

# Psychological Analysis and Countermeasures of Public Opinion in Colleges and Universities Against the Background of COVID-19 Epidemic

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## ABSTRACT

Due to the severe and complex epidemic situation this year, colleges and universities have been in closed-off or relatively enclosed management. College students are active and like to discover the world, and the relatively enclosed management makes them very depressed. Then, students use different ways to vent their negative emotions. Finally, it has become one of the ways for students to vent their emotions by publishing what they have seen and heard on the Internet, especially the events that cause students' dissatisfaction. Some information becomes public opinions after exaggeration, which is not only detrimental to the management of colleges and universities, but also damages the reputation of colleges and universities. In order to reduce public opinion in colleges and universities, this study analyzes the psychology of the subjects and objects of public opinion, explores the occurrence and development of public opinion, and tries to put forward countermeasures from the perspective of psychology.

**Keywords:** Epidemic situation, Public opinion in colleges and universities, Psychological analysis, Countermeasures.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the spring semester began, there have been frequent outbreaks of COVID-19 across the country. Compared with 2020, the spread of the epidemic this year is faster and insidious, leading to repeated outbreaks. The recurrence of the epidemic has also brought difficulties to the educational management of colleges and universities. The long-term enclosed management (or relatively enclosed management) has made students depressed, and the accumulation of negative emotions is growing. Due to the impact of the epidemic, students cannot go shopping, go out for sports, or meet friends and lovers outside the school. Their ways of emotional venting have to adjust accordingly. In the process of readjustment, students may take inappropriate ways to achieve the purpose of venting, such as expressing dissatisfaction with the enclosed management and daily nucleic acid testing, etc. At the sensitive moment of the epidemic, if students' dissatisfaction can not be relieved in time, it may

develop into public opinion and even damage the reputation of colleges and universities.

## 2. PUBLIC OPINION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

### 2.1 Classification of Public Opinions in Colleges and Universities

#### 2.1.1 Public Opinion on the Colleges

College students are active in thinking, have a strong ability to accept all kinds of information, and are willing to express their own ideas and opinions. However, they have little social experience and lack experience, so it is inevitable that they are biased in looking at problems. In addition, many college students are still in the late adolescence, with a rebellious mentality. During the epidemic period, students must be subject to the epidemic prevention policy in terms of school education, canteen food, dormitory management, etc., so they

may have extreme ideas, even extreme speech and behavior.

### *2.1.2 Public Opinion on Classmates*

Various contradictions may occur among students, such as the evaluation of scholarships and bursaries, the selection of outstanding and advanced students, and the plagiarism of homework ideas. If these contradictions are overlaid with the gap between rich and poor, employment and graduate studies, it will be worse. When students think they have been treated unfairly, they will seek some ways to solve the problem, or just vent their emotions[1]. Nowadays, with the development of the Internet, everyone can express their views on the Internet Weibo, Tiktok and other media [2]. These media are popular among students, and these problems encountered by students are also hot concerns for other students, which are easy to arouse the resonance of students and lead to negative effects.

### *2.1.3 Students' Own Crisis Situation*

When entering a university, the first thing students face is the adaptation to the new environment. Many students have adaptation problems due to dissatisfaction with the dormitory conditions, unsatisfactory food in the cafeteria, homesickness, etc. This in turn leads to dissatisfaction with the school and may lead to suspension or withdrawal in serious cases. During the epidemic prevention and control period, students who are in a relationship, even if both parties are in the same city, seem to have a long-distance relationship. In other words, the relationship is unstable, and there are many lovelorn students. As the intimate relationship ends, there is a great blow to the students. Interpersonal relationship is also an important cause of students' crisis. A broken relationship with a close friend or even a close friend falling in love may lead to the loss of important interpersonal relationships for the student, resulting in a crisis. There are also academic difficulties, employment and postgraduate entrance examination, which may trigger students' negative emotions, and even cause suicide, self-mutilation, violence and other behaviors.

## **2.2 The Impact of Public Opinion in Colleges and Universities**

Although higher education has been popularized in China, a minority of people have received higher education. Higher education is still a scarce resource, and universities and college students are still highly concerned. Once the public opinion of universities is expanded, it will have a very bad impact on society and universities and college students themselves[3].

Since the spring of this year, the complex and severe epidemic has brought a lot of panic to students. The continuous epidemic has made students feel that there is no end to the epidemic and they lose control of their lives. When the negative information appears, it is a guide for students who have lost their sense of control. Students will use attacking the school as a starting point to find their own sense of existence, in order to achieve the purpose of regaining control of their lives. From the individual point of view, students find an outlet for emotional catharsis, while from the overall point of view, it may bring adverse effects to the colleges.

## **3. ANALYSIS ON THE CAUSES OF PUBLIC OPINION IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

### **3.1 Psychological Characteristics of College Students**

#### *3.1.1 Age Characteristics of College Students*

College students generally enter the university at the age of 18. Their physiological development has been almost completed, which is close to that of adults, but their psychology is not mature and their socialization degree is not high. Because they have studied in school for a long time, they have little contact with the society, have little understanding of the society, and have relatively simple social practice. In-school period is a stage for students to prepare for their own social maturity[4].

#### *3.1.2 Enhancement of College Students' Self-awareness*

Since adolescence, people's self-consciousness has entered a period of rapid development. Compared with middle school students, college students not only focus on the external world, but

also pay close attention to their internal world, hoping to understand their own emotions, cognitive characteristics, abilities and interests. College students often have strong logical thinking ability, and their ability to solve problems is also enhanced. The university environment is relatively loose. Students have time and atmosphere to know themselves and consciously shape themselves.

### *3.1.3 There Is an Urgent Need for College Students To Participate in Society*

Because of their long study time in school and little understanding of the society, college students are eager to understand the society and join the society. They pay attention to all kinds of social events and judge the social phenomena they see. They hope that they can become a member of the society, transform and serve the society according to their own wishes, and perform their own values[5].

## **3.2 Psychological Analysis of Public Opinion in Colleges and Universities**

### *3.2.1 Lack of Discourse Power of College Students*

In Chinese traditional culture, teachers are equivalent to heaven, earth, monarch and relatives. People are required to treat teachers as kings and parents, and obey the arrangements of teachers. This makes the relationship between teachers and students belong to hierarchical relationship rather than equal relationship. In addition, teachers' purpose is to impart knowledge, while students are more like the carriers of knowledge. Therefore, when thinking of teachers and schools, students have insufficient confidence and weak discourse power. Even some students are afraid of teachers and dare not speak to teachers. For students, there is no appropriate way to tell when they encounter problems, and they are unable to speak, which inevitably leads to dissatisfaction. Nowadays, the network is developed, and there are many platforms for students to speak. In the absence of formal channels, students will seek other ways to express their views, thoughts and emotional dissatisfaction[6].

### *3.2.2 Weak Psychological Elasticity of College Students*

Psychological elasticity is a term derived from physics, which means that when the subject is

stimulated by the outside world, it can make benign adjustment according to the nature and intensity of the stimulus. For individuals, the strength of psychological elasticity is a manifestation of social adaptability. College students study in school for a long time, and it is even more difficult to contact the society during the enclosed management. There is certain isolation from the society, their ideological and psychological is not mature, their understanding of the social environment is not deep enough, and they lack social practice experience. When encountering external stimulation, college students are unable to give feedback in an appropriate way, which shows the problem of poor social adaptation of college students.

### *3.2.3 Impact of Negative Emotions*

The policy of relatively enclosed management in colleges and universities is consistent with the normalization of the epidemic situation. Students' long-term accumulation of various negative emotions, such as panic about the epidemic situation, worry about not knowing about novel coronavirus, boredom about nucleic acid testing day after day, and disruption of the order of normal study and life, is a test[7]. Some college students are in a state of mental sub-health. The enclosed management policy of colleges and universities under the normalization of the epidemic has become the "last straw to overwhelm the camel".

There are two kinds of instinctive drive, namely, sexual drive and aggressive drive. When the aggressive drive is expressed in the form of energy, it is aggressive. People's aggressiveness can occur naturally, and can be vented through sports, dancing and other means, as well as fighting and causing trouble, hurting people and objects, verbal provocation and so on. If aggression is not released, long-term depression will form depression. Depression is a common negative emotion of college students. In addition to the anxiety, panic, sleep disorder, somatization reaction, etc. caused by the epidemic, these negative emotions accumulate to a certain extent, and students will be overwhelmed by emotion, and their sense of reason will be greatly reduced or even lost, resulting in improper behavior and speech, such as self-injury, personal injury and violence.

From the perspective of personality tendency, students with depressive temperament tend to have weak nerves, sensitive and suspicious emotions, and are prone to be affected by negative information to form depression. The students with

impetuous temperament tend to have strong nerves, but unstable and strong emotions, and may take impulsive actions. Considering the age characteristics of college students and the lack of social experience, they are easy to be impulsive.

### *3.2.4 Strong Subject Consciousness of College Students*

College students have been aware of their dominant position, ability and value, which also reflect their subjectivity, initiative and innovation consciousness in college life. College students have the ability to make independent judgments, have their own value system, can judge the right from the wrong, actively participate in social affairs, have a strong desire for performance, do not like to stick to conventions, and have a strong sense of innovation. In college life and study, they have low tolerance for the shortcomings of the colleges, and hope to transform the school and optimize their own living and learning environment.

### *3.2.5 The Needs of College Students Are Not Met*

Individual needs can be simply divided into low-level needs and high-level needs. Low-level needs mainly refer to the relevant needs to ensure basic survival, such as food, cold clothing, shelter, etc. And high-level needs mainly refer to enjoyment needs, development needs, self-worth realization needs, etc. During the epidemic period, the enclosed management policy of colleges and universities can ensure the low-level needs of students, but the reasonable high-level needs may not be fully guaranteed. At the turn of spring and summer, the management is enclosed, the express delivery of colleges and universities is out of service, and some students do not have suitable clothing replacement in summer.

China has resolutely implemented the poverty alleviation policy for many years. Normal families can not only ensure the basic living expenses of college students, but also provide students with a reasonable range of living expenses. In 2021, according to the survey on the living expenses of college students in a university in Shandong, the average monthly living expenses of college students was about 1500 yuan, and the daily average cost of eating in the canteen was between 20 yuan and 30 yuan. For most college students, 600 yuan a month can be used to improve the quality of life, meet personal hobbies or personal

enjoyment. During the epidemic prevention and control period, students' normal requirements for quality of life could not be met under the enclosed management of the school.

## **4. COUNTERMEASURES TO DEAL WITH PUBLIC OPINION IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

### ***4.1 Colleges and Universities Should Change Their Management Concepts***

The purpose of management is to improve efficiency, and the core of management is people. Universities should fully understand human nature and characteristics of human nature and adapt to the needs of human nature. At the same time, they must understand that management is also a service. It is suggested to mobilize the enthusiasm and initiative of college students, and make college students willing to comply with school management. In terms of education management, universities must fully consider the psychological characteristics of college students and meet the needs of college students. To meet the needs of students, colleges must follow the educational principles. Colleges and universities should carefully distinguish the boundaries of the principles and achieve the wishes of students within the boundaries. From a psychological point of view, the establishment of boundaries is not only to clarify the rights of schools, but also to let students know what to do and what not to do, which is also an education for students.

In terms of the formulation of education management policy, universities should also consider the subjective feelings of students. Before formulating the policy, colleges should fully investigate and understand the ideological trends of students, listen to the voice of students, realize the rationality of students' subjective will, and make adjustments. After the policy is released, universities should also give students an interpretation in detail, such as the provisions, reasons, objectives, advantages and disadvantages of the policy. In this way, students can understand the universities to the greatest extent. The achievement of understanding is the mutual efforts of the school and the students. The school can reduce the students' resistance to the school and reduce the negative impact by thinking in an alternate position and listening sincerely[8].

## **4.2 Open Communication Channels**

In addition to the traditional "Principal Mailbox" and "Suggestion Box", it is suggested to cater to students' preferences and leave room for students to speak on the Internet in terms of the communication between colleges and students. It is feasible to set up special areas to reflect problems on various publicity media of the school, such as the school's official website, student work website, websites set up by secondary colleges, Wechat platform, QQ, Weibo and other media, and assign special personnel to manage them.

The principles of special area management are as follows. The first is the principle of "responding to every request". The original meaning of "responding to every request" means that if there is a request, it must respond to it. Here, it means that if there is a request, it is not necessarily to agree, but there must be a response. From the perspective of psychology, responding means building relationships. If relationships are established, problems can be solved more easily and students' negative emotions can be reduced. For example, if college students report that there are cockroaches in their dormitories, the universities often take action immediately, but there is no verbal response. For the student who reflects the problem, the verbal response not only means that the problem he raised is valued, but also means that he is seen and affirmed. As an individual, he is respected by the school. At this time, he not only represents the individual, but also represents the student group. The benign relationship between the school and the students is established, which is not only conducive to solving the problem, but also establishes a good image of the school in the hearts of the students, and the students will consciously maintain the image of the school. The second is the principle of inclusiveness. It is required to correctly treat students' irrational demands, allow students to express their dissatisfaction with the school, and tolerate students' attacks on the school. Tolerating aggression is the acceptance of students' different voices and ideas, and accepting itself can reduce students' aggression.

## **4.3 Strengthening Psychological Education for Students**

### **4.3.1 Emotional Education**

Emotions are divided into constructive emotions and destructive emotions. Extreme, hatred, paranoia

and other emotions may go to extremes if they are ignored. In the mental health education of college students, there is emotional education for students from the theoretical level in the compulsory courses, mainly explaining the basic common sense of emotion and the ways and methods of emotional management. In addition to classroom education, colleges and universities have also carried out a wealth of publicity activities in order to achieve the effect of emotional education. The emotional education in the second classroom attaches importance to students' ability to perceive, identify and express their emotions, and changes students' cognition through the improvement of their emotions.

### **4.3.2 Cultivation of Positive Psychology**

When college students live and study on campus, they inevitably receive negative information. How to deal with negative information from a positive perspective and produce positive emotions requires the school to consciously cultivate students' positive psychology. Positive psychology attaches importance to the advantages of people, focuses on the construction of psychological functions, and believes that individuals can rely on their own strength to repair psychological problems. First of all, students should understand their own superior character, such as striving, taking the initiative to undertake tasks, communicating with others, transcending bad emotions, etc., give full play to their own advantages, and achieve the purpose of improving psychological quality and psychological flexibility through the acquisition of advantages rather than the remedy of defects. Secondly, the generation of positive emotions first comes from the understanding and recognition of their own advantages. They use their advantageous character to obtain a sense of responsibility, honor, recognition, good interpersonal relations, etc. The regular experience of positive emotions is conducive to cultivating students' positive psychology.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The impact of the epidemic on colleges and universities is mainly reflected in the level of student education management. The emergence of public opinion in colleges and universities is often closely related to student education management. Preventing the emergence of public opinion is not only the maintenance of the image of colleges and

universities, but also the protection of students. Understanding students' wishes and meeting their needs does not mean that there are no limits to what students are expected to do, but that colleges and universities improve their own management concepts and adapt to the normalization of epidemic prevention and control. Under the epidemic situation, schools and students are facing tests at the same time. Only by constantly adapting to the new situation and facing students' problems and public opinion with a positive attitude can schools minimize public opinion and its negative impact.

### **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

This paper is independently completed by Lanlan Meng.

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