

Research on Public Opinion Guidance Strategies of Political Microblogs in the Context of Emergencies

-- The "Gansu 12-18 Jishishan Earthquake" as an Example

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Abstract

This study takes "Gansu 12-18 Jishishan Earthquake" as an example to explore the strategies of guiding public opinion on government microblogs in the context of emergencies. Using the life cycle theory of public opinion, the study divides the development process of public opinion into four stages: latency, growth, maturity and decline, and systematically analyzes the performance of government microblogs, such as @Gansu Firefighting, @Gansu Public Security, and @Gansu Publishing, in the development of public opinion on emergencies, as well as their guiding effects in the various stages of public opinion development. The study shows that governmental microblogs perform better in terms of timeliness and authority of information release in emergencies, and are able to rapidly convey official information and stabilize public sentiment. However, there are still deficiencies in the interactive mechanism, public opinion monitoring and early warning, and evaluation and feedback. Based on this, it is proposed to optimize the public opinion monitoring and warning mechanism, enhance public interaction, and improve the feedback and evaluation system, so as to improve the public opinion management ability of government microblogs in emergencies, and to ensure the efficient communication of government information and the effective guidance of public opinion.

Keywords

Government microblog; Network public opinion; Guidance strategy; Emergencies.

1. Introduction

In the digital age, the Internet has become one of the main channels for information dissemination. According to the Statistical Report on the Development of the Internet in China, as of June 2024, there were nearly 1.1 billion Internet users in China, and the Internet penetration rate reached 78.0%.⁰ At the same time, the rise of social media has changed the way of information dissemination, making it more instantaneous and widespread. In emergencies, government microblogs are an important bridge of communication between the government and the public, and play an increasingly critical role. Government microblogs can not only quickly deliver official information, but also effectively guide public opinion and crisis management. However, government microblogs also have urgent problems such as insufficient interaction, imperfect monitoring and early warning mechanisms, and evaluation and feedback mechanisms that need to be improved. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the public opinion guidance of @Gansu Fire, @Gansu Public Security, and @Gansu Publishing in the "Gansu 12-18 Jishishan Earthquake", identify the problems, and propose improvement strategies based on the theory of the public opinion lifecycle, in order to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the effective operation of government microblogs in emergencies. The purpose is

to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the effective operation of government microblogs in emergency situations.

2. Analysis of the Role of Government Microblogs in Guiding Public Opinion in The Context of Emergencies

The "Gansu 12-18 Jishishan Earthquake" is a typical public emergency. In this study, the related governmental microblogs published by three governmental microblogs, including @Gansu Fire, @Gansu Public Security, and @Gansu Publishing, were counted from December 15, 2023 to January 3, 2024, with the total number of governmental microblogs amounting to 328 items. In terms of content, it mainly includes the following information: earthquake news, rescue progress, rumor denial, casualty situation, incident investigation, and so on. Emphasizing the importance and timeliness of public emergencies, it draws the attention of the public and expands the scope of dissemination. In previous studies, some scholars have argued that the evolution of online public opinion events is similar to the life cycle of a living organism, going through the dynamic process of generation, development, maturity and decline. The theory divides the whole process of online public opinion events into four stages: latency, growth, maturity and decline.^[2] The stages are interconnected and constitute the complete life cycle of online public opinion, and this division provides a systematic theoretical framework for understanding and responding to public opinion crises. Drawing on the above research results, this study analyzes the effect of government microblogs in guiding public opinion during the four stages of emergencies: latency, growth, maturity and decline.

2.1. The incubation period: guaranteeing citizens' right to know

When an emergency is in the latent period and public opinion has not yet erupted on a large scale, the role of political microblogs at this stage is mainly to help the public make preparations in advance through the rapid release of early warning information, so as to minimize the pressure when public opinion suddenly erupts. As a convenient and real-time platform for delivering authoritative information, political microblogs guarantee the public's access to information, and the right to know, as a basic right of citizens, is especially important in the face of sudden disasters, and the public has an urgent need for the timely voice of official and authoritative media. The public has an urgent need for the timely voice of the official and authoritative media. As the earthquake is related to the safety of people's lives and properties, the public would like to get the latest information about the situation of the earthquake, and in such an urgent situation, it is all the more necessary for the government microblogs to make a quick response to the incident and report the real information to guarantee the citizens' right to know.

In 2010, the Public Opinion Monitoring Office of People's Daily Online put forward the concept of "golden four-hour media" for emergencies.^[3] Government microblogs should seize the first opportunity to release timely information within four hours of an emergency to meet the public's information needs. The "Gansu 12-18 Jishishan Earthquake" occurred at 23:59 GMT on December 18, 2023, and @GansuPublished retweeted the earthquake information from @ChinaEarthquake.com at 0:10 GMT on December 19, covering the magnitude of the quake, the location of the epicenter, and the basic conditions of the affected area, and then released the aftershock situation through the reprinting of the information. Aftershocks. Within an hour of the earthquake, @Gansu Firefighters released disaster information at 0:25 on December 19th, with the graphic "How to correctly avoid danger in the event of an earthquake", and @Gansu Public Security also released information about the earthquake at 0:47 on December 19th. In this process, the government microblogging has assumed the role of "authoritative release" to ensure the clarity and accuracy of information transmission, enhance the credibility of government information release and public trust, and effectively avoid the generation of

information vacuum. The timely release of government microblogs during the incubation period lays the foundation for the subsequent guidance of public opinion and protects citizens' right to know.

2.2. Growth period: promoting the formation of correct public opinion

When emergencies enter the growth period, public concern rises sharply and the amount of information disseminated increases rapidly. The core task of political microblogging at this time is to update the information in time, prevent the spread of false news, and guide the public to respond reasonably so as to form a correct public opinion. Therefore, government microblogs should actively report the events with positive energy in the process of earthquake resistance, and show the content of disaster resistance in a timely manner through live broadcasts, videos, pictures and other multimedia forms, so as to enhance the dissemination effect and emotional resonance of the information, further enhance the public's attention and empathy, and help form a correct public opinion.

During the growing period of Jishishan earthquake, @Gansu Public Security immediately retweeted the live broadcast of @CCTV News at 3:23 on December 19, so that everyone could clearly visualize the scene of the Jishishan earthquake as well as the rescue and relief situation. In addition, @Gansu Public Security united with other political microblogs at 10:27 on December 19, together with other governmental microblogs to release the video of police in Jishishan earthquake rescue, showing that the police and the public in the period of disaster were united in the time of disaster. @gansu release, @gansu fire respectively publicized the good deeds during the disaster, heart-warming moments, let everyone feel that the human feelings in front of the disaster will always be the most warm-hearted, in these depth and more warm government microblogging content, the people of the public to get more likes and retweets, while the public's comments are also more positive. It can be seen that through live broadcast or video and other ways to show the situation of disaster relief, can let the public first understand the disaster, can let the people have psychological resonance, but also easier to promote the formation of correct public opinion.

2.3. Maturity: clarifying facts and dispelling rumors

As public opinion develops, public sentiment reaches its highest point during the maturity period and the social impact of the event reaches its peak. As information is mixed up during the maturity period due to the rapid dissemination of information, government microblogs need to release transparent information such as rumor-disclosure information and government actions in a timely manner at this stage, and respond to the public's concerns and questions in a positive and interactive manner to help stabilize the social sentiment.

@GansuFire at 16:11 on December 23rd issued an emergency rumor search, timely clarification of search and rescue dogs rescued 36 people, returned to the rubble when the collapse unfortunately buried sacrifice rumors. @gansu public security at 8:28 p.m. on December 28 released to reject network rumors, clear network environment. @gansupublishing has effectively guided public opinion in a positive direction by releasing several pieces of information about the progress of disaster relief, government officials' instructions and related policies. When responding to public emergencies, timely release of truthful, open and transparent information is an effective means of stabilizing public sentiment and maintaining social order. Government microblogs have achieved remarkable results in guiding online public opinion in a positive direction and maintaining social stability by actively releasing disinformation and taking effective measures to pacify and divert the public panic triggered by false rumors. Through continuous high-frequency rumor debunking and information transparency, mature government microblogs are conducive to obtaining public support in terms of public opinion, helping the public build up trust in the government's work, and strengthening the work of clarifying facts and eliminating rumors.

2.4. Decline: Continuous release of public opinion information

As the incident is gradually brought under control, the public opinion enters a period of recession, and public attention gradually decreases, but the task of government microblogs at this stage is not over, and this stage may fluctuate. Internet public opinion events that have far-reaching impacts on the public and are of great significance can only be said to have "calmed down at a stage", and once new triggers or triggering points appear, the original Internet public opinion events may be triggered again and become new hotspots again.^[4]

Therefore, it is still necessary to continue posting progress and summarizing information on post-disaster reconstruction during the recession period to ensure that the public is aware of the follow-up work. @gansupublishing continues to publish microblog content related to post-disaster recovery, including the government's condolences to the affected people and the progress of infrastructure repair in the disaster area. @GansuPublicSecurity continued to post the actions of public security police on the frontline of the earthquake. @GansuFire, on the other hand, posted incidents in which firefighters continued to serve the disaster area. These government microblogs published at the late stage of public opinion have played a role in stabilizing public sentiment and maintaining social confidence. Through the continuous release of government microblogs, the public maintained a certain degree of attention to the post-disaster reconstruction work, which helped the government maintain its credibility and avoided the recurrence of public opinion and secondary public opinion crises in the post-disaster stage.

3. The Deficiencies of Government Microblog Public Opinion Guidance in The Context of Emergencies

After the above analysis, it can be concluded that @Gansu Fire, @Gansu Public Security, and @Gansu Publishing have performed remarkably well in the "Gansu 12-18 Jishishan Earthquake", speaking out in a timely manner, continuing to follow up, clarifying rumors, and resolving negative public opinion. However, after analyzing the data, the following shortcomings were found: lack of monitoring and early warning mechanism, poor interactive effect in guiding public opinion, and lack of evaluation and feedback mechanism.

3.1. Lack of monitoring and early-warning mechanisms for guiding public opinion

Another major problem faced by political microblogs in guiding public opinion is the lack of an effective public opinion monitoring and early warning mechanism. After an emergency, information spreads rapidly, and rumors and inaccurate information often accompany it. In this process, it is crucial to detect and deal with negative information in a timely manner. However, judging from the performance of the government microblogs this time, the monitoring and early warning capability is insufficient, failing to track and intervene in the development of public opinion in a timely manner. @GansuRelease: Despite releasing information on rescue and disaster progress after the earthquake, it lacked monitoring of public opinion and rapid clarification of negative information. For example, the concerns raised by some netizens in their comments such as the rescue speed and safety conditions were not answered or clarified by the officials in a timely manner, which easily led to the fermentation of public opinion. @Gansu Public Security: The main content of its releases focuses on rescue and safety tips, with no early warning and prevention and control mechanism for potential negative public opinion. For example, after the early release of information on traffic control and road safety, the public raised many questions and comments about road closure measures, but these comments failed to receive timely official responses and clarifications.

Due to the constraints of science and technology, economy and other factors, the public opinion monitoring and early warning system of China's government microblogs has many deficiencies in terms of hardware facilities, human resources and technical capabilities, and the organizational and coordinating mechanism for standardized and orderly coordination and linkage is not yet sound, making it difficult to give full play to its safeguarding role. For this reason, there is an urgent need to further improve the hierarchical response mechanism and enhance the effectiveness of overall public opinion monitoring and early warning. Before the earthquake, although the government had already paid a high degree of attention to public opinion, the rapid changes in online public opinion now make it impossible to rely solely on manpower for many tasks to be completed accurately and in a timely manner. The lack of a sound public opinion monitoring and early warning mechanism, as well as the failure of government microblogs to make full use of big data and social media analysis tools, has led to a weakening of the ability to conduct real-time monitoring of changes in public sentiment and potentially negative public opinion, and some public opinion issues have not been dealt with effectively at an early stage.

3.2. Lack of an interactive mechanism for guiding public opinion

Public interaction and feedback on government microblogs is an important part of information dissemination that cannot be ignored in the process of guiding public opinion on emergencies. Interaction refers to the public's behavior of retweeting, commenting and liking the information posted on government microblogs, and responding to it by participating in Q&A and other forms. By analyzing the data samples of 328 government microblogs released by @Gansu Fire, @Gansu Public Security and @Gansu, it can be seen that the total number of 9,792 likes, 7,854 retweets, and 2,747 comments are relatively small compared to the number of likes and retweets, which shows that the public interaction of government microblogs is insufficient, and the public's response to government microblogs is relatively lukewarm, especially effective interactions in the comment area are even more ineffective. The effective interaction in the comment area is even more ineffective.

During the disaster relief period, @Gansu Public Security, at 20:01 on December 22, a government microblog about "letting the affected people feel that the police are always by their side" had only two comments, and the number of comments on some of the posts was even 0. @Gansu Firefighters, despite releasing information that covered safety tips and rescue progress during the quake, had generally low numbers of comments. is generally low. For example, a message posted at 20:27 on February 24th about resettlement sites in the earthquake zone had only 1 comment and 1 retweet, indicating a low level of public interaction and participation. This lack of interaction prevented the public from effectively responding when expressing concerns and obtaining feedback. @GansuRelease, although releasing a large amount of relief and post-disaster reconstruction information, also faced the problem of low activity in the comment section. For example, a microblog about drones going to the disaster area to provide relief, released at 09:20 on December 21st, even turned on the comment settings such as "selected comments" and "fan comments only", refusing to allow the public to participate in the comment section. "Only fans are allowed to comment" and other comment settings, rejecting public opinion from thousands of miles away. The zero response in the comment section and the refusal to express public opinion reflect the lack of interaction in the current political microblogging.

Political microblogging plays more of a role as an information publisher and lacks two-way communication with the public, but the essence of political microblogging is not publishing, but communication and interaction among the people. The information released is mainly official and authoritative, and there is a lack of effective response to public comments and feedback, which leads to a gradual loss of enthusiasm among the public in the interaction. The interaction

mechanism is imperfect. Although government microblogs have interactive functions, they fail to make full use of the comment section to carry out targeted interaction with the public, missing the opportunity to guide public opinion by responding to public concerns.

3.3. Lack of an evaluation and feedback mechanism for public opinion guidance

In the process of guiding public opinion, government microblogs should not only release and guide in a timely manner, but also evaluate and summarize the guiding effect afterwards in order to improve the strategy in the future. However, through analysis, it was found that @Gansu Fire, @Gansu Public Security and @Gansu Publishing lacked evaluation of the effect of public opinion guidance and collection of public feedback after the end of the earthquake public opinion. @GansuFire: A large amount of information on rescue progress and post-disaster recovery work was released, but there was a lack of follow-up evaluation of these contents. Although some positive public feedback and post-disaster progress were released, there was a lack of systematic summarization of public opinion guidance, and a lack of effective evaluation of public sentiment changes and public opinion trends. @Gansu Release: Although information on post-disaster recovery progress was continuously released, there was a lack of summarization of public feedback after public opinion subsided. There was no systematic collection and collation of public opinions in the comment section, and no systematic evaluation and feedback of public feedback. Neglecting to self-examine and summarize after the disaster will result in government officials not being able to learn from the experience, which will lead to a lack of formality in their work, and will not be conducive to the effective development of public opinion guidance.

On the one hand, due to the insufficient collection of public feedback, government microblogs fail to effectively collect public feedback and conduct in-depth analysis of comment sections and retweet contents, so they are unable to form a comprehensive assessment of public opinion, which affects the optimization of public opinion guidance for future emergencies. On the other hand, there is a lack of systematic evaluation mechanism. Government microblogs lack a systematic evaluation mechanism for public opinion management and fail to quantitatively evaluate the effect of public opinion guidance, resulting in a lack of effective data support and experience summarization in the subsequent guidance process.

4. Strategies for Guiding Public Opinion on Government Microblogs in the Context of Emergencies

The "Gansu 12-18 Jishishan Earthquake" is a typical online public opinion event, and the life cycle of public opinion has gone through four stages: latency, growth, maturity, and decline, which can be traced and prevented effectively. Combined with the theory of public opinion life cycle, the following improvement strategies are proposed to address the deficiencies in public opinion guidance in order to improve the ability of government microblogs in guiding public opinion and to better cope with future emergencies.

4.1. Incubation period: improving monitoring and early warning mechanisms

During the incubation period, the heat of public opinion events is low and the amount of discussion is not high, but potential social conflicts and unresolved issues gradually accumulate and form negative emotions, and online public opinion is in the brewing stage. This stage is the initial stage of public opinion development, and although widespread public attention is low, the germ of public opinion begins to emerge. If the government ignores the hints of public opinion in the incubation stage and fails to detect potential risks in time, it is very likely that negative public opinion will rapidly erupt in a short period of time and evolve into a visible hotspot event. Therefore, government departments need to attach great importance to this

stage, take necessary preventive measures, and enhance their ability to monitor and warn public opinion in order to prevent problems before they occur.

4.1.1. Strengthen the government's sense of responsibility and crisis awareness.

The government's sense of responsibility and crisis awareness directly affect the subsequent development of public opinion. During the incubation period, the hidden and complex nature of public opinion requires government departments to have a high sense of responsibility and alertness in order to prevent possible public opinion risks in a timely manner.

A sense of responsibility requires government personnel to take the initiative to monitor and warn of public opinion in their daily work, rather than taking measures only after a crisis has erupted. In order to effectively enhance the government's sense of responsibility, training in crisis management and public opinion monitoring should be conducted on a regular basis. At the same time, the training should emphasize the anticipation of social conflicts and sensitive topics, so that personnel at all levels can develop a sense of crisis in their daily affairs and avoid the rapid fermentation of public opinion due to the neglect of potential problems. In addition, the modeling effect of leadership plays an important role in the formation of responsibility. Government leaders should establish a high sense of responsibility in their daily management and set an example by playing an active role in crisis management and public opinion monitoring. While strengthening responsibility, the development of crisis awareness must also be part of the government's daily work.

Crisis awareness includes not only a keen sense of public opinion during the latent period, but also the ability to anticipate the possible long-term effects of emergencies. Through continuous crisis awareness education, government personnel are able to recognize risks in advance during the latent period and intervene proactively to prevent problems from expanding. This proactive crisis awareness needs to be cultivated through institutionalized learning and reflection mechanisms so that it becomes part of the government's work culture. By continuously strengthening the government's sense of responsibility and crisis awareness, government departments are able to take the necessary preventive measures in a timely manner during the latent phase of public opinion, blocking the spread of crises at the source and preventing public opinion from further evolving into social problems.

4.1.2. Establishing a multi-level crisis early warning mechanism

During the latent period of public opinion on emergencies, the establishment of a sound crisis early warning mechanism is a key measure to ensure the initiative and effectiveness of public opinion management. The core of the multi-level early warning mechanism lies in the hierarchical response to public opinion events. Different public opinion events differ in terms of scale of dissemination, public attention and potential hazards, so they need to be managed hierarchically according to their development. For example, for mild public opinion, an automated public opinion monitoring system can be used for continuous tracking to identify sensitive words and negative emotions; for moderate or serious public opinion, the government needs to speak out quickly through authoritative channels such as government microblogs, proactively releasing accurate information and clarifying rumors, so as to avoid further deterioration of public emotions. Such hierarchical management can effectively prevent public opinion from escalating and ensure that problems are solved at an early stage. When an online public opinion crisis occurs, it will first be examined and graded, and corresponding disposal plans will be adopted for different situations, so that the most suitable disposal plan can be adopted at the first time of the occurrence of the public opinion and public opinion can be effectively guided. [5] This hierarchical early warning mechanism can ensure that public opinion is guided in a timely and correct manner and minimize the negative impacts of emergencies.

Another important aspect of establishing a multilevel early warning mechanism is the comprehensiveness and timeliness of the information monitoring system. Government

departments should make full use of modern technological means, including tools such as big data analysis, natural language processing and artificial intelligence, to monitor the flow of information on social media in real time.^[5] These technologies can not only automatically capture the dynamics of public opinion, but also categorize and analyze large amounts of information to help the government quickly identify potential risks. Through this kind of intelligent monitoring, the government can take timely countermeasures at the early stage of public opinion or even before it becomes publicized, and defuse crises in advance.

The implementation of a multi-level early warning mechanism also requires efficient coordination and information sharing among government departments. When public opinion escalates from mild to moderate or even serious levels, multiple government departments often need to respond jointly. In this process, the early warning mechanism should ensure synergy among different departments, unimpeded information sharing, and unity of command in emergency response. Only through a systematic multi-departmental linkage mechanism can the multi-level crisis early warning mechanism truly be brought into play, enabling the government to make adequate preparations before the arrival of a public opinion crisis and minimize the impact of negative public opinion.

In addition, when the government implements a multi-level early warning mechanism, it should not overlook the role of regular rehearsal and evaluation of the plan. By simulating different scenarios of public opinion outbreaks and testing the reaction speed and response capability of the early warning mechanism, it can help the government discover the loopholes and deficiencies in the mechanism in a timely manner. Based on the results of the drills, government departments can continuously optimize and improve the early warning mechanism to ensure that it plays a greater role in actual public opinion events.

4.2. Growth period: mitigating the impact of public opinion

During the growth period, public opinion heats up rapidly, negative factors accumulated during the latent period erupt in a concentrated manner, public discussion is enthusiastic, and online public opinion enters a highly active state. At this time, public opinion has strong propagation power and strong social resonance, and events become hot topics due to extensive media involvement and rapid dissemination on social platforms. However, the core problem of the growth period is that rumors and inaccurate information spread faster, and the risk of public opinion getting out of control intensifies, and the slightest delay in the government's response may lead to the rapid spread of negative emotions. At this stage, the government's work of guiding public opinion faces the test of both content and speed. Therefore, official voices should emphasize the diversity of content and the timeliness of information release.

4.2.1. Focus on the diversity of content in guiding public opinion

When guiding public opinion, it is difficult to satisfy the public's need to understand the event with a single text message. Compared with plain text, diversified content forms such as pictures, videos and data charts can show the whole picture of an event in a more intuitive and visual way. Therefore, when responding to online public opinion, political microblogs can combine text, pictures and videos to explain the original cause of the event, which not only attracts the attention of netizens, but also gives the audience the feeling of a reliable source of information.^[7] For example, in emergencies, real-time videos and pictures can not only convey the real situation at the scene, but also show the concrete progress of the government's rescue operations, enhancing the credibility and transparency of the information. This form of visual information dissemination can quickly attract the public's attention, giving them a more comprehensive understanding of the event and avoiding the spread of rumors due to information asymmetry.

The diversity of content is also reflected in the depth and authority of information. Political microblogs not only need to convey immediate information about the incident, but also need to

combine data analysis and factual basis to help the public understand the incident more deeply. For example, by displaying data on the progress of rescue in the affected areas, and sorting out and analyzing the timeline of the incident, the public can clearly see the government's response measures and their effectiveness. This data-supported visualization can enhance the persuasiveness of the information and effectively reduce the spread of misunderstanding and inaccurate information. In this way, government microblogs can guide public opinion in a positive direction and stabilize public sentiment.

4.2.2. Focus on the timeliness of public opinion guidance

During the growth period of public opinion on emergencies, the speed of information dissemination is exceptionally rapid, and the public's demand for timely and accurate information is particularly strong. Therefore, in guiding public opinion, government microblogs must pay great attention to the timeliness of information release to avoid the rapid spread of rumors and inaccurate information. Timeliness not only determines the effect of guiding public opinion, but also directly affects the public's judgment of the event and the establishment of government credibility. Rapid response is the core requirement of the timeliness of public opinion guidance. After the occurrence of an emergency, the public's demand for authoritative information reaches a peak, and the government needs to respond quickly within the "golden four hours" after the event to ensure that it occupies the high ground of public opinion at the first time. This strategy can not only alleviate the public's anxiety, but also lay a good foundation for the subsequent release of information.

4.3. Maturity: improving interaction mechanisms

In the maturity stage, public opinion reaches its peak, and political microblogs should respond to the public by responding quickly. In the guidance of public opinion on government microblogs, the lack of interaction at this stage results in the public's questions not being answered in time, which is prone to emotional fluctuations and further aggravation of public opinion, which is not conducive to the guidance of government microblogs' public opinion. Public opinion reflects public attitudes and tendencies, and the flat nature of the Internet has shortened the communication distance between the government and the public.^[8] As an important channel for uploading and disseminating information, government microblogs are not only the window for public opinion, but also play an immeasurable influence in guiding the social atmosphere. Therefore, enhancing the interaction mechanism is the key improvement direction at this stage.

4.3.1. Setting up a specialized interactive chat area.

In order to improve the efficiency of interaction, government microblogs can set up intelligent interactive chat areas. The establishment of interactive chat areas can provide 24-hour online services through artificial intelligence customer service to answer the public's immediate questions in the event of emergencies. The government microblog should preset key questions and standard answers, so that the system can automatically reply when the public raises relevant questions in the comment area or chat area. This mechanism not only saves the working time of the government microblogging team, but also improves the timeliness and relevance of the response, and avoids the emotional backlog caused by the lack of quick response to public queries. The government microblog should also set up a Q&A zone to collect feedback and opinions from the public, and prioritize urgent or high-frequency questions by screening them out to ensure that important questions are responded to in a timely manner. During emergencies, government microblogs can improve the precision of public opinion guidance and push social sentiment in a positive direction through this intelligent interactive mechanism. This interactive mechanism not only enhances two-way communication between the government and the public, but also effectively reduces negative emotions triggered by lagging information or insufficient response.

4.3.2. To give full play to the positive role of civil society "opinion leaders"

The so-called "opinion leaders" are individuals who are active and influential in online discussions, and who, by virtue of their deep insights and frequent voices in specific areas, have gradually become the guides of online public opinion and exert personal influence on other Internet users.^[9] The influence of opinion leaders lies not only in the amount of information they possess and the depth of their opinions, but also in their ability to quickly influence a large number of followers through the trust relationship in the online environment. Therefore, "opinion leaders" play a significant role in guiding public opinion, especially in public emergencies, and their role cannot be ignored.

In the new media era, government departments should fully recognize the strategic significance of cooperation with "opinion leaders". By actively communicating and establishing a good interactive relationship, the government can convey to these opinion leaders the direction of guiding public opinion on microblogs, the ideas and concrete measures for handling public relations events in an appropriate way, so that with their understanding and support, they can assist government microblogs in jointly responding to public opinion. Opinion leaders have a large audience base and high credibility, so their participation not only improves the efficiency of information dissemination, but also enhances the credibility and contagiousness of the information and helps the government better control the trend of public opinion. At the same time, good civil "opinion leaders" also play an important role in shortening the distance between the government and the public, and their voices on social media platforms can quickly guide the public's emotions and form a positive public opinion environment, thus promoting social harmony and stability. Therefore, government microblogs should attach great importance to the positive role of opinion leaders when responding to public opinion, and give full play to their important functions in guiding public opinion, enhancing public trust and promoting information transparency.

4.4. Decline: improving feedback and assessment mechanisms

As new hotspots emerge, public attention gradually shifts and the heat of public opinion begins to wane. Although the influence of the event wanes, certain events may be revived again in the future under the right circumstances. The recession period should be well wrapped up, and government microblogs should comprehensively summarize the experiences and deficiencies in public opinion management through a perfect feedback and evaluation mechanism in this process, so as to provide systematic references and bases for the response to future emergencies. The establishment of a scientific evaluation mechanism can not only optimize future public opinion guidance strategies and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of response, but also enhance the public's confidence in the government's ability, and improve the government's credibility and the comprehensive level of social governance ability. Through quantitative and qualitative analysis of public opinion development, government microblogs can continuously improve their information dissemination and public opinion guidance methods to ensure that their responses to emergencies are more accurate and effective.

4.4.1. Establish a scientific evaluation system for the effect of public opinion guidance

In the public opinion management of emergencies, a scientific evaluation system can provide a basis for continuous improvement of the government's public opinion guidance strategy. Evaluation is not only to summarize the response to the incident, but also to optimize the future public opinion management capability. Therefore, it is crucial to establish a standardized evaluation system for the effectiveness of public opinion guidance.

A standardized assessment process should be established to analyze all aspects of public opinion guidance in a combination of quantitative and qualitative ways. The assessment should cover key indicators such as timeliness of information release, effectiveness of public opinion guidance, and changes in public sentiment. By analyzing the performance of different

departments at various stages of public opinion, the government can identify weaknesses in a timely manner and propose targeted improvement measures. Such a standardized evaluation system can ensure that public opinion management is carried out in an orderly manner and accumulate experience for future crisis response.

In addition, a mechanism for enforcing responsibility should be established. Through data analysis, deficiencies in public opinion management can be identified, and the government and its administrators should be held accountable for their inaction, inaction, and poor performance in online public opinion, so as to improve the ability of government administrators to "ascertain and fulfill their responsibilities".^[10] By establishing a scientific evaluation system, the government can realize a long-term mechanism for public opinion management and ensure more accurate and effective responses to public opinion in the future.

4.4.2. Active summarization and public feedback

The government needs to review the process of public opinion management through an institutionalized summary and feedback mechanism. Government microblogs should establish a regular summarization mechanism to systematically review the entire public opinion response process. This includes a comprehensive review of the timeliness of information release, the effect of public opinion guidance, changes in public sentiment, etc., and clarifying the successes and shortcomings at each stage. Through this kind of summarization, the government can provide a practical basis for future public opinion management and ensure better response measures.

The government should focus on summarizing the whole process, covering public opinion monitoring, information dissemination and public feedback. Such systematic summaries not only help assess the handling of the current incident, but also provide standardized references for subsequent incidents. At the same time, public feedback is an important measure to enhance government credibility. By releasing summary reports through platforms such as government microblogs, the government is able to demonstrate to the public its transparency and accountability in crisis management and reduce the negative impact of opaque information. Summarization and feedback help the government evaluate its response measures, enhance public trust, and provide experience for future public opinion management.

5. Conclusion

In today's complex and changing public opinion ecological environment, government microblogging has become an important tool for the government to respond to emergencies and maintain social stability. This paper analyzes the performance of government microblogs such as @Gansu Fire, @Gansu Public Security, and @Gansu Publishing in guiding public opinion at different stages based on the theory of the life cycle of public opinion in the case of Gansu 12-18 Jishishan Earthquake, which is divided into four stages: latency, growth, maturity, and recession. It is found that government microblogs excel in the timeliness and authority of information release, and can effectively guide public opinion, reduce the spread of rumors, and maintain social stability. However, there is still room for improvement in terms of insufficient public interaction, imperfect public opinion monitoring and early warning mechanism and evaluation and feedback mechanism. Based on this, this paper proposes a number of suggestions for improvement: first, strengthen the government's crisis awareness and improve the public opinion monitoring and early warning mechanism to ensure that the government can respond to emergent public opinion in a timely manner; second, enhance public interaction and improve two-way communication between the government and the public by optimizing the interaction mechanism; and third, set up a scientific evaluation system of the effect of guiding public opinion to ensure that the government can summarize the lessons learned and optimize the public opinion management strategy in a timely manner. This study provides

theoretical support and practical guidance for the application of government microblogs in emergencies, aiming to promote the further development and improvement of government microblogs in guiding online public opinion, and to enhance their ability to respond to public emergencies.

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