

# Analysis of Colleges Informal Groups' Psychological Motivation in Online Public Opinion and the Guidance of Civic Politics-- Taking Hot Stem Culture as an Example

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**Abstract:** In the present time, the information is updated rapidly, and the public opinion environment in colleges is becoming more and more intense, and all kinds of online information are flooding the social media of college students, which greatly affects them. Especially among some informal groups of college students, the public opinion is spread in the form of hot stems and spreads by fission. Based on this, this paper researches the informal groups of college students who spread stems in the online public opinion environment from the perspective of psychology, analyzes their psychological motives for creating and spreading stems, and provides them with targeted ideological guidance to help universities build a good public opinion environment.

**Keywords:** Informal Groups; Hot Stem Culture; Public Opinion Management in Colleges

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## Introduction

The rapid development in the fields of Internet, big data and artificial intelligence has profoundly adjusted the media landscape and caused significant changes in online public opinion. <sup>[1]</sup> On August 27, 2021, the China Internet Network Information Center released the 48th Statistical Report on the Development Status of China's Internet in Beijing, which showed that as of June 2021, the size of China's Internet users reached 1.011 billion, and the Internet penetration rate reached 71.6%, of which the group aged 10-29 accounts for 29.7% of all Internet users. <sup>[2]</sup> General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that ideological and political work should be carried out throughout the whole process of education and teaching, so as to realize the whole process of educating people and educating people in all aspects. <sup>[3]</sup> Based on this, this paper explores the psychological motives of college students' pedantic transmission and proposes solutions in order to build a sensitive and efficient college public opinion management mechanism that keeps up with the times but adheres to the student orientation.

## 1. The "Hot Stem Culture" in Informal Groups in Universities

### 1.1 Informal group of college students

At present, there is no definite explanation yet, and Li Chenyang's view is very representative. Informal groups are groups whose members are formed spontaneously without clear rules and hierarchical status based on similar values, and this group is distinguished from formal groups such as class cadres in classes and student councils in schools. <sup>[4]</sup> Due to the existence of informal group cohesion, members of informal groups are united, identify with each other, and have a common goal to strive for. <sup>[5]</sup> The intrinsic motivation of the formation process of informal groups of college students is mainly the need for identity and cluster habits; while the extrinsic triggers are mainly pressure from outside and network development. <sup>[6]</sup>

### 1.2 Hot Stem Culture

Although the creation and derivation of many different forms of hot stems have greatly promoted the prosperity of the stalk culture, multiple hot stems have emerged one after another and set off waves of heat in the public opinion arena. <sup>[7]</sup> Under the variety of fun and interesting stems, negative information quietly hides in them and spreads together with ordinary

stems, subconsciously influencing people and even greatly damaging the good morale.

### **1.3 The phenomenon of passing stalks among informal groups in universities**

Because students lack the ability to identify information keenly, they are easily used by people with ulterior motives to spread the stems mixed with campus public opinion, so they spread public opinion in the form of stems due to their own wrong judgment, causing bad effects. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of the key phenomenon, from which the psychological motives of the informal group of college students in the problem can be explored, combined with academic knowledge, and innovatively applied to the measures of the problem, provides a guiding contribution to the college thinking and political education.

## **2. Analysis of Colleges Informal Groups' Psychological Motivation in Online Public Opinion**

From the viewpoint of external factors, the intersectionality and resonance of public opinion itself<sup>[8]</sup>, there are four main psychological motives for the informal group of college students to spread online public opinion in the form of stems; the psychology of selective contact when the informal group of college students chooses hot stems, the psychology of identification when receiving hot stems, the psychology of collective unconscious when spreading hot stems, and the psychology of crowd and irrationality.

### **2.1 Selective acceptance psychology when choosing hot stems by informal groups of college students**

Information on the Internet is very complicated, so when people see a certain information, it is difficult to receive all the information positively, and they often receive only some of the information selectively. Under the psychological effect of such selective reception, students are not able to understand the information comprehensively when they see it on the Internet, so they tend to make subjective assumptions and one-sided perceptions. Under such circumstances, students process the information into stems according to their own perceptions and spread them rapidly among informal groups. Although the students themselves may not have malicious intent, the result of unconscious dissemination of public opinion is bad.

### **2.2 The psychology of identity when informal groups of college students receive hot stems**

When public opinion is spread to informal groups as a stunt, the informal groups are very likely to have similar cognitive evaluation or emotional identification, that is, a sense of identity or identification psychology. When the students who create the stems pass the content they find interesting to other members of the informal group, other individuals in the group will not only approve of the content but also imitate it in their behavior, thus causing the information to spread. At the same time, due to the existence of the "pressure to agree"<sup>[9]</sup>, when individual members of the group realize that the stalker's viewpoint is contrary to their own, they will choose to ignore their own subjective viewpoint and choose to believe everyone in order to gain group approval due to the pressure to agree.

### **2.3 Collective unconscious psychology when informal groups of college students spread hot stems**

When the group unconscious is activated, group members tend to become more radical, aggressive, and indifferent to responsibility, and are more likely to discuss against the group consensus view and push the view to a more extreme direction, thus expanding the influence of the issue, which is more easily manifested in the informal group of college students due to their own cognitive characteristics. Once the public opinion problem breaks out, students among informal groups are prone to become more radical and brave under the push of the reached collective unconscious mentality, which makes the handling of public opinion more difficult.

## **2.4 Herd mentality when informal groups of college students spread hot stems**

In a group, due to the existence of group pressure, individuals in the group often coincidentally choose to give up their individual opinions and instead cater to the common agreement of the group. Giving up individual opinions not only reduces the psychological pressure caused by different opinions in the group, but also improves one's sense of belonging and security in the group. In the process of informal group opinion dissemination, due to their own needs for a sense of belonging, college students are more inclined to behave like a herd to people or groups they agree with, although they do not think they will bear the corresponding responsibility.

## **3. Internet hot stems of public opinion thought political guidance**

### **3.1 Latent period: active identification and enhanced control.**

When the hot stems of public opinion have just appeared, firstly, we should strive for the fermentation time; secondly, we should actively guide the relevant people in mind; thirdly, we should continue to pay attention to the information on personal and social media of peripheral members within the group and think about the possibility of invisible dissemination and prevent the secondary development of public opinion.

### **3.2 Developmental period: positive leadership and timely treatment**

If the invisible spread of the hot-stemmed opinion has occurred, the information of the opinion has been accepted by the members of the group at that stage, and if single individual contact is taken the workload is large and the effect is not obvious. In response to the problem, administrators should give the first response to issue relevant announcements to answer the questions and opinions that may exist in the student group.

### **3.3 Declining period: serious reflection, summing up experience**

When the public opinion is controlled and the demand is handled, it will enter the recession period. Firstly, they should actively guide students psychologically and ideologically in their daily political work. Secondly, for teachers, they should insist on learning. Lastly, universities should actively follow the information of social hotspots and make all risk plans in advance to cope with the emergence of unexpected situations.

## **4. Summary and reflection**

In 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping presided over a symposium on network security and informatization work, especially emphasizing "to build a good ecology of the network and play the role of the network in guiding public opinion and reflecting public opinion". This also provides fundamental guidelines for China to promote the construction of public opinion field of online political and ideological education in colleges and universities in the new era. In daily education, colleges and universities should focus on cultivating college students' values, sense of right and wrong, as well as their own independent personality and ability to regulate emotions, and fundamentally cultivate students' awareness of public opinion and their ability to understand and analyze hot stems.

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