

Analysis and Countermeasures of Ethical Anomie of Emergencies Internet Public Opinions—Taking the Incident of “10.28” Bus Crashing into River in Chongqing as an Example*

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Emergencies Internet public opinion is a manifestation of netizens' views, attitudes, and value understanding of emergencies through the Internet and other information dissemination media. According to the Internet public opinion on the transformation of the responsibility body in the emergency of the “10.28” bus crashing into river in Chongqing, the problem of Internet ethics anomie is discussed. The corresponding countermeasures for the emergencies Internet public opinion and ethics anomie are proposed.

Keywords: emergencies, Internet public opinion, ethical anomie

Introduction

With the development of mobile Internet and the popularization of smart phones, the Internet has become the most important platform for people's life and entertainment. Internet public opinion is gradually becoming the mainstream expression of social culture, and emergencies and hot topics have become the focus of Internet public opinion. The so-called “emergencies Internet public opinion” refers to the behaviors of individuals or groups that express and disseminate opinions, attitudes, and value understanding of emergencies through the Internet (Kang, 2012). It is a way for people to express their emotions, attitudes, and values. With the convenience of smart mobile phones and other information dissemination terminals, the main body of dissemination has shown a diversified phenomenon, and the amount of information disseminated has increased geometrically. The characteristics of network virtualization, conformity, weak responsibility, and self-moral judgment make emergencies disseminating in the network media out-of-context, wild guesses, one-sided words, and even random fabrications to attract eyeballs, disordered audio-visual, resulting in online public opinion ethics anomie and deviating from the truth. Especially with the development of online culture and online commerce, different groups have diversified views, opinions, and value orientations on the event due to different interest orientations. The Internet public opinion ethics has shown a complex trend. The bus dropping in the river in Chongqing on October 28, 2018 is a typical example.

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The Process of Ethical Anomie of Internet Public Opinion in Emergencies

With the development of mobile networks, people are receiving and disseminating information anytime and anywhere. The reporting and dissemination of events is no longer restricted by time and space. The stage characteristics are weakened and the events develop rapidly. “10.28” incident is the representative of the Internet public opinion dissemination of emergencies. At 10:08 am on October 28, 2018, a bus crashed into river after colliding with a car on the Second Yangtze River Bridge in Wanzhou District, Chongqing. The accident caused 13 deaths and two people lost contact. After the accident, different groups disseminated information about the accident through news, micro-blog, short videos, wechat moments, and other network communication methods, which caused a large number of netizens to participate in the discussion and quickly became the focus of public opinion. During the discussion on the attribution of accident responsibility, there were three turns of public opinion.

The Responsibility for the Accident Lied With the “the Driver of the Retrograde Red Car”

After the accident, local netizens reported the incident through micro-blog, wechat, and short videos, and the public eagerly sought the official “truth”. At 11:09 am, the micro-blog account named “Real News Video” (mainly posting social hot spots and novelty videos) posted “Chongqing Wanzhou female driver was retrograde”, the bus evaded and rushed out of the guardrail, from the No. 2 Yangtze River bridge Wanzhou Chongqing a bus rushed directly into the Yangtze River. The whole city of Wanzhou was boiling. At 11:15 am, the micro-blog of Beijing Youth Daily described the accident without mentioning the cause, which was forwarded more than 4,000 times and reprinted by many big media on micro-blog. At 11:27 am, the Chongqing Youth Daily posted on micro-blog that “It is said that the accident was caused by a retrograde of a red private car driven by a female driver”. At 11:41 am, Sina News mentioned the “retrograde female driver” on micro-blog and was forwarded for thousands of times (Social Network and Data Mining, 2018). At around 14:00 pm, Pear Video released the message that “the district government responded that the Chongqing bus crashed into the Yangtze River: The car crashed with the bus” and “the owner of the car has been controlled” are confirmed each other. The entire Internet generally accepted the responsibility for the accident lies with the “retrograde car”, and there are verbal abuse and insults directed at the female car drivers. Some people publish her information on the Internet through human flesh searches, and some even generalize their vents to the “female drivers” group. It can be seen from the dissemination process of the accident that the Internet, including some official media released the news and concluded with certainty who was responsible for the accident without verification, and mainstream media including Sina, Netease, and Beijing News also spread it without verification. While netizens were eager to seek the “truth”, and when the “truth” appeared in line with the pre-established “truth”, the majority of netizens do not hesitate to spread it a second time. Everyone could stand at the commanding height of morality, and righteously began to “moral” abuse and insult.

The Responsibility for the Accident Lied With the “Bus Driver”

The attack on the “female car driver” continued until 17:46 pm on the October 28, 2018, when the Wanzhou police released a message that “the bus suddenly crossed the center solid line” and “impacted against a normal driving car”. On the Internet, a scene video of outside appeared. The downturn spread of the accident once again set off a climax. Part of the mainstream media that spread responsibility for the accident lied with “car retrograde” appeared on the websites with a “404”. Netizens accused others of being irrational and pointed

the finger at the bus driver at the same time. The professional ethics of the bus driver were all questioned. In particular, the Chengdu Commercial Daily announced on the 29th that the driver had sung a song “Looking Back” in the K song App four and a half hours before the incident. Netizens changed the guess of the cause of the accident from “the bus driver K song to the wee hours, the most likely to be dozing off” to the conclusive “bus driver K song in the early morning when driving. Falling asleep caused an accident”. This argument has triggered a new upsurge of public opinion, and the information of the bus driver is disclosed on the Internet, including private information, such as family difficulties, disharmony with his wife, and suicidal tendencies. In the process of information dissemination on the Internet, different groups intentionally or unintentionally changed the quality of information. The masses used self-cognition experience as a benchmark, and used obtain information as a reference disseminated views or values that they believe to be correct to the outside world. Due to the anonymity and virtuality of the Internet, People just publish opinions based on the intuitive feelings in the brain without rationally thinking whether the lack of information leads to misjudgment. Most people had not thought about the possible consequences of their actions, and some of them even released indiscriminately created content just because of “fun”, which has caused the ethics anomie of Internet public opinion.

The Responsibility for the Accident Lied With “Passenger Liu”

At 23:28 pm on October 31, 2018, the accident bus was salvaged and landed. The police analyzed the bus monitoring and driving recorder, and put the video on the Internet. The “truth” of the accident was reversed again. Passenger Liu after missing her destination station, she requested to stop and quarreled with the bus driver. Passenger Liu beat the driver to cause the accident. The Internet censure again pointed to the passenger Liu. According to statistical analysis by Jiangxi Daily Dajiang Big Data Research Center, more than 70% of the netizens believed that the behavior of the female passenger in the incident should be primarily responsible. Netizens once again published the information of the female passenger through the “human flesh search”, including the fabric shop she operated. People gathered and watched her storefront. Until the police investigation result “the cause of the Chongqing Wanzhou bus crashing into river was announced: The passengers and the driver fought each other, causing the vehicle to lose control”, netizens realized that the bus driver was also at fault. Some even thought that during the time as long as five minutes from “arguing” to “fighting each other”, the passengers in the car were unexpectedly indifferent, and this kind of indifference caused the tragedy was “worthy of the crime”. This shows that netizens’ ethical anomie in Internet public opinion is in the process of imperfect online legal system and continuous improvement of supervision. Some people regard parts as the whole, distorting facts, and “actively” promote Internet public opinion in a self-righteous way.

Although the “10.28” incident has passed, the war of Internet public opinion is still there. Once an emergency or hot event occurs, a new online wave will be set off. In this process, how to guide netizens to have appropriate words, deeds, and value orientation? How to create an online culture in a tolerant and friendly way? It requires us to guide and develop the emergencies Internet public opinion ethics.

Strategies for Ethical Anomie of Emergencies Internet Public Opinions

Understand the Realistic Rationality of the Internet Public Opinion Ethical Anomie and Guide the Trend of Public Opinion From the Essence

Throughout the entire “10.28” incident, the spread of public opinion on emergencies can easily trigger

group public opinion through real-time content release, vivid details, and expressions that are close to the people, viral transmission speed, and follow-up interaction (Yang, Chen, & Gan, 2016). Once, the public opinion is out of control, the harm is great. While seeing the loss of control of Internet public opinion causing ethical anomie, we should also see the realistic rationality and the positive impact on the accident during the occurrence of Internet public opinion.

Justice is the most basic social quality of people. An important reason for the anomie of Internet public opinion is that the rapid development of the Internet has given people the opportunity and possibility to express their sense of justice. People judge others with personal “moral expectations” (referring to the ideal expectations of individuals for moral behavior) without rational thinking, and even with radical and personally offensive remarks, claiming themselves the incarnate online justice. Especially, the anonymity and lawlessness of the Internet, and the public’s improper understanding that “the law does not account for the public” make some people unscrupulously distort the facts on the Internet, and use the value orientation of “network justice” to contribute to the emergence Internet public opinion. Once errors are found, deleting network data becomes the solution. For example, in the “10.28” accident, there were twists and turns. In order to make up for the “justice” misplacement, when the public found a new “responsible person”, they had no hesitation in expressing their own opinions to calm their moral guilt. This caused many “story reversals” in the “10.28 accident”.

The pursuit of freedom is human nature. The Internet provides an open platform for the public. Netizens who are bound by various rules in their lives suddenly feel the freedom of speech on the Internet. This is why more and more people are addicted to the Internet. When encountering emergencies, people unscrupulously publish speeches on the Internet, vent irrational emotions, and even create something out of nothing, fan the flames in the incidents, and induce public opinion with content that conforms to the emotional tendencies of the public, resulting in online violence.

The pursuit of self-righteous “justice” and narrow “freedom” are the important reasons for the emergency Internet public opinion and ethics anomie. However, the pursuit of justice and freedom also shows the public’s pursuit of “truth, goodness, and beauty”. Their original intention is to punish evil and promote good. In the current development of Internet public opinion, people being misled by some irresponsible media and bad media have become an accomplice of the ethical anomie of Internet public opinion. Therefore, when dealing with the ethical anomie of internet public opinion, we should take advantage of the public’s protection of justice and the pursuit of free expression. Through the guidance of mainstream media, timely and transparent information interaction will develop Internet public opinion to the direction of “truth”.

Establish an Online Information Release Platform for Emergencies, and the Government Should Strengthen the Rule of Law and Public Opinion Guidance on the Internet

The right of privacy is a basic human right and should be respected and protected by society (Tang & Li, 2016). Due to the anonymity of the Internet and the deletable data, the subjects of emergencies often have privacy respect aphasia. In the “10.28” accident, in order to satisfy the public’s curiosity about the parties involved in the accident, the information of the female car driver, bus driver, passenger Liu, and others were all “human flesh searched” and disclosed on the Internet, which caused adverse effects and great hurt to their family members and their surroundings. When people make attributions with purpose and emotion, they tend to look for content that supports existing conclusions or emotions, which caused deviations from the facts, and

subsequent excessive behaviors. This is also a reason for the ethical anomie of Internet public opinion in emergencies. Therefore, the government should establish Internet-related laws and regulations to protect the privacy of the parties involved in emergencies. Whoever is responsible for the accident should be verified by relevant law enforcement agencies and announced reasonably and legally. The people who publish other people's private information by other illegal organizations, which cause improper affects, should be investigated for legal responsibility.

In the "10.28" accident Internet public opinion guidance, the information announcement of government departments has achieved a very positive effect. The latest investigation of the accident released by the Wanzhou Police at 17:46 pm on October 28 played a vital role in the guidance of Internet public opinion. The follow-up People's Daily and other official online media also provided timely guidance to correct the ethical anomie of the Internet public opinion in the accident. However, there are hundreds of millions of Weibo, tens of millions of wechat public accounts, short video sites of all levels and types. The openness and diversification of online media often make official government information be submerged in the flood of information. Therefore, the government should establish a corresponding emergency information release platform to release credible Internet public opinion on emergencies in a timely manner, so as to facilitate the development of online public opinion in a positive direction.

Establish a Credibility System for Mainstream Media

Mainstream media has the advantage of a wide range of dissemination. It is one of the main bodies of dissemination during the occurrence and process of emergencies. It is a representative of the public voice and often guides the development of Internet public opinion. However, in the "10.28" incident, mainstream media, such as Xinnet, Netease, Beijing News, Pear Video, etc. published information that "the accident was caused by car retrograde" without verification. Due to the wide spread of the information, it is extremely guiding for the public. Therefore, while combining with the government to establish an emergency information release platform, a mainstream media credibility system should be established. For platforms and media with better credibility, priority should be given to publish on the emergency information platform. If the information was found to be false one with no verification, the public trust index would be deducted according to certain rules. If one platform declined to a certain public trust index, the government would review and supervise the press release rights of the platform. In this way, the government can guide the mainstream media to develop together toward the truth, instead of pursuing for profit and forgetting responsibility of the media.

Conclusion

Internet public opinion is a part of the mass network culture. The process of responding against the ethics anomie of the emergencies Internet public opinion is a process of gradual construction of the network culture. Through the governance of government laws and regulations, the accurate guidance of mainstream media, and the rational participation of the public, the response of emergency Internet public opinion will surely become more and more truthful.

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