

Research on the communication strategy of university public opinion event report from the perspective of frame theory: Shandong University Buddy Program Incident as an example

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Abstract. The dissemination of sudden public opinion can easily lead to the generalization of group opinion, and it is particularly important to adopt appropriate news communication strategies in the face of such sudden public opinion events. This paper takes the report text of the Shandong University buddy program incident as the analysis object, starts with the frame theory, combines the content analysis method, systematically analyzes the news frame construction of the event report from three parts: frame presentation, construction mechanism and framing effect, and discusses and summarizes the communication strategy of media reports of sudden public opinion events in universities.

Keywords: Frame theory; Public opinion in colleges and universities; Framing content analysis; Communication strategy.

1. Introduction

On July 6, 2019, A netizen posted on Weibo that Shandong University buddy program from "1 to 1" in 2017 to "1 to 3" in 2018, with each international student having three Chinese student companions, the program application form not only does not avoid the opposite sex buddy, but also mentions "becoming a foreign friend of the opposite sex" ambiguous content. The move attracted widespread attention and swept the Internet within a day. Subsequently, the official "Information Statement" issued by Shandong University was evasive and "going through the motions" in its response, neglecting effective expression and dissemination at the linguistic level, which accelerated the spread of negative public opinions, and this event gradually became a topic of public opinion from discrete potential discussion. In the face of such event reports, the analysis of the news frame construction of different types of media has a certain practical significance for the research on the communication strategy of public opinion event reports in universities.

The study of frame theory is a popular area of journalism research, which provides a theoretical explanation for the performance of the media's news report under the specific social issues and the influence of people's cognitive stance and emotional views. Media use news of different natures to construct different news structures, influence attitudes, cognition, emotion, judgment and behavior of events, and construct news with different narrative methods, rhetoric and discourse strategies, so as to provide the public with a specific event analysis frame (Liu, X. and Zhang, C.Y, 2021).

At present, domestic scholars mainly focus on the concept of frame dissemination and use content analysis to study social ethics news reports. Some scholars explore the anomie reflected by the frame structure in social ethics reports through comparative analysis or individual case analysis (Liu, X. & Zhang, C.Y, 2021; Zhang, Y, 2019), while the analysis of the effects of specific frame on news reporting of sudden public opinion event types in universities is rare. The purpose of this paper is to take the media report of the buddy program incident of Shandong University as an example to discuss the difference of the news frame presentation, construction mechanism and effect of the news report under the same event. It focuses on the analysis of the framing effect of the type of report content of sudden public opinion events in colleges and universities, and summarizes the response scheme and communication strategies of the media in the face of such reports. The conclusion of this paper has certain academic reference significance for the expansion and deepening of frame theory.

2. Frame theory and news frame

The origin of frame theory can be traced back to two clues, one of which originated in sociological theory. As early as 1974, the American sociologist Goffman proposed a frame theory in his book *Frame Analysis*, "the psychological principles and subjective processes by which individuals organizing events"; secondly, it originated in psychological theory. In psychology, the hypothesis construction of individual cognitive process-"schema" has been formed (Shun, C. Q, 2010).

Under the influence of Goffman's theory, scholars gradually introduced the concept of "frame" in the field of mass communication. The American scholar Tuchman compared news to a "frame", arguing that mass communication is restricted by the "window" perspective when describing the world, and "frame" form is the indispensable core of its material selection and highlighting mechanism (2008). Gitlin continued Goffman's theory, proposed that "framing" mechanism is "the criterion used to select, emphasize and express the questions of what exists, what happens and what is the meaning"(1980). Entman believed that the selection and emphasis of framing analysis would affect audiences' definition of problems, cognitive understanding and problem-solving methods (1993). Later, framing analysis gradually developed three core concepts in the field of media studies: frame, framing, and framing effect, covering the three main areas of discourse, its construction and reception. Corresponding to the three major fields of news communication research: media content (what is the frame), news production (how the frame is constructed) and media effect (how the audience receives and processes media information) (Scheufele, D.A. & Tewksbury, D, 2007). To sum up, news frame is a variety of narrative forms presented by media reports and a consistent interpretation routine used by news media when reporting issues (Li, H. B, 2017).

Extending to the field of news reporting, the news itself is a frame, which is a construction composed of media setting the public agenda in the report. In the process of providing the information that the audience wants to know, needs to know, and should know, the news media carries out secondary processing of the information provided through the screening of topics, the control, and regulation of the weight of topics, and other means, which in turn influence the public's cognitive perceptions and positions. Based on the frame theory of news reports, the fruitful theoretical achievements of the academic circle have formed a standard framing analysis model. This paper makes a qualitative analysis of the content and effect of media reports on the types of sudden public opinion events in colleges and universities. Taking the report on the incident of the school buddy system in Shandong University on July 6, 2019 as an example, the news frame of public opinion reports in colleges and universities is studied. So as to understand and explore the communication strategy of sudden public opinion reports in universities.

3. Analysis of media coverage content framing effects

3.1 Frame presentation: media coverage frame selection and content diversity

Media can use news of different natures to construct different news structures, influence the attitude, cognition, emotion, judgment and behavior of events, and construct news with different narrative methods, rhetoric and discourse strategies, to provide the public with a specific event analysis frame and make the public focus on a specific field and problem, thereby guiding the development direction of event public opinion.

The frame selection of the media report is manifested as the choice of topic construction and the direction of influencing public opinion. According to data from the social hotspot aggregation platform "Zhiwei data", the social influence index of Shandong University buddy program incident and the influence index of Weibo were 71.6% and 78.5% respectively, both exceeding 80% of the influence of social events. During this period, a total of 62 major media participated in the news report of the event, among which the participation rate of central media reached 44.8% , which exceeded 79% of the event reports. For the media reports of this event, the author took the top ten headlines

according to the number of Network media report (as shown in Table 1). As can be seen from Table 1, major news media compete to report, with the media occupy the main leadership of public opinion in the development process of public opinion events in universities. The top ten news headlines reported by Network media were all from the mainstream media's vocal position. Most of them choose the factual reporting frame, release positive and objective reports, adopt the topic construction method conducive to the suppression and calm of public opinion conflicts, and mostly use positive and introspective title keywords such as "project apology", "comprehensive assessment", "careful summary and reflection" to eliminate public outcry. To some extent, it is conducive to the positive trend of public opinion.

The diversity of content shows that the topics are diversified and the emphases coexist. Diversity is reflected in the fact that major mainstream media and online media choose to report the buddy program incident from different levels and construct different agenda Settings, thus enriching the perspective and entry point of this incident. The difference in emphasis, it can also be seen from the correlation between the title and the publishing media in Table 1 that the reports of mainstream media are more objective, and the reports of we-media are more inclined to emotional guidance of public opinion. The reporting frame is specifically manifested as that the reports of mainstream media focus on the fact level. In contrast, we-media reports focus on the moral-emotional level. For example, the use of sensitive terms such as "foreign student companion of the opposite sex" and "one international student with three student companions", which misleadingly imply and incite public sentiment, has added to public discontent about the "super privilege" of international students. In the end, the discussion on the incident was raised to a storm of discussion on such stigmatized topics as "preferential treatment for international students", "worship and fawn on foreigners University", and "Easy Girl".

Table 1: Statistics of top 10 headlines reported by Network media in "Shandong University Buddy Program Incident"

Title of Report	Number of media reports	Media related to spreading this sound
1. Shandong University apologizes for Buddy Program: A full evaluation will be conducted	23	China Economic Net, China Youth Net, Red Net, China Worker Net, China News Net, China Net, China Jiangsu Net, North Net, Dahe Net, Northeast Net, CPCC Net, Yangtze Evening News Net, Xinhua Net, Southeast Net, China Quality News Net, Colorful Guizhou Net, Yunnan Net, Xinhua News Agency, CNTV, Xinhua Net client, China Review Net, China Net News, Jiangxi Network Radio and Television, etc
2. The "Buddy Program" for international students in Shandong University caused Controversy, Teachers and students: for friendly communication	15	Tencent Net, Huanqiu Net, Xinmin Net, Guangming Net, Changjiang Net, Changjiang Daily, The paper. cn, Guancha Net, Dayang Net, Xinmin Evening News, The paper.cn reporters, Chongqing Evening News,

		Tencent News, Public Welfare China, Guangzhou Daily, etc
3. Shandong University: The university will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the "Buddy Program", and seriously summarize and reflect	14	Xinmin Net, Economic Daily, Eastday. com, China Youth Net, The paper.cn, Dayang Net, Peninsula Net, Xinmin Evening News, Shandong University official Weibo, Cover news, The paper.cn client, China Youth Net News, Peninsula+, South Plus, etc
4. Shandong University apologizes for the "Buddy Program": We will seriously summarize and reflect	8	China Net, Jiefang Daily, Sichuan Daily Observation, Shandong University official Weibo, Zaoknow, CNMO. com, China Net News, etc
5. "one international student with three partners" student at Shandong University said that is conducive to cultural integration	8	Sina News, China Economic Net, National Business Daily, Red Star News, Red Star Depth, National Business Net, Daily Talk, Contemporary Business Net, etc
6. Foreign Ministry comments on Shandong University "Buddy Program" and online comments about African students	6	Tencent Net, Sina Net, Guancha Net, The paper.cn client, Chongqing Evening News, etc
7. Shandong University responded to the "Buddy Program" incident and apologized	5	Xingdao Huanqiu Net, Governor of Chang'an Street, Zhejiang News official Net, Zhejiang News, Shanxi Legal Net, etc
8. Geng Shuang's response to the Shandong University "Buddy Program Incident": Foreign students in China should abide by Chinese laws	5	China Worker Net, China News Net, Liyang Net, Qinghai Legal Net, Military Express client, etc
9. Shandong University responds to Chinese and foreign students' buddy program: Deeply sorry for this	5	Eastmoney.com, Hexun.com, Jingchu Net, The Beijing News, The Beijing News Net, etc
10. Shandong University apologizes for the buddy program of "Making Foreign friends with the opposite sex", But one detail is worth noting	4	China Economic Net, Hexun.com, National Business Daily, National Business Daily Net, etc

3.2 Frame construction mechanism: frame self-vibration and media type gatekeeping differences

The resonance of frame refers to that a certain type of media will first adopt a certain reporting frame when reporting a certain event, and it will be used as material for other media to cite and refer to, thus pushing the report to a climax (Zhang, Y, 2019). In the incident, the mainstream media is the main reporting source. For example, the Xinhua News Agency's article *Shandong University Buddy*

Program Apology: Comprehensive Evaluation will be carried out was republished by 23 media outlets. The report highlighted Shandong University's official apology for the incident, saying, "In the next step, we will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the buddy program and earnestly summarize the reflective response." The mainstream media chose to focus on objective reporting of the positive response content of the universities concerned, stabilized public sentiment, and guided public opinion back to rationality. After being reprinted and reported by several news media, it became the main frame of news media reporting at the later stage of the public opinion disturbance of the University incident and played a role in resolving negative public opinion.

In the new communication pattern, with the ferment of events, new media and audiences have a strong initiative to decode, different frame issues will be set, and different types of media have different gatekeeping levels. For example, the International Affairs Department of Shandong University stated in response to the incident, saying that the program is legal and legitimate, and refusing to hype and rumor-mongering. This response aroused public opinion to rebound again, causing some we-media to publish reports with sensitive keywords, such as "1 with 3" and "most of the school buddy are female students". Of which, *What is the intention of Shandong University to match male international students with "admire" female buddy?* was the headline published by we-media of Xinjie Life Daily, which is guide public opinion in a disguised way, intentionally create a public opinion atmosphere that Shandong University gives preferential treatment to international students. As the output of gatekeeping mechanism of different types of media is also different, some we-media will set controversial and topic-based issue frames to attract the public, catering to the market, organization, and other factors. The differences in gatekeeping standards among media lead to the differences in the construction of news frames. If there is a lack of intervention and guidance in the construction of the media reporting frame, it will make the we-media deviate from the mainstream media's other voice, so that the reporting object will become the target of public opinion attack, thus setting off a secondary public opinion storm.

3.3 Framing effects: the impact of media coverage on the governance of public opinion events in universities

The media has a strong ability to disseminate information and guide the manufacture of public opinion. The construction of the media report frame can have a significant impact on the audience's cognition and emotional position and play an important role in the governance process of crisis events in colleges and universities. On the one hand, the selection frame of news media mainly focuses on the level of factual reporting and actively intervenes, which can play the role of crisis public relations and "official refuting rumors" of crisis events in colleges and universities, which is conducive to calming negative public opinions and recovering the image of colleges and universities. Among them, some universities' response attitude of "sincerely facing and actively responding to the thorough investigation" will gain netizens' praise and good reputation under objective reports of public opinions and events by the media, which is conducive to repairing organizational image and social reputation.

On the other hand, most media choose to present only the facts of the reporting frame, which will lack a real in-depth interpretation of the event. When reporting the crisis events in colleges and universities, the media should not only stay at the level of objective description but also consider how to use the way of news to deeply interpret the events. For example, when reporting the incident of the "Shandong University buddy program system", Sina News and other media claimed that "there is an unreasonable phenomenon in school buddy system", focusing on words such as "school buddy the opposite sex" in the title, but did not make in-depth analysis and comprehensive interpretation of its specific content. For this event, school buddy is a voluntary agreement between the two parties, but some media did not explain the implementation of the school buddy system, only in the form of a brief introduction of "School buddy system" and attract readers' attention and controversial topics of the title of the report, the audience cannot draw a more comprehensive and objective conclusion from the "School buddy system". If the media report only makes a single introduction on the level of facts, overemphasizes the positive and political content of the report, and takes the way of "blocking" the

negative information of colleges and universities, the effect is often counterproductive, which is more likely to cause the suspicion and dissatisfaction of the audience, resulting in the public's doubt on the reputation of the campus and the aversion to the "diplomatic rhetoric" of the news media.

4. Optimization strategy of media coverage on sudden public opinion events in universities based on frame theory

The Pseudo—environment by the media through the news topic frame can affect the public's view of the event, as well as the changes in people's emotions and actions. Therefore, the way the media reports matters. In the face of university crisis event, major media platforms should timely reflect on the problems, improve reporting methods, and optimize the frame structure.

4.1 Adhering to the self-discipline of the news industry and advocating the establishment of communication bridges between the media and universities

The news media should give full play to their resource advantages with high credibility, guide and supervise the news information transmission process in time, and avoid some media from over-interpreting and exaggerating the original events. Mainstream media should also stick to the inherent position of guiding positive public opinion, clean and eliminate the negative public opinion influence after major events promptly through authoritative, fast, and true information, improve their journalistic literacy, and adhere to the self-discipline of the industry. On the other hand, the news media should correctly understand the significant impact of news reports on the teaching work of colleges and universities, be willing to communicate with teachers and students, and establish a good communication bridge with colleges and universities, to facilitate the acquisition of first-hand information after the outbreak of unexpected public opinion events in colleges and universities.

4.2 Standardize news frame and rationalize news reporting

The media should respect the objective facts of the incident and report the news content reasonably. The construction of a news report structure is to guide the public to "how to think". Therefore, news communication must fully realize that information is the basis of communication, and the authenticity of news is the lifeline of communication. The media should establish a reasonable frame, guide public opinion in the correct direction, resist spreading rumors, and refrain from distorting facts. In this case, the media should not spread false information such as "three women to one African man" and "25 volunteers to serve international students" before confirming the truth, thus Creating false frames and biasing public opinion.

4.3 Actively undertake the social responsibility of spreading facts and guiding rational thinking

In terms of the general idea of media management, it follows the "5S principle" of assuming responsibility, honest communication, efficiency priority, service guarantee, and power guarantee. While enjoying good social resources and information channels, the media shoulder the mission of objective reporting and dissemination of facts, and have the obligation to shoulder positive social responsibilities and guide the public to rational thinking. In the incident of Shandong University buddy program, extreme emotion dominated public rationality, leading to an increased risk of public conflict. At this time, the media should give full play to the social benefits, actively construct the news structure related to facts, divert the audience who is already in extreme emotion from the negative emotions, and direct them in a positive direction, so that their public opinion and trend back to the rational.

5. Conclusion

Based on a frame theory perspective, the media's choice of news frames is an important factor in influencing the public's perception of the event, the direction of public opinion on the topic and the reshaping of the image of the university in crisis. Research shows that different types of media have different news frames and tendencies in reporting sudden public opinion events in universities, with mainstream media tending to choose factual reporting frames and positive narrative strategies, while some we-media reports have a labeling orientation and set up eye-catching and controversial reporting frames. Therefore, the media should reasonably plan the news frame for reporting such events, avoid secondary public opinion, and carry out interpretive reporting, which is the key for the media to do a good job in such reporting.

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