Investigation on Media Literacy of China Government Officials:
Under the View of Public Opinion Guidance

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ABSTRACT

China media environment has drastically changed leading to the an inevitable change of public opinion ecology. Empirical studies have focused less on public opinion guidance, which forms an important component of the government officials' media literacy. This study applied quantitative method in the investigation of media literacy in China. Ideally, media literacy is measured from media cognition, media contact, media usage under the view of public opinion guidance. The findings reveal that the existing problem on 1) incorrect media cognition and public opinion guidance; 2) insufficient contact of personal social media 3) improper tendencies in the use of media to guide the public opinion, especially, on confidential information. Consequently, in order to improve media literacy in China government officials, enhancement of their basic knowledge on news diffusion and public opinion is necessary. Secondly, to effectively deal with "agenda settings", it is important for the government to consider the provision of valuable information and platforms to effectively spread information. So they need to learn how to personally and officially use social media platforms such as Weiboa and Wechat. This ensures they have maximized their potential to acquire valuable information and spread them on valuable platforms. Thirdly, government officials should be able to analyze and understand public opinion trends for official and personal use. Finally, they should understand the development of public opinion and the how online public opinion laws are formed and the target group.

Key words: *China Government Officials, Media Literacy, Public Opinion Guidance, Internet, Weibo, Wechat.*

1. INTRODUCTION

According to *the 40th Statistical Report on the Development of Internet in China* (hereinafter referred to as *Report*) released by China Internet network information center (CNNIC), China's Internet population reached 751 million until June of 2017, accounting for one-fifth of the global total. The number of Internet users increased by 14.40% compared with 2012. It can be seen that the media ecological environment of China has undergone large changes, which will inevitably lead to the change of public opinion ecology. On the 19th National Congress opening ceremony General Secretary Xin Jinping emphasized in his report that will "firmly grasp the leadership of ideological work", and pointed out that will "attach great privilege to the communication channel construction and innovation, advance the public opinion propagation force,

guiding force, influence and credibility". Xi's words illustrated how highly Chinese government thinks of the ideology leadership which interweaves with public opinion guidance. And as the internet penetration rate rises in China, academic started to attach importance to online public opinion guidance via internet usage. China's media environment and political condition highlight the necessity of the studies which combine internet media literacy and public opinion guidance. The present study investigated China government officials' media literacy under the view of public opinion guidance, aims to reflect how well China government officials apply media, especially new media, for public opinion guidance. In the following parts: literature review was conducted to explain the background theories, and the measurement scales as well as operationalization of media literacy was settled in this part; the sampling and collecting were explained in Method part; then results were illustrated from *media cognition, media contact, media usage* three aspects; finally, Conclusion and discussion made a closure.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Media Literacy

Originate concept of media literacy comes from *Culture and the Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness* (1933) wrote by the British scholar ER. Levi and Danish education workers Denys Thompson. For the first time, the concept of "cultural literacy" was proposed in their book, which is generally regarded as the prototype of media literacy. In the process of continuous improvement of the theoretical frame, scholars of various countries have defined the media literacy according to the current understanding. The commonly applied definition is from *Aspen Institute Report of the National Leadership Conference on Media* Literacy (1992), which defined media literacy as *"the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms."* This definition contains three levels: the ability to use the media, the ability to interpret the media content, and the ability to create media and media content [1].

2.2 The Government Officials' Media Literacy

With the development of media literacy theory, Chinese scholars have also shed light on the media literacy of government officials. Tong believe that proper utilization and management of mass media is an important reflection of the powerful leadership of political parties. China government must learn from the United States, and make a good usage of media [2]. According to Ding, the media literacy is constitution of governing competence, which include accepting media supervision, connecting with people via media as well as scientific media management [3]. Luo thinks that government officials' media literacy is connected with the application of people-centered administration philosophy, scientific decision-making, proper crisis management, enforcement of public opinion guidance as well as the establishment of public image [4]. Namely, public opinion guiding ability is one important part of media literacy for government officials. Zheng conducted questionnaire survey subjected on more than 500 government officials in Nanjing, which provides a valuable reference for the conceptualization for media literacy in the present study [5]. Inspired by previous research results, combining the present research purpose, government officials' media literacy will be reflected from media contact, media cognition as well as media usage.

2.3 Public Opinion Guidance

Public opinion guidance refers to the social activity that the organization managers exert influence on people's focus and evaluation on public affairs through distributing specific information, aiming to guide public opinion to develop in the way conforming to social norms and ethics [6]. Since the 21st century, the research on public opinion guidance conducted by Chinese scholars keep growing continuously, which can be divided into three categories: the object research (e.g., research on public opinion guidance conducted during the emergent event), the subject research, and the countermeasure research. In terms of guidance subject research, researches on the media (e.g., radio and television media [7]; news media [8]; Weibo [9], government [6], colleges and universities [10] and the mass [11]

are comparatively common. However, the research subjected on government officials is rare. In fact, the subject of public opinion guidance should not only include the mass media, but also the faculty of administration departments [3]. However, officials' media literacy research under the perspective of public opinion guidance is rather rare. According to the retrieving result in the leading citation index system, only two relevant papers were found. As non-empirical summaries or suggestions, both of the two articles lack sufficient theoretical foundations and statistic support. In conclusion, although the researches on media literacy and public opinion guidance has piled up in China, the researches on government officials' media literacy under the view of public opinion guidance is inadequate, especially, empirical researches are rather rare.

Basing on previous measurements and the definition of media literacy widely applied, the present study applied three scales to measure China government officials' media literacy. As Table 1 shows: media contact, which was operationalized to ask five categories of mass media contact situation as well as channel for news; media cognition, which was operationalized to ask cognition for media and journalists, cognition for public opinion and guidance as well as cognition for the relationship of government and media; media usage which was operationalized to ask daily usage behavior with a focus on digital media as well as media usage when hot events of public opinion occurs. Cronbach's alpha values (Media contact $<a=.77>$, Media cognition $<a=.67>$, Media usage $<a=.72>$) all greater than 0.6, indicating that the items used to test the three variables in this study had satisfying internal consistency and reliability.

Table 1. The Measurement Scales and Operationalization of Media Literacy

Media contact (a=.77)	Contact situation for five categories of mass media
	Media contact for news
Media cognition (a=.67)	Cognition for media and journalists
	Cognition for public opinion as well as guidance
	Cognition for the relationship of government and media
Media usage (a=.72)	Daily usage(with a focus on digital media)
	Media usage when hot events of public opinion occurs

3. METHOD

3.1 Sampling

The sample was selected in Chongqing city of China. As the youngest municipality of China, Chongqing has maintained double-digit economic growth in recent years, ranking the top three in the country, and its important political and economic status is self-evident. At the same time, the public opinion situation in Chongqing also presents the complexity. Taking July of 2017 as an example, according to data from Tianya (well-known comprehensive network community by ethnic Chinese) public opinion monitoring platform, there were 6833,000 pieces of online public opinions there in July, raising

by 15.0% from the previous month. Concerning the source, public opinion information mainly comes from Weibo (literally refers to China Micro-blog), BBS and news sites. And the content mainly focuses on three aspects: social livelihood, administration and corruption. It is not hard to find that the network public opinion base in Chongqing is large and growing fast, and the technical and content platform involvement are extensive. Meanwhile, according to the data released by CNNIC, the Internet penetration rate in Chongqing was 51.6% as of December 2016, and ranked 17th among the 31 provinces surveyed. Basically, Internet development level of Chongqing is consistent with national average level, and is representative.

3.2 Data Collecting

This survey adopted the quantitative research method to collect data through online questionnaires. The sample sources were divided into: propaganda department and non-propaganda department. 1) Propaganda departments: through sending the questionnaire link to Wechat (most widely adopted comprehensive social media by ethnic Chinese) working groups of Chongqing propaganda department and those of 39 counties, the electronic questionnaire file reached government official in propaganda department; 2) non-propaganda department: on Wechat questionnaire link was sent out to other departments which have work connection with propaganda department, including the department of civil affairs, department of political science and law, etc. Since only fully-completed questionnaire can be submitted, the questionnaires collected are all valid. From December 19th to December 22th of 2017, 317 questionnaires were collected. SPSS20.0 was used to analyze the data.

3.3 Demographic Features

At the first part of the questionnaire demographic features information was asked, including sex, age, position level and education background. Table 2 illustrates all items and rates as well as coding which is applied for statistical description in later stage.

Table 2. Demographic Features and Coding (N=317)

	Group rates	Coding
Sex	Male: 48.6%; Female: 51.4%	1=Male ; 2=Female
Age	30 and below: 32.8%; 31-40:41.3%; 41-50:21.1%; 51-60:4.4%; beyond 60: 0.3%	1= 30 and below; 2=31-40; 3=41-50; 4=51-60; 5= beyond 60
Posit-ion level	Leading/Assisting role of departments or equivalents: 0.9% ; Leading/Assisting role of divisions or equivalents: 24.9% ; Leading/Assisting role of sections or equivalents: 33.8% ; Staff member: 40.4%	1= Leading/Assisting role of departments or equivalents ; 2= Leading/Assisting role of divisions or equivalents ; 3= Leading/Assisting role of sections or equivalents ; 4= Staff member
Education background	Below junior college:1.6% ; Junior college:17.4% ; Undergraduate:66.3% ; Graduate:15.1% ; PhD:0.6%	1= Below junior college ; 2= Junior college ; 3= Undergraduate ; 4= Graduate ; 5=PhD

4. RESULTS

4.1 Media Cognition

Correct understanding of the medium is the premise of the proper media usage and improvement of government officials' media literacy. It includes the cognition on mass media, social role of journalists, and the relationship between media and government, etc., which relate to their attitude and behavior in the face of public opinion.

Table 3 reflects rates of participants' response (strongly agree, agree, cannot tell, strongly disagree, disagree) to four items *Internet users' speech release happens in the virtual space, has nothing to do with the real world, the Internet has become the main battlefield of public opinion guidance, in the face of public opinion events, the government has the right to refuse the media or the reporter's interview, government and government officials should deal with the relationship with media and journalists, especially when the public opinion events occur.*

According to the survey results, 1) the respondents who strongly agreed and agreed that "the news media is the mouthpiece of the party and the people" accounted for 94.6%, while only 1.6% did not agree with this statement. That is, the vast majority of government officials are clear about the nature of the China media that serving for the party and the people. However, 2) this does not mean a clear understanding of the relationship between the media and the government. For instance, 39.1% believe that the viewpoint "the journalist is the uncrowned king with the supremacy of power" is correct, and 24.0% expressed they were not sure; on the other side, when asked whether the government has the right to reject the media and reporters in the event of public opinion, 25.6% gave a positive answer. Namely, there are some officials believe the media power is supreme, while some tend to focus the social responsibility of media and journalists which they believe should be subject to the government. As a matter of fact, the relevant laws of China have stipulated that government has the obligation to disclose information for the public as long as it is not involved with the national security, state secrets or military secrets. Actually, information blocking would lead to the loss of public opinion guidance privilege [5]. That is, 42.0% of government officials holds incorrect viewpoint on it.

Concerning the basic knowledge on public opinion guidance: firstly, when asked whether had read book about basic knowledge of journalism and public opinion guidance, positive answer was given by 68.8% of the respondents, 31.2% answered negatively. Table 3 shows investigation results on cognition for public opinion, It can be seen that some officials hold some incorrect views: 10.1% of the officials think that "Internet users' speeches release happen in the virtual space, has nothing to do with the real world", 1.6% are not aware of

"the Internet has become the main battlefield of public opinion guidance", 25.6% think "in the face of public opinion events, the government has the right to refuse the media or the reporter's interview", 7.9% are not clear that "government and government officials should deal with the relationship with media and journalists well, especially when the public opinion events occur".

Table 3. Investigation Results on Cognition on Public Opinion (N=317; Unit：%)

	Internet users' speech release happens in the virtual space, has nothing to do with the real world	the Internet has become the main battlefield of public opinion guidance	in the face of public opinion events, the government has the right to refuse the media or the reporter's interview	government and government officials should deal with the relationship with media and journalists, especially when the public opinion events occur
Strongly agree	3.5(n=11)	56.5(n=179)	6.0(n=19)	69.7(n=221)
Agree	6.6(n=21)	36.9(n=117)	19.6(n=62)	22.4(n=71)
Cannot tell	9.5(n=30)	5.0(n=16)	16.4(n=52)	5.7(n=18)
Strongly disagree	54.6(n=173)	1.3(n=4)	45.1(n=143)	2.2(n=7)
Disagree	25.9(n=82)	.3(n=1)	12.9(n=41)	0.0(n=0)

In addition, 1-5 points were assigned to the measurement *strongly agree, agree, can not tell, strongly disagree, Disagree.* And the bigger the number is, the higher the cognition level is. Table 4 is the results of T-test on media cognitive Level difference between readers and non-readers. It shows there is significant media cognitive level difference between respondents who have read books on public opinion (M=4.29, SD=.40) and who do not (M=4.17, SD=.40) (*p*< 0.05), which reveals that learning or training for relevant theoretical knowledge is necessary to improve the media literacy of government officials.

Table 4. Results of T-test on Media Cognitive Level Difference between Readers and Non-readers

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
.39	.54	-2.26	296	.02	-.12	.05	-.23	-.02
		-2.26	178.35	.02	-.12	.05	-.23	-.02

(group variables: readers (n=218) and non-readers (n=99); test variables: media cognition level; N=317)

4.2 Media Contact

Table 5 shows investigation result of media contact motivation for five categories of mass media. Specifically, rates were calculated to reflect how the respondents use newspaper, TV, magazine, radio and Internet for news learning, new knowledge learning, recreation, work needs, talking topics obtaining and the others

Table 5. Mass Media Contact Motivation (N=317; Unit：%)

	Newspaper	TV	Magazine	Radio	Internet
News learning	80.2(n=254)	72.8(n=231)	53.0(n=168)	57.4(n=182)	88.3(n=280)
New knowledge learning	55.7(n=177)	48.7(n=154)	66.1(n=209)	41.3(n=131)	82.6(n=262)
Recreation	18.1(n=57)	69.1(n=219)	53.4(n=169)	44.0(n=139)	72.5(n=230)
Work needs	58.1(n=184)	28.9(n=92)	34.2(n=108)	25.2(n=80)	76.2(n=242)
Talking topics obtaining	41.6(n=132)	41.6(n=132)	41.6(n=132)	31.5(N=100)	61.4(n=195)
The others	6.0(n=19)	6.4(n=20)	8.1(n=26)	6.0(N=19)	15.4(n=49)
I am non-user	7.7(n=24)	4.4(n=14)	9.1(n=29)	26.5(n=84)	0.3(n=1)

According to the above statistics, "news learning" is the main motivation for officials to contact media, of which the internet is the most frequently adopted one; and When motivated by "learning new knowledge", "work needs" and "obtaining social topics", the media with the highest contact rate is also the Internet. To sum up, 1)"news learning" is the most common motive for government officials to use the media; 2) the media that best meet this need is the Internet; 3) and on the Internet WeChat (85.9%) is the most common channel to learn news. Other platform usage rate is shown in Table 6:

Table 6. Channels for News Learning on Internet (N=316; Unit: %)

Media	Wechat	News site	News app	News section of portal	Weibo	Others
Rate	86.1(n=272)	71.6(n=227)	63.4(n=201)	58.7(n=186)	43.2(n=137)	10.4(n=33)

4.3 Media Usage

Given the results has revealed that the Internet is the most commonly used media, discussion in this section is focused on the digital media. Internet penetration rate among officials is 99.0%, and the results of the survey (Table 7) show that 91.0% of the respondents have used it for over five years. However, personal media have not been well utilized as expected. As media consumers, on one hand, government officials use media as ordinary users do on the base of personal habits and motivation; on the other hand, they are often superior to ordinary users for information sources, consequently, they have

the responsibility and obligation to participate in the media content production more actively, to make the right voice through the media and guide the public opinion. However, according to the results of the survey (Table 8), near half of the respondents do not use Weibo and more than half have no WeChat official account. On the other hand, some chose to use their personal media in an anonymous way rather than disclose their identity of government official.

Table 7. Time Length of Internet Adoption (N=317; Unit：%)

Time length	0 year（non-user）	Less than 2 years	2-5 years（2 included）	6-9 years（6 included）	10 and beyond 10 years
Rate	0.3(n=1)	1.9(n=6)	6.7(n=21)	23.2(n=74)	67.8(n=215)

Table 8. Weibo and Wechat Usage (N=317; Unit：%)

| | The number of follower | | | | | Identity disclosure | |
	0(non-user)	200 below	200-500（200 included）	500-1000（500 included）	1000 and beyond	positive	negative
Weibo	43.4(n=137)	43.7(n=138)	7.5(n=23)	2.7(n=9)	2.7(n=9)	67.7(n=214)	32.3(n=102)
Wechat	73.6(n=233)	19.0(n=60)	5.1(n=16)	1.7(n=5)	0.7(n=2)	25.6(n=81)	74.4(n=235)

This part was further divided into two aspects: daily usage and the usage for public opinion guidance. Table 9 reflects daily usage by presenting rates of participants' response (strongly agree, agree, cannot tell, strongly disagree, disagree) to three items *can express own viewpoints on social events via personal media, will send out relevant information out on personal media immediately as hot events of public opinion occur, will forward unconfirmed information in personal media*. To be specific, concerning the daily use of personal media, firstly, 63.4% of respondents "can express own viewpoints on social events via personal media", while 24.6% gave a negative answer; 2) 23.4% responded that they will "send out relevant information out on personal media immediately as hot events of public opinion occur". As the development of information technology, information fragmentation and explosive growth will result in a large amount of information garbage, which is one trigger of the constant "news inversion" phenomenon; 3) when asked whether will "forward unconfirmed information in personal media", most subjects made it clear that they won't, but there are still 4.7% expressed positive answer and 5.1% cannot tell. The above results revealed that there is a problem of information discrimination ability weakness and insufficient media usage among officials.

Table 9. Daily Media Usage (N=317)

	can express own viewpoints on social events via personal media	will send out relevant information out on personal media immediately as hot events of public opinion occur	will forward unconfirmed information in personal media
Strongly agree	23.4(n=74)	9.5(n=30)	75.3(n=239)
Agree	40.0(n=127)	13.9(n=44)	14.9(n=48)
Cannot tell	22.0(n=70)	29.2(n=93)	5.1(n=16)
Disagree	13.9(n=44)	40.0(n=127)	3.7(n=12)
Strongly disagree	.7(n=2)	7.4(n=23)	1.0(n=3)

Table 10 shows the results of survey on media usage for public opinion guidance. It reflects media usage for public opinion guidance by presenting rates of participants' response (strongly agree, agree, cannot tell, strongly disagree, disagree) to five usage behavior items *taking the advantage of the media to clarify the facts and disintegrate the rumor, constantly improving early warning mechanism, firmly grasp the reporting initiative, and control the public opinion events at incubation stage, blocking the news in the face of emergencies or public crises, paying attention to the unified release of messages and media coordination, and utilize the combined impact of mass communication and interpersonal communication, paying close attention to media reports, especially the follow-up effects of online media*. According to the findings, 93.6% of the respondents agree on "constantly improving early warning mechanism, firmly grasp the reporting initiative, and control the public opinion events incubation stage", 95.7% believe that should "take the advantage of the media to clarify the facts and disintegrate the rumor", 96.0% think they need to "pay attention to the unified release of messages and media coordination, and utilize the combined impact of mass communication and interpersonal communication" and "pay close attention to media reports, especially the follow-up effects of online media"; However, respondents' views were less consistent with whether government departments should block the news in the face of emergencies or public crises. Of these, 28.5% consider the information should be sealed off and not made public. Furthermore. in order to numberalize media usage level, 1-5 were assigned to the measurement *strongly agree, agree, cannot tell, strongly disagree, Disagree*. And the bigger the number is, the higher the usage level is.

Table 10. Media Usage for Public Opinion Guidance (N=317)

	taking the advantage of the media to clarify the facts and disintegrate the rumor	constantly improving early warning mechanism, firmly grasp the reporting initiative, and control the public opinion events at incubation stage	blocking the news in the face of emergencies or public crises	paying attention to the unified release of messages and media coordination, and utilize the combined impact of mass communication and interpersonal communication	pay close attention to media reports, especially the follow-up effects of online media
Strongly agree	76.5(n=242)	72.1(n=229)	7.0(n=22)	75.2(n=238)	76.8(n=243)
Agree	19.2(n=61)	21.5(n=68)	8.7(n=28)	20.8(n=66)	19.2(n=61)
Cannot tell	4.0(n=13)	5.0(n=16)	12.8(n=41)	3.7(n=12)	3.7(n=12)
Disagree	.3(n=1)	.3(n=1)	49.3(n=156)	0(n=0)	.3(n=1)
Strongly disagreed	0(n=0)	1.0(n=3)	22.1(n=70)	.3(n=1)	0(n=0)

In addition, independent sample T test was conducted to compare the media use level difference between readers and non-reader. <Table 11> shows that there is significant media usage level difference ($p< 0.05$) between respondents who have read books on public opinion (M=4.29, SD=.40) and who do not(M=4.17, SD=.40).

Table 11. Result of T-test on Media Use Level Difference between Readers and Non-readers

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.01	.93	2.40	293	.02	.12	.05	.02	.22
Equal variances not assumed			2.41	174.55	.02	.12	.05	.02	.22

(group variables: readers and non-readers; test variables: media cognition level; N=317)

Meanwhile, correlation analysis was conducted and the results (Table 12) reveal Pearson correlation coefficient is. 571 ($p < 0.01$), which further proves the necessity for the government officials of carrying out theoretical study and enhance their media cognition.

Table 12. The Correlation between Media Cognition and Usage. (**p<.01; N=317)

		Media cognition	Media usage
Media cognition	Pearson Correlation	1	.571**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Media usage	Pearson Correlation	.57**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	
	N	317	317

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSIONS

The "decentralization" communication mechanism in the Internet has completely changed the pattern of information dissemination and made new demands on the media literacy of government officials. As both media users and the managers of the media industry, government officials' cognition for digital media environment, understanding of communication law, discrimination for media content, establishment of communication channels, cooperation with media and the public all constitution of their media literacy and directly related to the administration quality.

Firstly, 1) in terms of general media cognition; the survey results reveal that there are 36.9% of the respondents consider journalists as "uncrowned king with supreme power", this misconception may cause the social problem of bribery; but on the other hand, majority (94.6%) of them are clear that China media is the mouthpiece of administration party and the people, meanwhile, some think the government had the right to reject media and block the news during public opinion events. These findings suggest that government officials, on the one hand, fully recognize the importance of media and reporters' social role, even deify the power of the press; On the other hand, there is the problem of ignoring the responsibility of the government to media journalists, and only emphasizing that the media is subject to the government. 2) In terms of cognition on network public opinion, 10.1% of the officials think that "Internet users' speech release happens in the virtual space, has nothing to do with the real world"; 1.6% are not aware of "the Internet has become the main battlefield of public opinion guidance"; 25.6% think "in the face of public opinion events, the government has the right to refuse the media or the reporter's interview"; 7.9% are not clear that "government and government officials should deal with the relationship with media and journalists well, especially when the public opinion events occur". It can be seen that some officials have the problem of information discrimination and lack of systematic knowledge of news communication. According to the survey results, 31.2% of the respondents have not study or read courses or books about the basic knowledge of news communication or the guidance of public opinion. At the same time, through the comparison of the average, we also found that the media usage and cognition level of the respondents were significantly lower than those of government officials with relevant knowledge learning experience. Therefore, to improve the media literacy of government officials, the learning and training of the relevant theoretical knowledge of is indispensable, which can be carried

out systematically by the government, and personal learning by officials.

Secondly, concerning media contact; in the digital age, new media keep emerging, and the trend of media convergence is deepening. Government officials should fully understand the features of today's media environment, grasp the applying skills of new media, especially personal new media. With the development of communication technology, the form of personal media is constantly updated. Blogs, micro-blogs, WeChat, etc. have become important information dissemination and public opinion generation platforms. According to the survey, 43.4% of respondents do not have Weibo account, 73.6% did not have WeChat official account. Let alone those who never use the Internet. According to Agenda Setting Theory, the media agenda affects the public agenda. This classical theory is still applicable in the context of network media. As the premise of "agenda setting", agenda come in the first way, which highly rely on media. Thus, government and government officials must learn to collect information from information platforms such as Weibo, WeChat and BBS, and produce content and release them as well as set them as agenda.

Thirdly, concerning media usage; firstly, government officials are often superior to ordinary users for information sources, consequently, they have the responsibility and obligation to more actively participate in the media content production, to make the right voice through the media and guide the public opinion. They should actively learn to use new media, especially those widely adopted by the public; they should take the advantage of new media to release information on public affairs and make a quick response to public opinion; secondly, government officials should learn public opinion and correctly guide it in daily media use. As communicators, government officials have to take the initiative to become the information source in the progress of agenda setting. Openness characteristics of the Internet makes it function as a perfect information platform for all netizens. However, not all but only accurate and useful information can be referred as resource. It is obligated for officials to filter untrue and harmful information and guide the public opinion in a positive way; due to the their identity, the information released by government officials will receive more attention, so they should be cautious with public affairs expression on their personal media; thirdly, officials should be aware of the of the formation law of online public opinions, and use the media in a targeted way in the different stages. According to the process of formation and development, it can be divided into the incubation, the burst, the diffusion, the closure stage. Basic knowledge of the public opinion formation is the premise of correct guidance. First of all, they should actively get involved into collecting information on real thoughts and desires of the public through a variety of effective information channels, analyzing and sorting it, and find ways to curb vicious one in early stage; in the stage of burst, the key words are "speed" and "truth". That is, the truth should be disclosed as soon as possible. However, the present survey results reveal that 12.8% of respondents cannot tell how to do, 15.7% think information should be blocked. In the age of the Internet, such a practice would only aggravate the situation and lose people's trust. What should government officials do is not simply "dealing with" journalists or "blocking" news, but using the right communication skills and maintaining smooth interaction with the public; at the later stages, close attention should be paid to media reports, especially the follow-up effects of online media.

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