

The Strategy and Effect Evaluation of the Government's Response to Emergencies in the Era of Network Media—Taking the Gas Explosion Incident of Yinchuan Barbecue Store as an Example

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Abstract: The arrival of the era of network media and the widespread use of various APPs provide more platforms for the release of information. When emergencies occur, all kinds of information will be spread in different channels, which brings challenges to the government's public crisis management, but also provides a new way for the government's public crisis management. Based on the gas explosion incident of barbecue restaurant in Yinchuan City, this paper studies the government's response strategy in this emergency, and finds that the government has done the following in this accident: timely and accurate release of information, positive response and solution, establishment of assistance mechanism and strengthening crisis management ability. On this basis, the government's response strategies are analyzed from three aspects: the impact of the timeliness and accuracy of government information release on the development of public opinion, the impact of assistance mechanisms on victims and affected groups, and the evaluation of communication and interaction between the government and the public.

Keywords: new media; public crisis; social security

1. Questions and literature review

In recent years, with the development of new media, the degree of harm and the scope of influence brought by the frequent occurrence of various emergencies to people's life and production are also expanding, such as SARS in 2003, Wenchuan earthquake in 2008, new coronavirus epidemic in 2019, Henan heavy rain in 2021, etc. These events are all sudden, which have a very negative impact on China's economic and social security, and also improve the ability of our government to respond to emergencies. Not only that, with the rise of Internet technology and new media, the speed and coverage of information dissemination have increased significantly, making the channels for the public to obtain information more diversified and convenient. News related to emergencies has also spread rapidly in society at a lower cost, which makes the government and the media restrict and interact with each other in the era of network media.

The development of new media is a double-edged sword for the government. The new media platform provides more communication channels and ways for the government, and also increases the channels of interaction and communication with the public. However, if the government cannot make good use of the advantages of new media, it will also have a negative impact on the government and hinder the government from carrying out its work. Therefore, the research on the strategy and effect evaluation of the government's response to emergencies in the era of network media has become the focus of academic attention.

In recent years, the frequency of public crisis events has shown an upward trend both at home and abroad. In particular, the outbreak of the new coronavirus epidemic in 2019, the heavy rainstorm in Henan in 2021, and the explosion of barbecue stores in Yinchuan in 2023 have caused public crisis to attract everyone's attention. In this context, public crisis, public crisis management, and network public opinion monitoring have attracted the attention of the Chinese government and academia.

On the connotation of public crisis. Xue Lan and others once defined the concept of crisis, and believed that the crisis is a summary of the situation in which the values of decision-makers are impacted and challenged, the relevant information is missing, the development prospects of the event

are uncertain, and decisions need to be made quickly in a short time[1]. In terms of public crisis management, Shan Shaonan believes that public crisis governance generally reflects the complex phenomenon from "linear governance" to "nonlinear dynamic governance." Governance theory and practice need to consider the interaction of multiple factors such as emergency technology, collaborative partners, governance processes and post-disaster recovery to cope with increasingly complex public emergencies[2]. In terms of network public opinion monitoring, Chen Rongxiang proposed that local governments should play the role of the media in the process of dealing with network public opinion problems, introduce professional talents, introduce network real-name system as soon as possible, and update network management technology, so as to continuously improve the disposal ability[3]. Wang Lei and Yi Yang found that the network political platform acts as a 'sensor' for the government to understand the social situation and public opinion and can play the role of crisis 'buffer' by studying how the digital government can alleviate the negative public opinion of the network in the public health crisis[4]. The study of Wen Haidi and Qiu Zhenbo found that the official government platform, as an information producer and information disseminator, guides the direction of public opinion in the public opinion network[5].

2. Case presentation: Yinchuan barbecue gas explosion incident

2.1. Event overview and social public opinion reaction

At 20: 40 on June 21, a major gas explosion accident occurred in Fuyang Barbecue Shop, Minzu South Street, Xingqing District, Yinchuan City, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. The accident building was a two-story business building. The explosion caused the collapse of the partition wall of the first floor, and the first to second floors of the stairs were blocked by the collapsed building. After receiving an alarm call, Yinchuan Fire and Rescue Team quickly carried out search and rescue and firefighting. At 21: 20, the fire was extinguished. By 23: 40, the fire rescue team and other rescue forces had rescued 38 people from the accident site. The accident caused 31 deaths and 7 injuries. According to the Yinchuan public security report, the cause of the explosion was due to the replacement of the gas valve by the store staff. Before the explosion, the barbecue store staff had found the gas leakage, but did not evacuate the crowd in time and opened the window to ventilate, which led to the accident.

When an emergency occurs, the views of opinion leaders and a large number of media reports make the network public opinion spread rapidly from the center, which has aroused strong attention from all walks of life and is intensifying. This process is the outbreak period of public opinion[6]. The occurrence of this gas explosion accident in the barbecue store has a significant social impact. On the one hand, the accident caused many deaths and injuries, and brought endless pain and sadness to the injured and their families. This is an irreparable loss of human life. On the other hand, the incident involves the safety of public places, which has aroused the concern of the government and the public about the use and management of gas. After the accident, it received great attention from all walks of life, especially the news media. We are in an era of network media, the occurrence of this accident will cause a series of network public opinion problems. After the accident, the public's primary concern in the process of paying attention to the development of the incident is the cause of the incident and how the responsible party responsible for the accident will deal with it. If the relevant departments do not disclose the reasons and results of the investigation in time, it will arouse people's discussion, question the standardization of gas use and safety management, and question the regulatory responsibilities of relevant departments. In addition, the occurrence of this tragedy has triggered a public discussion on the safety of barbecue restaurants and other public places, which may have an impact on the reputation and development of related industries. Not only that. There may also be some rumors, false information and emotional statements on the Internet, which requires timely guidance and response from government departments. If they are not controlled, they will react to the crisis center after the storm, and slowly become stronger, forming a network public opinion, which may erupt into great power.

Once the local government finds that there is public opinion, it should immediately track and judge, and intervene in public opinion at the right time. Generally speaking, the best time point is the beginning of the topic of public opinion, when the trend of public opinion diffusion appears. For the government, active network response is the best way to initial public opinion[7]. After the accident, it received the attention of various departments. Ningxia immediately established an accident investigation team to thoroughly investigate the cause of the accident and held a news conference. On the second day of the accident, a multi-department joint inspection was carried out to investigate and

rectify the city's gas safety hazards, and a family reception service group for the explosion accident was set up to provide psychological counseling for the family members. After the accident investigation was clear, it was announced to the public in a timely manner and the relevant responsible persons were dealt with, which to a certain extent appeased the public and reduced the degree of occurrence of network public opinion.

2.2. The application and effect of network media in emergencies

After the accident, the new media has played an important role in the dissemination and reporting of the authenticity of the incident. First, the new media platform can quickly spread information and dynamics, providing fast and accurate news reports. After the accident on the evening of June 21, Weibo, Tik Tok and other platforms have been widely disseminated. People can timely understand the latest situation of emergencies and the response measures of relevant government departments and rescue organizations through these platforms, which helps the public to better understand and respond to emergencies and ensure personal and social security. Secondly, new media can provide a platform for real-time interaction and communication, so that the public can share their views, experiences and help. For example, in the event of an emergency or natural disaster, the public can post emergency information through social media, looking for help or providing help. At the same time, the public can also express their concern and support by commenting and forwarding information, so as to enhance social cohesion. After the explosion of Yinchuan barbecue store, it has received extensive attention from the public. They expressed their views on the incident by commenting in the comment area and forwarding Weibo. Finally, the new media platform can also help the government and rescue organizations to carry out information dissemination and crisis management. After the explosion of Yinchuan barbecue restaurant, the government and relevant rescue organizations started the organization and rescue work at the first time. The government quickly released authoritative information and released the rescue situation in real time through official Weibo, WeChat public number and other channels to guide and reassure the public.

For new media, they play the role of 'Watchmen' after emergencies occur. The role of watcher is that the media uses its own communication power and influence to evaluate and adjust the measures that have been taken in emergencies, to affirm and advocate correct ideas and effective behaviors, to correct and summarize wrong understandings and improper measures, and to soothe the psychology of the public, so as to eliminate the factors that are not conducive to social harmony and stability. For the media, emergencies have two sides, it is both an opportunity and a challenge. Dealing with it can optimize the image of the media, but if it is not handled properly, it will damage the image of the media and reduce the credibility of the media. Therefore, new media plays an important role in emergencies. It is necessary to establish a correct, credible and authoritative image and play an important role in information communication and public opinion guidance between the government and the public.

3. Study on the government's coping strategies in the gas explosion of Yinchuan barbecue store

3.1. Timely and accurate release of information

After the occurrence of public crisis, whether the relevant information is transparent and accurate in the first time has always been the focus of attention. For the government, the first time public events related information, and to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of information, help the public to understand the truth of the facts, to avoid panic and unnecessary speculation, to prevent the breeding of rumors. After the gas explosion accident of Yinchuan barbecue shop on the evening of June 21, the local government departments responded quickly and attached great importance to it. They immediately organized rescue teams to carry out rescue and set up investigation teams to investigate the causes of the accident. After finding out the causes of the investigation, the new media platform was used to timely announce the latest situation and measures to the public, including the cause of the explosion, the number of casualties, the progress of rescue, the identification of the person responsible for the accident and the follow-up to the family members of the casualties.

3.2. Positive response and answer

After the occurrence of unexpected events, there will be various voices on the network, and such voices are positive and negative. In order to prevent the occurrence of negative news from causing social panic and the spread of various rumors, local government departments should respond positively

to the occurrence of unexpected events and answer public questions. After the gas explosion accident in the barbecue store in Yinchuan City, the local government departments organized the rescue team to rescue at the first time. In order to prevent the occurrence of network public opinion, the corresponding treatment was immediately carried out. The second day after the accident, a press conference on the explosion accident was held at 8 p.m. under the organization of the relevant departments. At the site of the press conference, Yinchuan Municipal Party Committee indicated that the accountability procedure had been opened, indicating that the cause of the explosion accident would be identified as soon as possible, and the results of the investigation would be published in due course. At the same time, a family reception service group for the explosion accident was set up, and 20 consultants were organized to carry out psychological counseling for family members. On the 24 th, it was announced that the suspect of the accident took compulsory measures of criminal detention for the crime of major liability accident, and announced the cause of the accident on the same day. The government actively responds to the public and answers the public's questions by taking some of the above measures, and provides the public with the latest information, thus preventing the fermentation of public opinion.

3.3. Establish assistance mechanisms and strengthen crisis management capabilities.

After the accident, affected by the incident, some of the Dragon Boat Festival entertainment activities at that time, such as the Yellow River Music Festival, were cancelled. On the 22 nd, Yinchuan Municipal Administration organized 27 people from the Market Supervision Administration Bureau, the Comprehensive Law Enforcement Bureau and other departments to carry out safety inspections on the city's gas enterprises and key users. The safety hazards found must be rectified, the closed-loop number should be closed, and the enterprise's crisis awareness should be strengthened. It also requires enterprises to actively promote the knowledge of safe use of gas in household security inspections, find potential safety hazards, and mobilize users to actively cooperate with rectification and replacement work. After the accident, the government took the initiative to find the cause and took measures in advance to investigate the potential safety hazards in time, so as to prevent and mitigate the risks in advance.

4. The effect analysis of the government's response strategy in the gas explosion incident of Yinchuan barbecue store

4.1. The impact of the timeliness and accuracy of government information release on the development of public opinion.

In this accident, the government issued information in a timely and accurate manner, which made the development of public opinion develop in a controllable direction and met the public's demand for real, timely and credible information. In this accident, the timeliness and accuracy of government information release have the following main effects on the development of public opinion:

First of all, it affects the public's perception and evaluation of events. In this gas explosion accident, the government issued accurate information in time to help the public understand the real situation of the incident, thus reducing the spread of rumors and the expansion of uncertainty. Secondly, control the spread of rumors and false information. After an emergency, rumors and false information often spread widely, bringing panic and confusion to the public. In this accident, the government departments released information in a timely manner, inhibited the generation and dissemination of rumors, made up for the information vacuum, and reduced the negative impact of false information on society. Thirdly, it affects the public's trust and support for the government. The timeliness and accuracy of government information release directly affect the public's trust in the government. Government departments release accurate information in a timely manner, and actively respond to the concerns of the public, the public will be more confident and support the government's decisions and measures. On the contrary, if the government information release lags behind or mistakes occur, it will weaken the public's trust in the government and lead to the deterioration of public opinion. Finally, the impact on public opinion guidance. After the accident, the government departments provide accurate information in a timely manner, so that the public is affected by government information when forming views and expressing opinions, reducing the spread of rumors.

4.2. Impact of assistance mechanisms on victims and affected groups

The occurrence of the accident, whether for the victims or their families, or other groups affected by

the accident, is an unacceptable thing. After the accident, the local government departments in accordance with the principle of territoriality of the victims of the 'one-on-one' aftermath of the disposal, and their families for psychological counseling, legal advice, etc., as well as the National Financial Supervision and Administration Bureau to guide the local agencies and related financial institutions to do a good job of insurance emergency and claims services, in this regard, the government has played the following roles: First, strengthen organizational leadership and start the emergency response mechanism for major disasters and accidents at the first time. The second is to strengthen the underwriting investigation and closely contact with the accident disposal working group. The third is to accelerate the progress of claims settlement and open up a green channel. Fourth, do a good job in resource co-ordination, support relevant agencies to do a good job in the investigation, combing, rescue and claim settlement services of casualties. Fifth, standardize information release, do a good job in publicity management, and prevent opportunistic marketing. These mechanisms help the affected people to get through the difficulties and restore the order of production and life by providing timely assistance and support. At the same time, these measures also help to reduce the burden on victims and affected people, stimulate their self-confidence and courage, and promote post-disaster reconstruction and social stability. In addition, the government's assistance mechanism can also promote social solidarity and common development, provide more hope and support for victims, and allow them to reintegrate into society and achieve sustainable development.

4.3. Evaluation of the effect of communication and interaction between the government and the public

In the event of emergencies, effective communication and interaction between the government and the public can also reduce the spread of negative news to a certain extent. In the gas explosion accident of Yinchuan barbecue store, the communication and interaction between the government and the people have done the following: First, in terms of information transparency. After the accident, the government maintains the principle of information disclosure and transparency, and publicizes the causes of the accident, the number of casualties in the accident, and the results of the handling of the people responsible for the accident, so as to ensure that the information is open to the public and the information is disclosed in a timely and accurate manner so that the public can respond rationally and reduce panic and uncertainty. The second is the use of communication channels. After the accident, the government communicates with the public on interactive platforms such as social media and official websites, including answering questions raised by the public in a timely manner, transmitting positive information, increasing credibility, etc., which reflects the government's correct use of media communication channels and inhibits the fermentation of negative public opinion.

5. Conclusion and summary

With the continuous development of information technology and the advent of the era of network media, the way of information dissemination has gradually changed, which has brought severe challenges to the government in dealing with emergencies in the context of new media. After the occurrence of emergencies, the government needs to consider reporting on emergencies through media and other channels and guiding public opinion. The joint efforts of the government, the public and the media will help the government to solve the crisis and minimize the harm caused by emergencies. At this time, the media needs to spread the real situation of the event, the development process of the event, the government's response measures, etc., to create a positive, positive energy, conducive to the solution of the public opinion environment. However, in the context of media convergence, massive information leads to an extremely complex public opinion environment, which can easily bring greater and more negative effects and hazards to crisis events. Therefore, in the era of network media, it is necessary to study the government's use of media to deal with public crisis. In this paper, by combining the gas explosion incident of Yinchuan barbecue shop, the government's response measures after the incident are studied. It is found that in the accident, the government plays a leading role. With the help of the media, the incident is published in a timely and accurate manner, and actively responds to and answers the public's questions. After the accident, the government actively establishes the assistance mechanism and strengthens the public crisis management ability to rescue the occurrence of emergencies and prevent the recurrence of such incidents. On this basis, the government's response strategies are analyzed from three aspects: the impact of the timeliness and accuracy of government information release on the development of public opinion, the impact of assistance mechanisms on victims and affected groups, and the evaluation of communication and interaction between the

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