



# Analyze the Influence of Internet Public Opinion on Public Policy

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## Abstract

With the continuous development and progress of social economy and science and technology, my country's Internet technology has developed rapidly. The popularization and application of the Internet has brought great convenience to the people, promoted the communication and interaction between the government and the people, and added new ways of expressing public opinion; the Internet is highly developed, and the government makes full use of its role to collect social opinions through Internet. Public opinion promotes the democratization and scientific rationality of public policies. This article will discuss the following aspects: first, focus on the influence of online public opinion on public policy, explain the research background of the article, analyze and organize it; second, consult relevant literature, sort out the related concepts of online public opinion and public policy and characteristics; third, analyze the value of online public opinion on public policies, including positive and negative effects, based on cases, data, and referenced literature; finally, put forward targeted suggestions and countermeasures for existing problems, including improvement. The government plays an important role in the construction of network infrastructure and strengthening the moral education of netizens. It is necessary to do a good job in guiding the network public opinion, devote itself to creating a good and healthy network atmosphere, and attach importance to the dual influence of network public opinion on public policies, to make it fully play its positive role.

## Subject Areas

Information Science, Public Policy

## Keywords

Internet Public Opinion, Influences, Public Policy

## 1. Research Background

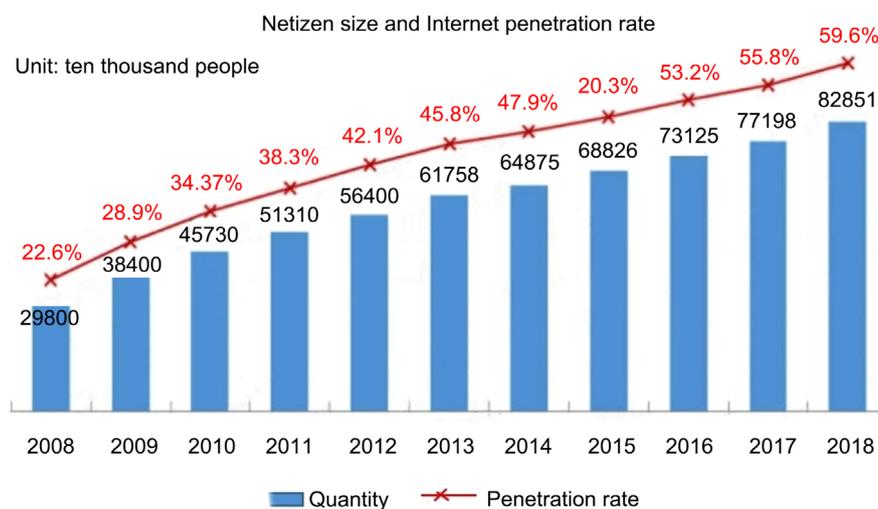
With the development of society and economy and the advancement of science and technology, the Internet has entered all aspects of people's lives and is an important way for people to obtain information and understand the outside world. According to statistics from China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC): as of December 2018, the number of Internet users in China reached 829 million, and the Internet penetration rate was 59.6%. Among them, the number of mobile Internet users reached 817 million, and the proportion of Internet users using mobile phones reached 98.6% (Figure 1 and Figure 2). In addition, as of December 2018, the utilization rate of WeChat Moments and Qzone users has decreased compared with the previous year. The utilization rate of circle and Qzone users decreased compared with the previous year, while the utilization rate of Weibo showed an upward trend. The users of mobile network news also showed an upward trend compared with the previous year. The popularization and application of the Internet has promoted the increase of netizens year by year, and the influence of the Internet on people's lifestyle will be deepened.

It can be seen that in this context, more citizens can use mobile phones and other network devices to quickly understand what is happening at the moment, actively express their own attitudes, and participate in public policies; the role of the government is particularly important.

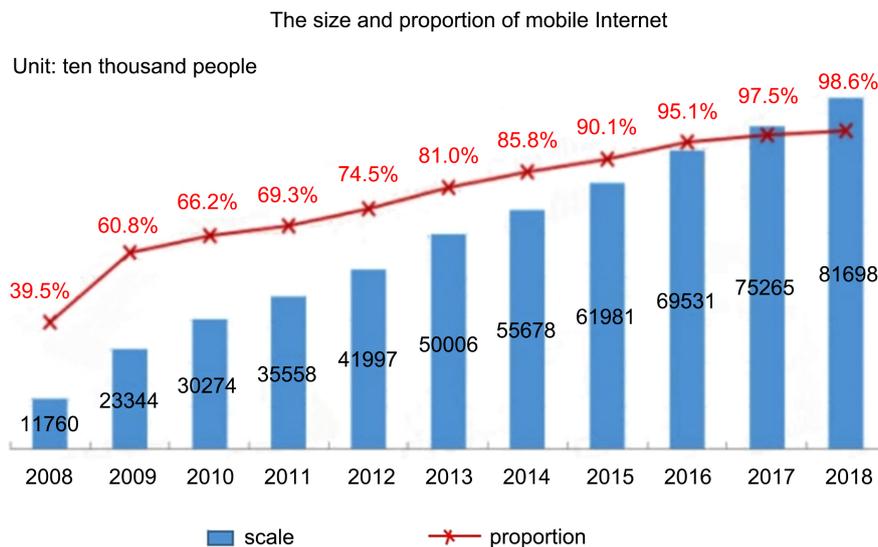
## 2. Overview of Internet Public Opinion and Public Policy

### 2.1. Internet Public Opinion and Its Characteristics

Public opinion has a certain relevance to online public opinion. Internet public opinion is a product of public opinion in the Internet era. Therefore, first consult relevant information about public opinion, and then summarize online public opinion. Through literature analysis, it is found that many scholars have defined the concept of public opinion in their research: Wang Laihua: Public opinion refers to the occurrence, development and change of intermediary social



**Figure 1.** Netizen size and Internet penetration rate.



**Figure 2.** The scale and proportion of mobile Internet users. Data source: Data screenshots taken from CNNIC China Internet Development Statistics Survey <http://www.cnnic.net.cn/>.

matters within a certain social space, and the people acting as the subject The specific socio-political attitudes and unique social and political attitudes generated by the object's national managers [1]; Ding Baiquan, Nanjing University: Public opinion is public opinion, covering many issues in social life, especially public opinions or emotional responses to hot issues, which are social pulses, The expression and manifestation of public emotions [2]. Therefore, in this article, Internet public opinion is defined as a collection of opinions or attitudes expressed by the public through the Internet on a certain social phenomenon or topic that the public is concerned about in a specific historical stage and social space.

Under normal circumstances, the public has a lot of autonomy to express their own opinions about the occurrence of a certain social event, and their opinions do not need to be recognized by the majority of people; therefore, Internet public opinion has the following characteristics:

First, virtuality; the Internet is not limited by time and space, which also facilitates the exchange of information between people, and also enables the rapid spread of online public opinion in multiple channels, increasing the number of affections; Internet users can use The Internet quickly understands online public opinion, and through QQ, WeChat, Weibo and other popular online platforms, you can bring yourself into the virtual network environment and obtain more online public opinion; in this network environment, netizens can fully Express your own views and attitudes towards online public opinion, and have sufficient freedom of speech, which also reflects the characteristics of the virtual growth environment of online public opinion.

Second, anonymity; in the virtual network environment, netizens can freely express and exchange their views without being restricted by identity, time and

space, and can participate in online public opinions anonymously, with great freedom of speech; The majority of people and netizens have equal opportunities in the online environment and have equal rights to speak. Regardless of relevant systems, they adopt an anonymous way to speak freely. This also makes online public opinion characterized by extensiveness, diversity and richness, and accelerates the rapid spread of online public opinion.

Third, the richness and diversification of network issues; in the virtual network environment, the network can break through the limitations of time and space, consolidate and disseminate various network issues, form public opinion issues, and the public can freely participate in the network. In the exchange and interaction of public opinion, the topics of online public opinion are rich and diversified, and there will be different current affairs hotspots at different times, including political, economic, and cultural aspects of society, which may form online public opinion topics, which require the government to scientifically guide the network Public opinion maintains social harmony and stability.

## 2.2. How Internet Public Opinion Influence Public Policy

First of all, online public opinion reflects current hot issues in the current society, such as social security incidents, moral incidents, educational events and other social issues; the formation of policy issues is the primary link in public policy formulation, and the role of the Internet is to promote social issues into the political field. The public policy agenda finally forms public policy issues (Figure 3).

Case: In 2017, the “Yulin parturient woman falling from a building” was widely circulated and discussed on the Internet. The victims themselves and their families became direct victims. Similar phenomena were not uncommon. At first it did not become a public issue, but later on the Internet. Public opinion has attracted great attention; the spread of video surveillance of pregnant women in the hospital before their deaths, “women kneeling”, “the hospital management process is not sound” and a series of remarks have been spread on the Internet, arousing high public attention. It has also deepened the attention of the people, hospitals and other interest groups, which has led to medical reform. In the case, the social issue of the incident was promoted by the Internet public opinion to become a public policy issue; the Internet public opinion directly participates in the public policy agenda. The emergence and dissemination of online public opinion enables the government to understand the people’s ideas in time, walk into and understand the people’s real life, and formulate scientific and realistic public policies, embodying the concept of establishing a service-oriented government, and at the same time responding to unreasonable public policies. Make necessary adjustments and improvements to policies (Figure 4).

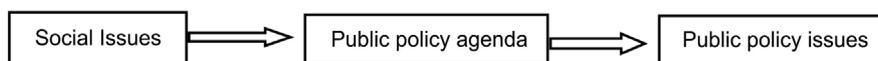
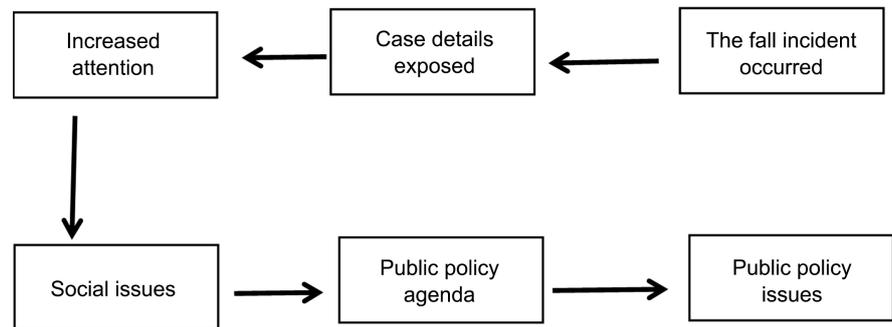


Figure 3. The formation of public policy issues.



**Figure 4.** The evolution of the building fall.

### 3. Value Analysis of the Influence of Internet Public Opinion on Public Policy

#### 3.1. The Positive Influence of Online Public Opinion on Public Policies

The goals, methods, and even the entire process system of public policy formulation will have an impact on the quality of the policy; the emergence of online public opinion can sublimate social issues, put them on the public policy agenda, and then form public policy issues, which provide the general public with a new way of political participation and safeguarding their own rights and interests, the public can participate in the formulation of public policies without being restricted by time and space; in addition, the government and relevant departments can also use online public opinion to understand the real thinking of the people and make decisions. Scientific, realistic and meaningful public policies that serve the general public, truly serve the people; enhance the professionalism of policy formulation, be more rational, increase new channels for people to participate in and discuss politics, and promote the democratization of public policy formulation.

1) Internet public opinion promotes the democratization of public policy formulation

Democratic decision-making means that the government guarantees that citizens and various social and political organizations can fully participate in the public policy process, and protect the fundamental interests and requirements of the broad masses of the people, and can be reflected and reflected as much as possible in the content of the policy. Form a democratic system, procedures and atmosphere [3]. It requires the government to actively listen to the valuable opinions and suggestions of various departments after determining public policy issues. On the other hand, it should also collect opinions and listen to the voice of the people through various feasible channels such as the Internet [4]; now, network technology Rapid development and high popularity. People can express their opinions on the Internet at different times and regions. People have equal rights to participate in and discuss politics on the Internet. They can express their opinions freely in the form of anonymity. This is to a certain extent. It mobilized the people's enthusiasm for political participation and promoted the de-

mocratization of public policy formulation.

2) Internet public opinion adds impetus to public policy formulation and adjustment

The goal of public policy formulation is to serve the interests of the broad masses of people. Of course, every public policy formulation cannot be separated from rigorous planning and formulation, but the social environment is constantly changing, and any public policy cannot be long. "Permanent preservation", is a public policy in line with the current social environment and is it necessary to modify it? Or keep it? To a certain extent, social conditions and public opinion can evaluate public policies through the Internet and other forms, and policy-making departments can also find problems from them and make timely improvements to policies.

To a large extent, online public opinion reflects the most real thoughts of the current people. The government and relevant departments can use the positive influence of online public opinion to discover problems and deficiencies in the current society. Collect and listen to opinions and suggestions from multiple parties. Formulate relevant public policies in a timely manner. Maintain the long-term stability of society.

3) The supervisory role of online public opinion on public policies

Online public opinion supervises public policies, including the formulation and implementation of public policies. In the past, because the people could not participate in the supervision of the implementation of public policies in a timely manner, the state's public policy supervision was at a large level, and only after the fact. Above, since the emergence of online supervision, the public can effectively and timely participate in the supervision process. This problem has been solved and the supervision channels have been simplified; online supervision has played a great role in monitoring all aspects of the policy process.

### **3.2. The Negative Impact of Online Public Opinion on Public Policies**

People can express their opinions equally on the Internet, and are not limited by time and space and other factors. However, despite this, there is still information imbalance. In the acquisition of Internet resources, there is still a certain amount of information in the urban and rural areas and the eastern and western regions. The expressions of vulnerable groups such as the young and the old are likely to be ignored; in addition, due to the great openness and anonymity of the Internet, there is no lack of false information in the Internet public opinion, which may disrupt the judgment of decision makers and impose policy implementation. Organizations bring pressure and increase the difficulty of policy implementation.

1) Structural imbalance affects the publicity of public policies

With the continuous development and popularization of the Internet, the scale of netizens in China is increasing. People living in remote areas, urban and

rural netizens, netizens in the east and west, and netizens from disadvantaged groups have a certain gap in access to network resources, and their opinions or suggestions are likely to be affected. Ignorance affects the realization of the right to participate in politics, thereby affecting the publicity of public policies.

#### 2) False information disturbs the judgment of decision makers

The network environment has the characteristics of virtuality, anonymity, and freedom. Netizens can express their opinions freely to the greatest extent. It is inevitable that different forms of information will be mixed with the same social public issue, and there are many false online public opinions. It is very likely to disrupt the judgment of decision-makers and affect the science and rationality of decision-making. At the same time, false network information may also put pressure on policy implementation organizations and increase the difficulty of policy implementation. In addition, the lack of authenticity and integrity of on-line public opinion, and its security risks are likely to pose a certain threat to the formulation of public policies.

### **4. Countermeasures and Suggestions for the Government to Scientifically Respond to and Guide Online Public Opinion**

#### 1) Strengthen the construction of network infrastructure and reduce the differences between participants

In recent years, although China's Internet technology has been greatly developed and popularized, there are still a considerable number of areas in which the popularity of the Internet needs to be improved. Popularity and coverage are far lower, including some remote areas with low network coverage, and the people's wishes are difficult to fully express; this requires the government to take corresponding measures to solve network construction problems in rural and remote areas based on actual conditions, such as construction Signal towers, etc., to ensure that people have a good network signal environment, participate in the network environment, actively participate in public policy formulation and other links, reflect the situation in a timely manner through the network, and actively participate in politics; at the same time, the government should also popularize network knowledge and let They can better learn network knowledge and make full use of network resources.

#### 2) Broaden the channels for online public opinion expression

Currently, the most popular public opinion expression platforms are social software, Weibo, social networks, etc. As the social environment changes, public opinion expression platforms will also change accordingly, and the number of netizens on each platform will also change. What is popular with the public may not still be favored by netizens in the future; therefore, the government and relevant departments should actively encourage the update and progress of network technology, on the one hand, encourage continuous improvement of the services and user experience of existing platforms, and encourage and support new expressions of public opinion The development and construction of the

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platform will broaden the platform for public opinion expression.

3) Pay attention to online moral education and improve the quality of netizens

The virtual network environment is full of all kinds of information, and the quality of netizens is uneven, which is likely to affect the quality of online public opinion information; netizens can express their opinions freely and without responsibility, but some are inappropriate and lacking. Reasonable speech will not only affect the judgment of decision-makers and the implementation of public policies, but may also lead to bad online public opinion guidance. This requires the government to pay attention to online moral education, strengthen active guidance, improve the overall quality of netizens, and create a good Web environment. On the one hand, the government must play an overall role in propaganda and establish correct values. Schools must also do a good job in related propaganda and education. For example, starting from primary and middle schools, carry out online moral education, actively guide young people to go online and express rationally. In addition, Netizens should also proceed from their own actions and constrain their online words and deeds. Each active individual constitutes the entire online environment. Therefore, the correct understanding of individuals is also extremely important; corresponding policies and measures shall be introduced to regulate the online order in accordance with the law.

4) Reasonable supervision and scientific guidance

The network has its own characteristics, with diverse participation methods and participants, and “disharmonious” voices are unavoidable. Various views on the same social issue are inevitable. The government and relevant departments need to increase network supervision and scope. Making it truly a powerful way for netizens to participate in public policies, serving the democratization and scientific rationality of public policies, allowing more people to fully express their positive views, and maintaining the network environment together with netizens, and maintaining the stability of the social environment, Harmonious Development [5]. Actively guide online public opinion, extract important information, understand the demands of the people, and strengthen positive guidance and regulation of online public opinion.

5) Strengthen the guarantee mechanism for the participation of online public opinion in the public policy process

Carry out the disclosure of government information, protect the people’s “right to know”, improve all links of online public opinion participating in public policies, and strengthen the guarantee mechanism. Set up a public opinion collection mechanism to discover social issues in a timely manner and include them on the policy agenda; strengthen the supervision mechanism of the public policy formulation process to ensure that problems are discovered in time during the formulation process, rather than being supervised and dealt with afterwards. Pay attention to the collection and analysis of online public opinion to ensure that the collected public opinion is reasonable and authentic, can serve the practical significance of policy formulation, and represent the fundamental

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interests of the majority of the people.

## 5. Conclusions

With the continuous development of network technology, the network penetration rate is increasing year by year, and the number of participants will continue to increase. Therefore, for a long time in the future, the Internet will be an extremely important new channel for people to participate in public policies; this article uses literature analysis method, case analysis method and other research methods to analyze the impact of online public opinion on public policy, and propose targeted solutions and suggestions for existing problems.

The Internet is a “double-edged sword” in which the government plays a very important role. At present, the network environment needs to be purified and the overall quality of netizens needs to be improved. This requires the government and relevant departments to put forward effective countermeasures to deal with existing problems. When formulating public policies, on the one hand, the government must actively listen to the opinions and suggestions of various local departments, try to broaden the breadth of information collection, and have a certain ability to identify the authenticity of online public opinion information. Public opinion is an expression of social sentiment and public opinion. The government must reflect it in public policy. In addition, the government should also strengthen online moral education and publicity, combine social forces, build a positive and healthy online environment, make full use of and play the positive role of online public opinion, and maintain the long-term stability of society.

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