of farce. B2: Major sudden public events were difficult to study and judge in the early stages. C2: Traditional media had established scheduling restrictions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Strengthen the Support | A2: The media will filter to retain positive views to stabilise the public, but in reality, people's positive attitudes coexist with negative attitudes, and negative views are limited. B3: Reveal the facts, gather cohesion and alleviate public anxiety.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Minimise the Crisis    | A1: More propaganda-style reporting will make people less alert to the epidemic and less posing is needed. C1: Minimise negative forms and lead efficiently. B2: Release positive information and manage negative information in parallel.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

|                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Differentiation                             | C1: Draw on past experiences such as SARS-era strategies and avoid interviews with failures. B2: Contrast different cultures in China and the West and different regions to explore how to do better within the existing framework of prevention and control. C2: Make information was more transparent.                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Self-transcendence                          | A1: Government focuses more on events beyond the outbreak, the post-epidemic era when governments are successively carrying out precise epidemic prevention, and shifting the direction of reporting. B2: Cultural emphasis on individual subordination to the collective, reporting from a macro, collective and holistic perspective, using emotional mobilization, and personal commitment to giving back. B3: The Chinese nation's episode of great love, the memory of fighting the epidemic.  |
| Commitment to Solving the Problem           | A1: More important than publicity is the implementation of precise epidemic prevention and regularization. B2: Public opinion should not be directed at the most important level of government agenda-setting, but should be "timely and effective" in the context of dealing with the problem. A swift, sustained and effective response would be very useful in improving social governance in the government's Internet presence. B3: The closure of the city proved to be correct and decisive. |
| Take Responsibility and Ask for Forgiveness | B1: The central government is motivated to accept the reality of public sentiment and opinion. B2: The situation is being dealt with in an orderly manner with strong state intervention. A3: People are concerned about the timely information on punishment and the reports on rescue and livelihood security are being made public.                                                                                                                                                              |

## 4.2 Main axis coding

The second round of spindle coding aimed to find and establish links between categories and sub-categories. Through analysis, this paper found that the different concepts obtained in the open coding were basically in line with positive public relations and image restoration theories at the category level. After evaluation, the author re-named the main categories, sorted out the corresponding categories and defined the connotative categories concerning the characteristics of sudden public events in the context of crisis communication, forming the following table of main axis coding.

**Table 3.** Table of spindle codes

| Main Category             | Corresponding Category     | Explaining the Connotation of the Connotation Category                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Problem Identification    | Crisis Identification      | Detection and problem identification of the political, economic, social, cultural and technological aspects of the government's exposure to emergencies and risk assessment of public opinion on the topic |
|                           | Environment Identification | Identification of the root causes, types, responsibilities and attributions of the government before, during and after a crisis event                                                                      |
| Strategy Development      | Communication Strategy     | Integrate multiple communication tools and provide recommendations on communication strategies in response to strategic organizational development goals                                                   |
|                           | Media Strategy             | Propose a combination of traditional media, new media and self-published media                                                                                                                             |
| Interactive Communication | Content Presentation       | Propose concept cores, communication keywords, topic design, press releases, etc.                                                                                                                          |
|                           | Communication Skills       | Two-way symmetrical, conversational communication using appropriate communication strategies                                                                                                               |
|                           | Crisis Management          | Government crisis statements, press conferences, handling of negative public opinion, etc.                                                                                                                 |
| Assessing Public Trust    | Public Trust               | Assessing the contribution of opinion leaders to building public trust                                                                                                                                     |
| Evasion of Responsibility | Positive Comeback          | Government acts in response to another unreasonable act                                                                                                                                                    |
|                           | Inability to Control       | Lack of or no government information on key elements and circumstances of the incident                                                                                                                     |

|                   |                                             |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reduces Hostility | Strengthens Support                         | Media reinforces positive public perceptions of the organisation, counteracts negativity and can emphasise good features of the organisation and positive actions taken |
|                   | Minimise the Crisis                         | Public opinion is guided to reduce negative public sentiment about the event                                                                                            |
|                   | Differentiation                             | The media differentiates the crisis from similar or more damaging crises so that the public thinks it is not so serious                                                 |
|                   | Self-transcendence                          | The media reminds audiences that there are more important things to focus on                                                                                            |
| Corrective Action | Promises that the Problem will be Solved    | Government promises to restore the status quo ante or to prevent a recurrence                                                                                           |
| Apologise         | Take Responsibility and Ask for Forgiveness | The government takes primary responsibility for the incident and apologises                                                                                             |

### 4.3 Selective coding

Once the main axes have been coded, the relationships between the categories gradually become apparent. The role of selective coding is to further address the relationships between the different categories. It extracts core categories from the main categories and uses them as a basis for analysing the relationships between the core categories and other categories. The selective coding analysis refines the levels more abstractly than before. In the selective coding stage, the author summarizes and integrates the eight main categories formed by the main axis coding to refine more systematic core categories, and finally forms five core categories of public opinion monitoring and research, crisis prevention and identification, public labelling and relationship management, multiple presentations of communication contents, and the use of image restoration strategies.

## 5. Data analysis

In the face of sudden public events, the government is constantly using positive public relations strategies to repair its image and enhance its credibility. In the new media era, crisis communication has also taken on many new characteristics, making the government's Internet governance and public opinion guidance work increasingly complex. The first disruptive change compared to the traditional media era is the plurality of crisis communication subjects. The microphone of speech is in everyone's hands, making it more difficult for local governments to anticipate the risks of public opinion, and therefore the work of public opinion guidance is becoming increasingly difficult, and more diverse strategies are urgently needed to solve the real-life dilemma.

Based on the analysis of the above interview categories, the author finds that the government's public opinion guidance strategy in the crisis communication perspective is mainly reflected in the adoption of various strategies to shape positive public relations and adopt image restoration strategies to enhance its credibility, and the strategic methods adopted are mainly reflected in public opinion monitoring and research, crisis prevention and identification, public labelling and relationship management, diversified presentation of communication contents, and comprehensive application of communication strategies.

### 5.1 Follow the rules of communication and grasp the effectiveness of timing

Whether it is public opinion monitoring and research or crisis prevention and identification, there are communication rules that can be followed, and timely detection and agenda-setting can respond to unexpected events and subtly resolve problems. Due to the rapid development of communication technology, the current situation of "everyone is a journalist" shows that information asymmetry, delayed information and rumour spreading will increase the difficulty of guiding public opinion and increase social risks in a normal society containing crises and sudden public events. The government's

standards for guiding public opinion and journalism. The government's standard "timeliness and effectiveness" principle for guiding public opinion is three-fold.

The three principles of "timeliness and effectiveness" are the core of public opinion guidance. In the case of the Wuhan city closure, the mainstream media played the role in risk warning at a later stage, and some of them were able to seize the current "golden four hours" of timeliness and effectiveness, using the law of communication to follow the whole incident during the crisis and the follow-up process, and to minimise the form of negative reporting. Local governments are still at the centre of emergency management, and the management of crisis communication on the internet is both an opportunity and a challenge for them. Therefore, whether the government can understand and grasp the characteristics of new media crisis communication, realize the challenges and problems faced by crisis communication in the new media era, and take effective countermeasures to resolve the crisis are of great significance to enhance the government's credibility and build a good image.

## **5.2 Improve public opinion guidance strategies and strengthen mechanism construction**

Based on the experience of public labelling and public management work, excellent communication strategies are formulated so that the content of public opinion guidance is presented slightly from the available information. Experience has been gained.

As public health emergencies are characterised by their wide scope of impact and a high degree of expertise in prevention and control, press conferences held by the government are a symbol of authority and are highly visible. The government press conference site is an occasion of great attention and information density. If we want to complete the coverage efficiently and give full play to the mainstream media's function of guiding public opinion, we need to strengthen the construction of mechanisms and take the lead in setting the agenda. First of all, society should strengthen its leadership to be able to lead and coordinate various departments to form a synergy to respond to public opinion in a high-speed and efficient manner; continue to strengthen the construction of the public opinion guidance team, which is currently very scarce and does not have a full-time staff, and needs to continue to strengthen the construction of the team to form a professional, experienced and resilient one; in addition, the construction of mechanisms and systems should be strengthened. This includes the need to do assessments of release risks. There is the monitoring and research of public opinion, the coordination of cadres and the setting of agendas; finally, the construction of new media platforms should be focused on. Make the government's new media platforms capable of continuous and continuous voice, and be able to quickly detect public opinion and nip it in the bud.

## **5.3 Advocate positive public relations and attach importance to empathic communication**

The positioning of the function of crisis communication has undergone a huge change, from the linear model of one-way information by mainstream authoritative discourse to public participation and having the status of a subject, and the core connotation has also changed from tangible crisis to the current intangible public emotion, and the public's increasingly strong sense of identity substitution and emotional empathy have made the emotion channelling in crisis communication an important research object. However, the mainstream media is still the main channel of voice. Taking the epidemic as an example, most of the media take a macro, collective and holistic perspective, and apart from government-level reports on prevention and control measures, epidemic-related knowledge and popularisation, they intervene in the history of the epidemic from different levels, using a civilian perspective, micro-minimal narratives of the daily practices of ordinary people's lives, positive reporting using emotional mobilisation and touching stories, and using The story is a positive one, using personal contributions to give back to the event.

This time, the mainstream media innovated by adopting the "slow live" format, racing against the epidemic and going straight to Wuhan Fangzhan Hospital, bringing audiences a unique sensory experience with immersive experiences and long hours of cloud accompaniment, allowing them to understand the progress of the emergency at the first time, while satisfying their right to know and desire for knowledge, and showing China's speed and power. In addition to the official mainstream

media, UGC short video content created by users, such as the tribute to heroes, volunteer services, home isolation, grassroots services and other topics are very extensive, not only has a personalised content expression, but more in line with the audience's use and satisfaction psychology, forming a two-way communication, empathy communication, for the audience to accept more easily.

## **6. Research and Discussion**

With the Internet as the core driving force, the media landscape and media environment have undergone radical changes, and the government is facing both challenges and opportunities in guiding public opinion. The public expectation perspective has clarified the main content of the government's media image construction. The author aims to discuss the path and strategy of media image construction and provide feasible suggestions for the government's public opinion guidance in the new environment.

### **6.1 Improve the monitoring and management mechanism of public opinion and promote the rational construction of the government and citizens**

In response to crises and sudden public events, the Internet environment governance faces dilemmas, opportunities and challenges, and the media should also make a new review and positioning of their social roles and social responsibilities. Under the goal of building a harmonious society, the mass media should assume a corresponding social role. The government should not only be a timely and comprehensive information distributor and risk warning agent, but also become a communicator of social information and a coordinator of conflicts, and take an authoritative stance in monitoring and managing public opinion, grasping the overall situation and consciously maintaining the government's image. In China, public opinion and public sentiment are controlled by the government and mainstream media, and with the combination of "self-published media breaking news, mainstream media quickly following up, and the government dealing with those in charge", the government's image is more successfully shaped.

In addition, to build a responsible government, the guidance of public opinion should not be at the forefront of the government's agenda-setting, but should first consider whether things are being handled at the same "pace" as the current state of public opinion. A prudent, inclusive and positive public opinion environment is more conducive to the rational construction of the government and citizens, by paying attention to people-oriented sentiments, public opinion guidance, continuous government openness, and the effective promotion of "precise focus" in monitoring public opinion and handling events.

### **6.2 Pay attention to the voices of opinion leaders and play a leading role in emergency events**

German sociologist Ulrich Beck put forward the theory of "risk society", arguing that the world is entering a risk society that is different from the traditional modern society, which provides a reference for our current social divisions, problems and contradictions. However, the mass media has the role of promoting social awareness and communication among its audience, and the public has high expectations of media coverage during an epidemic. In sudden public events in specialist areas such as healthcare, where the traditional press release is issued by an administrative position rather than an authoritative expert in the field, professional opinion leaders have a stronger positive effect and persuasive effect on the public than the information released by general government employees at press conferences. In the Wuhan epidemic closure, China's mainstream media also portrayed many heroes in the fight against the epidemic, such as Zhong Nanshan, Zhang Wenhong and Li Lanjuan, who spoke as expert opinion leaders to interpret the epidemic information and spread health knowledge, breaking the communication barriers and being highly influential. Therefore, in terms of press releases in China, we should strengthen the construction of expert interpretation mechanisms, form a team of government online commentators, and interpret expert speeches at a deeper level, so that policies and information can be gathered from the people.

The two-pronged approach of online opinion leaders and expert opinion leaders, with official discourse and civil discourse complementing each other, will play a more precise and effective role in guiding public opinion. Overseas opinion leaders on the Internet have a unique advantage in shaping and spreading China's national image. Their position in the overseas audience is more objective and realistic, and they are more persuasive in denouncing rumours that the overseas media arbitrarily distort facts and stigmatise China's image, so that they can objectively and comprehensively present the actual situation in China, change the stereotypes of the international community about China and spread China's voice.

### **6.3 Comprehensive use of media technology to build the government's media image**

Image construction lies in the media government itself, but also in the development trend of intelligent media that is connected to everything, and the innovative use of various concepts, means and methods, such as the "three micro ends" new media technology, live press conferences, new media matrix construction interconnection, etc. During the epidemic, different media had different guidance strategies. The domestic mainstream media made full use of 5G technology to report on the epidemic, innovating the use of integrated media technology to achieve a new experience of audience scenario-based communication. For example, CCTV News launched an anti-epidemic news report vlog, which was grounded and close to the people's hearts, directly triggering emotional resonance; it produced visualised epidemic information production graphics with warning music, promptly exposing rumours to quell controversies and fully responding to social concerns on key issues.

We must continue to improve the government's ability to communicate across the media and manage the restoration of the government's image in crisis communications, shape positive public relations between the government and the public, and adapt to the new era of intelligent communication with full media, full media and full-effect media, which can not only strengthen public opinion guidance and improve communication capabilities, but also build a government media image with influence, guidance, credibility and communication power.

## **7. Conclusion**

In the rapidly developing environment of social media platforms, there are three major changes in the guidance of public opinion. The first is the change in the channels of public opinion dissemination, from word-of-mouth by the public to voices through new media platforms with traced records, forming an aggregation effect that can easily induce public opinion. Secondly, there is a change in the characteristics of communication. Under the Internet, public opinion can be spread very quickly, and the interaction between the publishers of public opinion information and netizens has created a rapid dissemination effect. Thirdly, the invisibility of public opinion and the dominance of discourse have also changed. In a normal society where crises are embedded, information asymmetry, the delayed transmission of information and falsehoods can make crises and risks come more quickly. The current Newcastle pneumonia outbreak continues to be unprecedented in terms of events and scope, and the government still needs to do a better job within the existing framework of prevention and control, defence, and continuous follow-up of public opinion on related events. From the crisis communication perspective, this paper takes the sudden public event of Wuhan city closure as an example to analyse the government's public opinion guidance strategies and effects, adopt various strategies to shape positive public relations and adopt image restoration strategies to enhance its credibility, and continue to improve measures at the levels of public opinion monitoring and research, crisis prevention and identification, public labelling and relationship management, diversified presentation of communication content, and integrated use of communication strategies to better Build a responsible and responsive government.

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