

# Research on the Government's Public Crisis Management under the New Media Environment: A Case Study of TikTok Account of "Communist Youth League Central Committee"

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Received: January 13, 2023 Accepted: February 23, 2023 Online Published: February 27, 2023

doi:10.5539/par.v12n1p1

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/par.v12n1p1>

## Abstract

Given the frequent occurrence of public crisis events in China in the new media era, with the frame theory as the theoretical basis and the TikTok Account of the "Communist Youth League Central Committee" as the research object, this paper uses the literature analysis to systematically analyze the public crisis management reports involved in governmental short videos. On the whole, this paper aims to observe and grasp the current situation of the government's public crisis management under the new media environment through the analysis of various aspects, encompassing video themes, related words in the video introduction, manifestations, release time, video duration, audience's feedback data, user comments, etc. This research indicates that the TikTok account of "Communist Youth League Central Committee" will highlight the theme of public crisis and promote publicity around public management, adheres to the guidance of public opinion and has a good guidance strategy, and grasps the limit of entertainment, the form of communication is diversified. But the two-way interaction of its communication topics is relatively low, and it does not pay enough attention to the details of video production or effectively communicate with other levels of government affairs accounts. So the account operators should timely respond to the questions raised by users in the comment section, optimize the details of video production and interconnect with other types and levels of short video accounts of government affairs.

**Keywords:** new media, public crisis management, communist youth league central committee, governmental short videos

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background and Significance

#### 1.1.1 Research Background

The new media developed based on Internet technology, which endows the spread of social public crisis with various forms, fast speed, high interactivity as well as accurate and timely information, has evolved into a major route for the public to understand public events. Nevertheless, due to the inherent reasons of new media, such as inadequate development and imperfect management, it inevitably exposes a variety of problems in the dissemination of public events, including poor coverage and inaccurate guidance of public opinion. Additionally, while giving new opportunities to the government's public crisis management, it also brings brand-new challenges. Under normal circumstances, a public crisis presents a whole development process from the incubation and forming stage to the outbreak period. However, in the context of new media, the network polarization effect will amplify the public crisis and even lead to its direct outbreak.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began to spread in 2019, shows numerous characteristics, including sudden onset, uncertainty, and strong transmissibility, and is closely related to the vital interests and life safety of the general public. In the face of this sudden public health event, China has actively developed governmental short videos to interact with the people in order to enhance the dissemination effect of the national public crisis management policy among the masses. However, at present, academic circles seldom conduct relevant research on the combination of new media and government public crisis management. Hence, this paper carries out a corresponding frame analysis on the reports of the TikTok account of the "Communist Youth League Central Committee", intending to provide a valuable reference for the research concerning governmental short videos in

the new media environment. Briefly, it is in a position to provide an important theoretical basis for changing the current situation of public crisis management. In this regard, the TikTok account of “Communist Youth League Central Committee”, the official account of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China, not only has a much higher number of fans and likes than other similar governmental short videos accounts but also presents a comparatively strong ability to guide public opinion. For this reason, this paper intends to take the TikTok account of the “Communist Youth League Central Committee” as the research object and its short videos on government affairs released during the COVID-19 pandemic as the research scope.

### 1.1.2 Research Significance

On the one hand, through the analysis of the current situation of Chinese government's public crisis management in the new media environment, it is helpful to improve China's public management theory system. With the advent of social transformation period in our country, the public crisis events occur more frequently, the public crisis management receives more people's attention, this study can perfect our country's public crisis management governance method.

On the other hand, this study takes the public crisis management effectively carried out by the TikTok account of the “Communist Youth League Central Committee” as an example, which can provide reference for other government accounts to prevent and resolve various social problems and conflicts, and guide the actual operation of official mainstream media. It also breaks the traditional methods of public crisis management and takes governance with the help of new media as an important management method.

## 1.2 Literature Review

### 1.2.1 New Media

Different from traditional media, the new media based on digital technology and spread through the Internet presents the characteristics of immediacy, openness, and interaction, and has evolved into the main channel for Internet users in China to obtain information. Moreover, its rapidity and influence in information dissemination have brought both opportunities and brand-new challenges to the current public crisis management in China. Huang and Wang (2018) contend that China should speed up the construction of digital China in the general environment of developing new media, and formulate an implementation plan for the development of new media in China from a strategic perspective, we should seize the opportunity of policy support and make use of the effectiveness, flexibility and content richness of new media information transmission to develop government short videos.

### 1.2.2 Public Crisis Management

Conceptually, public crisis management refers to the management subject represented by the government using diversified means including early warning and monitoring to avoid the public crisis and reduce the negative impact of the public crisis, to ensure the stable and orderly operation of society, which embodies a host of characteristics such as publicity, sociality, urgency, abruptness, uncertainty, and complexity. Zhang (2019) argues that government management in public crisis management has not received enough attention in China, nor has it been included in the formulation of various policies and regulations, even though it has a far more important subject position than other types of management. However, the release of short videos of government affairs can provide the function of public opinion survey for the government to formulate public crisis response policies, transmit the information of policy formulation more quickly and accurately, and better play the main role of the government.

### 1.2.3 Governmental Short Videos

According to a study by Shi (2021), governmental short videos are defined as governmental accounts opened by various government departments or agencies on short video platforms, with the release time of videos ranging from 15 seconds to 5 minutes, and with the basic principle of transmitting national policies and concepts to publicize government information, guide public opinion, and disseminate correct values. In addition, Zhang (2021) proposes that there is still great space for progress in the research concerning governmental short videos in China, which needs to be further improved in content, form, and other relevant aspects. So in order to make up for the shortcomings of our existing research, this paper will study the relevant reports of the TikTok account of the “Communist Youth League Central Committee” from three perspectives, including the content selection frame, the form construction frame, and the audience effect frame.

## 1.3 Theoretical Review

This paper is based on frame theory. According to the frame theory, for certain news facts, the communication subject will perceive some aspects and make choices, so that these aspects can be highlighted in the text. These

highlighted aspects are received and decoded by readers to form their cognition of a certain news fact, and then influence their subsequent words and deeds.

It usually has three aspects, including the content selection framework, the form construction framework and the audience effect framework. Content selection framework research takes news text, video, image as the research object, which is the most widely used field of the framework theory in the research of journalism and communication. Formal construction framework usually studies the expression form of news communication and explores the news framework existing in the media production link. The framework analysis at the audience level belongs to the research category of communication effect, mainly studying how the media framework affects the audience's cognition and the degree of influence.

#### 1.4 Research Methodology

The main research method of this paper is literature analysis. Through searching the network database and library resources, this paper will consult the monographs and documents of domestic and foreign experts and scholars on the government's use of governmental short videos for public crisis management under the new media environment and on the media coverage of the TikTok account of "Communist Youth League Central Committee" in an attempt to correctly grasp the current academic research results related to this, thereby providing solid theoretical support for this research. In addition, the data in the article comes from Tiktok and Douchacha. The video topic search function of Tiktok is used to complete the sampling of short government affairs videos, and then the videos are classified according to the research content. Collect data with the professional big data analysis function of Douchacha data platform, and obtain various data summary reports of Tiktok accounts.

## 2. Analysis on the Reporting Frame of Public Crisis Management for the TikTok Account of "Communist Youth League Central Committee"

### 2.1 Overview of the TikTok Account of "Communist Youth League Central Committee"

By the statistical time of February 2, 2023, the number of fans of the TikTok Account of "Communist Youth League Central Committee" had reached 9.359 million, with 1,991 published works, 2.958 million likes of a single published work, and cumulative likes reaching 250 million (data source: Douchacha data platform)

### 2.2 Content Selection Frame

#### 2.2.1 Video Themes

Table 1. Statistical table of 100 videos of the TikTok account of "communist youth league central committee" with the theme of "COVID-19"

Primary Themes	Secondary Themes	Percentage (%)	
Government Public Management	Policy Reports	26%	42%
	Official Rumor Refutation & Encouragement To The Public	16%	
Medical Development Progress	Drug Development	10%	14%
	Protection Guidance	4%	
Social Support	Social Organization	9%	21%
	Grass-roots	12%	
Comprehensive Reports on COVID-19	International Situation	8%	23%
	People's Life	15%	

Data source: Tiktok Video Themes search

According to the statistics, this paper takes 100 Videos of the TikTok account of the "Communist Youth League Central Committee" with the theme of "COVID-19" as the research object. Through relevant analysis, this paper summarizes four primary themes, namely, government public management, medical development progress, social support, and comprehensive reports on COVID-19. Among them, the government's public management mainly includes policy reports, official rumor refutation, and encouragement to the public, while the medical development progress mainly includes the development of therapeutic drugs for COVID-19 and guidance for personal protection. In addition, social support mainly includes support from social organizations, as well as the participation of the grassroots. In closing, the comprehensive reports on COVID-19 mainly include the development form of

international COVID-19 and people's life under the background of COVID-19.

As can be seen from Table 1 above, video content related to government public crisis management accounts for the largest proportion, up to 42%. For example, two videos entitled *Announcement of 20 Measures to Further Optimize the Prevention and Control of COVID-19* and *National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China: Renaming COVID-19 as Novel Coronavirus Infection* timely reported the latest news released by the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, the speech orientation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, as well as the prevention and control policies of COVID-19. In the era of new media, the openness and transparency of the Internet present the government's specific solutions to the public, thus enabling the government's management to maintain the initiative to effectively deal with public health emergencies. Meanwhile, in the face of various problems, including the fast-spreading speed and wide coverage of online rumors, the public's acceptance of erroneous information caused by the wanton spread of unproven remarks by some we-media accounts with inflammatory nature to earn attention, as well as the serious lack of information dissemination criterion, the TikTok accounts focusing on government affairs can seize the best time to deal with rumors and other crises, thus avoiding the negative impact of crisis events on social stability and public life.

Secondly, the video content related to the comprehensive reports on COVID-19 accounts for 23%. Such videos tend to report on the COVID-19 prevention and control measures adopted by various countries, such as the United States, Britain, Japan, India, etc., attaching great attention to the statements of the World Health Organization. For instance, the video entitled *World Health Organization Warning: COVID-19 Has Pandemic Characteristics* compared the image of China's government's active response to COVID-19 with that of other countries, bringing people hope that the Chinese government is capable of tackling all kinds of public crises, which not only effectively shapes the image and reputation of the Chinese government but also urges the government to solve public crises and carry out subsequent reconstruction work more flexibly and effectively.

Thirdly, video content related to social support accounts for 21%, especially focusing on the anti-epidemic process of young people. For example, the video entitled *Let's Praise the Youth Who Shoulder the Heavy Duty* highlighted the exemplary role played by key figures represented by the hero Zhong Nanshan. In the public opinion management of the public crisis, on the one hand, based on making full use of professionals and adopting the communication skills of the media to communicate positively with the public, such videos give full consideration to the common aspiration and popular will, and conduct emotional guidance to the public with a positive image, with a view to improving the effectiveness of public crisis management. On the other hand, such videos also encourage all kinds of social organizations and grassroots to actively maintain the original social operation order, which contributes to the smooth information transmission among various public governance subjects and strengthens the emergency support ability.

At last, video content related to the medical development progress accounts for 14%. For example, two videos entitled *Reference Table of Commonly Used Drugs for Home Treatment of People Infected with COVID-19* and *Official Announcement: China COVID-19 Vaccine Comes on the Market* expressly indicate that the government has consistently adhered to the people-centered principle to promote the development of medical drugs, striving to ensure the safety of the masses and minimize the loss of personnel caused by COVID-19.

### 2.2.2 Related Words in the Video Introduction

Table 2. Frequency of the related words in the video introduction of the TikTok account of “communist youth league central committee”

Related Words in the Video Introduction	Frequency
China	34.57%
Tribute	9.22%
Youth	8.60%
Hong Kong	8.07%
Youngster	7.00%
People	7.00%
America	6.65%
Hero	6.56%
Incapable	5.85%

Data Source: Douchacha data platform

As an important component of the short video, the related words in the video introduction are more specific than the video theme. Among them, the frequency of “China” is as high as 34.57%, indicating that the TikTok account of “Communist Youth League Central Committee” attaches great importance to the overall development of China as the main body. As the case stands, when a public crisis occurs, national development will inevitably be severely hit, which in turn will increase the uncertainty of the social environment. As a result, most of the related words in the video introduction are words closely bound up with the China government, aiming to spread the official voice and focus on the crisis. In addition, the words with high frequency also involve a series of positive words, such as “Tribute”, “Youth”, “Youngster”, “Hero”, etc., indicating that the TikTok account of “Communist Youth League Central Committee” focuses on positive publicity during the period of COVID-19, commits to carrying out positive reports in an appropriate manner, and repeatedly conveys the salute to the heroes and the encouragement to the youth. Furthermore, the frequent appearance of “Hong Kong” and “America” indicates the regions and countries emphasized by the TikTok account of “Communist Youth League Central Committee”, its comprehensive, objective, and timely capture of hot events, as well as its active efforts in comments. Assuredly, the creation of intimate texts represented by “People” and “E-pal” reflects the China government’s people-oriented thinking. More importantly, these related words illustrate that the Chinese government is committed to promoting the democratization of crisis management and decision-making while conveying information through videos and that the Chinese government can widely mobilize the masses to enhance the public’s identification with the government’s emergency management policies in the context of the continuous spread of the COVID-19, and effectively implement the people-centered concept into practical actions to serve the people.

### 2.3 Manifestation Construction Frame

#### 2.3.1 Manifestations

Different from the single text or picture information used in traditional media dissemination, new-media short videos cover more abundant manifestations, such as background music, subtitles, and so on. To put it concretely, first of all, the TikTok account of the “Communist Youth League Central Committee” made full use of musical elements. Because it is boring for people to directly state the content of public crisis management policies in the past, using popular music with a wide audience as the video soundtrack can relieve the aesthetic fatigue of users caused by blind positive output to a certain extent, and better fit the audience’s audio-visual preferences. Secondly, the videos released by the TikTok account of the “Communist Youth League Central Committee” were generally accompanied by subtitles. According to the importance of the information and the actual situation, these subtitles were usually placed directly above or below the picture to show the main idea of the short video. This is convenient for the masses to understand the core of the video for the first time. Also, the conversations involved would be displayed in synchronized words, so that the audience can fully understand the whole content of the video. Moreover, the feature of short video production is the addition of special effects and stickers. However, given the need to choose appropriate topics for the video released by the TikTok account of “Communist Youth League

Central Committee”, the thematic seriousness that regularly appears is inherently unsuitable for the addition of special effects and stickers. Therefore, the diversiform special effects and stickers of the TikTok platform have not been fully utilized to further enrich the video manifestations.

### 2.3.2 Release Time

On January 22, 2020, the TikTok account of the “Communist Youth League Central Committee” first released a short video about COVID-19 entitled *Please Return Safely*, which aims to express the wishes of front-line medical staff to return safely, to cheer for the anti-epidemic action, and to disperse people’s panic. The above examples illustrate the importance of timely release of official information in the face of uncertain public health emergencies. During the period of the novel coronavirus epidemic, most of the videos released closely follow hot spots to disseminate new policy information in a timely manner, encourage the public, and establish the image of good public crisis management by the government.

### 2.3.3 Video Duration

Table 3. Video duration distribution of the TikTok account of “communist youth league central committee”

Video Duration	Distribution
0-15 s	50.00%
16-30 s	36.21%
31-60s	10.34%
>60 s	3.45%

Data Source: Douchacha data platform

The video duration of the TikTok account of “Communist Youth League Central Committee” is in line with the innovative short-video model. Among them, the distribution of videos with a duration between 0 and 0-15s is 50.00%. Compared with long videos, such short videos exhibit various advantages, including short playing time, appropriate rhythm, moderate intensity, more prominent highlights of videos, timely information release, and easier stimulation of interactions with fans. In turn, these advantages also help to increase the exposure and fans of the video, thereby leading to more efficient and fast information dissemination. During the COVID-19 public crisis event, especially the safety information about people’s lives and property will show explosive-style dissemination, which can enable the masses to quickly collect the official information concerning public crisis management released by the government.

## 2.4 Audience Effect Frame

### 2.4.1 Audience’s Feedback Data

Based on relevant statistics, the average number of likes of the video released by the TikTok account of “Communist Youth League Central Committee” was 107,000, with the ratio of likes to fans being 27.2:1, the average comments being 10,000, and the average forwarding amount being 5,351 (data source: Douchacha data platform). In general, the TikTok account of the “Communist Youth League Central Committee” has a high volume of likes and comments, as well as high forwarding amount, with high content dissemination. Moreover, the related theme videos released during COVID-19 can attract a great many audiences, which is conducive to publicizing the correctness of China government’s decision-making in public crisis management, presenting China’s international status and diplomatic image as a responsible great power, and then leading people’s spiritual culture and social life.

### 2.4.2 User Comments

In the comment area set up by the short video platform, the audience can freely express their opinions. Based on relevant statistics, the most frequently displayed comments on the TikTok account of the “Communist Youth League Central Committee” include “China”, “Tribute”, “Hero”, “Official”, “The People”, “Touched”, “Salute”, “Country”, “Spirit”, “Cheer” and “Safety” and so on (data source: Douchacha data platform). This further demonstrates that the information transmitted by the video released by the TikTok account of “Communist Youth League Central Committee” guarantees the basic rights of the public, such as the right to know and the right to choose, which is conducive to people’s effective supervision of government work and timely access to all kinds of information at low cost. In the meantime, it also endows the government with a channel to guide public opinion, playing a coordinating and organizing role. Through scientific information dissemination, more importantly,

releasing government policies and effective measures helps to reduce public anxiety, increase cohesion, and make public opinion guidance achieve the expected outcomes, thus shaping an excellent public opinion atmosphere.

### 3. Conclusion

In general, the TikTok Account of “Communist Youth League Central Committee” has the following advantages. First, its videos will highlight the theme of public crisis and promote publicity around public management. Second, it adheres to the guidance of public opinion and has a good guidance strategy. Third, it grasps the limit of entertainment, the form of communication is diversified.

However, it also has some shortcomings. First of all, the two-way interaction of its communication topics is relatively low. Most topics, such as the transmission of public crisis management policies and scientific methods to protect against COVID-19, are unilateral content communication. Second, it does not pay enough attention to the details of video production. For example, the incorrect placement of subtitles and font size will block the key picture of public crisis management propaganda. Third, it does not effectively communicate with other levels of government affairs accounts, so the video content may be homogenized with video accounts, which reduces the appeal of public crisis management information dissemination.

In view of the above deficiencies, I propose some suggestions. The most important thing is that the account operators should timely respond to the questions raised by users in the comment section, which can not only maintain the stickiness of users and maintain good two-way interaction, but also provide real and effective suggestions for the government to improve public crisis management methods, so that the government can better solve emergencies according to public opinions. In addition, it needs to optimize the details of video production, improve the quality of short videos of government affairs, provide users with high-quality viewing and sensory experience, attract people to obtain information, and improve the scope of public policy dissemination. Finally, it needs to interconnect with other types and levels of short video accounts of government affairs to jointly form the media communication matrix of public crisis management, and conduct content analysis from multiple perspectives to avoid repeated and ineffective management.

However, there are limitations in the research of this paper. The bottleneck of public crisis management by government short video needs to be broken. Future research should not only focus on its own improvement, but also understand the characteristics of the platform, and cooperate with multiple platforms to build a public crisis management system that keeps up with The Times.

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**Appendix**

Data collection instrument is the video topic search function of Tiktok.

Data extraction and mining tool is the professional big data analysis function of Douchacha data platform.

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