

# **The Impact of Crisis Public Relations Strategy on Corporate Image: A Case Study of 2018 Corporate Public Relations and Its Enlightenment in the Post-epidemic Era**

**Yuxi Feng<sup>1\*</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>Peking University, Beijing, China*

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**Corresponding Author:**

Yuxi Feng

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**Abstract**

The increasingly complex business environment facing contemporary enterprises increases the possibility of enterprises facing crises, and enhances the necessity and importance of enterprises dealing with crises appropriately. The author collects and studies the specific handling strategies of the current corporate crisis public relations, analyzes the response of the society to its public relations handling and the impact of crisis public relations on corporate image, and then finds out the effective way to deal with the public relations crisis. Specific research methods include: analysis of corporate public relations cases, issuance of questionnaires, on-site and telephone interviews with enterprises, establishment of models for analysis, etc. The main innovation lies in the data analysis of crisis public relations from occurrence to response to impact, and the presentation of all aspects of crisis public relations in the form of data, so that the research can be more realistic and play a guiding role for enterprises to deal with public relations crisis. In the post-epidemic era, crisis public relations should focus on transparent communication, data-driven decision-making, value resonance and integration of digital tools, and strengthen trust building and long-term brand resilience.

## **1. Introduction**

With the growth of the domestic market economy and the rise in social complexity, during the development of enterprises, crisis public relations management is confronted with unprecedented challenges. The effective management of public relations crises has emerged as a crucial subject in enterprise management. In the new media age and the post - pandemic era, crisis public relations are up against numerous challenges. Firstly, the swift dissemination of social media enables crisis information to spread rapidly, and public sentiment fluctuates more drastically. Secondly, the social uncertainty in the post - pandemic era has been aggravated, and the requirements for a brand's social responsibility and transparency have been on the rise. Against this backdrop, crisis public relations not only demand a quick response but also require an accurate grasp of the tempo of information

dissemination and public psychology to effectively handle reputation crises and safeguard the brand image.

Corporate crisis public relations signify a dynamic process. In this process, an enterprise systematically and systematically learns, formulates, and implements a set of management measures and response strategies to prevent or alleviate the severe damages and threats posed by the crisis. This includes the prevention, control, and resolution of the crisis, as well as the post - crisis recovery. It is a continuous process of learning and adaptation (Xuan Xuan, 2015).

At present, the operation and development of domestic enterprises are complicated, the external competition pressure is great, and unfair competition exists in many industries. Many enterprises may be maliciously slandered by competitors even if they do not have essential problems. Unfair competition affects the development of many enterprises. But it cannot be denied that the reason for the crisis is more the credibility and management of the enterprise itself. From the Sanlu melamine incident to the Samsung note7 bombing incident, no matter whether the enterprise is in crisis due to its own problems or is in crisis due to the public, the enterprise must deal with the problem and solve the problem with the awareness of crisis public relations at the first time, or avoidance will only cause more unnecessary public speculation and credibility collapse. The research on crisis public relations strategy is to implement it in a reasonable and instructive way, to control the impact scope of the crisis events in the shortest possible time, minimize the losses and quickly restore the good image of the enterprise, or to avoid the occurrence of the crisis from the source and keep the enterprise in a steady development state (Nie Su Nan, 2012).

In 2018, a number of corporate crisis public relations incidents globally attracted extensive attention. For instance, there was the food safety issue at Haidilao in China and the United Airlines passenger - dragging incident. These events not only had a profound impact on brand reputations but also mirrored the complexity and rapidity of crisis communication in the new media era. As a result, choosing the 2018 corporate crisis public relations cases as the research subject holds great significance.

Firstly, 2018 was a time when enterprises faced major challenges in the context of globalization and digitalization. The high occurrence frequency of crisis events and the public's high - sensitivity to corporate handling methods offered abundant practical data for the theory of crisis public relations. Secondly, the handling of multiple events in 2018 exposed the disparities between the traditional crisis public relations approach and the coping strategies in the new media environment, which is worthy of in - depth analysis and reference. By delving into these cases, enterprises can gain a better understanding of the information dissemination mechanism, public sentiment regulation, and public opinion guidance in crisis management. This provides references for dealing with crises in a rapidly changing social environment, and improves the effectiveness of crisis public relations responses and brand resilience.

After a public relations crisis, the different ways enterprises handle crisis events reflect their crisis management control capabilities. When an enterprise confronts a crisis, how to efficiently establish a reasonable public relations crisis management system is a concern that every domestic enterprise management should pay attention to. In 2018, the role of public opinion on the new media platform became prominent, and the spread speed and scope of corporate negative news were significantly enhanced. Through the empowerment of new media, Key Opinion Consumers (KOCs) obtained more opportunities to participate in discussions and dissemination. Relying solely on traditional voice channels and language models, the crisis public relations tactics of enterprises are difficult to

be accepted by the public. Studying the responses and effects of enterprises facing crisis public relations in 2018 is of great importance for enterprises' crisis public relations strategies in the new media era. The necessity of pre - crisis prevention, the effectiveness of crisis public relations strategies, and how to utilize new media to handle crisis public relations well in the post - epidemic era are the issues this paper endeavors to clarify. This paper aims to draw lessons from the crisis public relations events in 2018 and the existing crisis public relations management theory, to carry out on-the-spot and online questionnaire surveys in the way of random sampling, to clarify the current situation of China's enterprise public relations crisis management, to summarize the defects and deficiencies of China's enterprise public relations crisis management at present, and to think about how to construct a public relations crisis management mechanism with strong applicability. This research has important reference significance for domestic enterprise managers to better deal with public relations crisis events, both in practice and in theory. On the whole, China's enterprises are currently short of crisis prevention systems and countermeasures. Most of them are still used to the traditional practice of "blocking the enemy by force and covering up the enemy by force". Some of them have whitewashed their own problems, and as a result, their corporate image has been damaged. Many enterprises have encountered setbacks even before they reached the maturity stage, affecting the whole country. When the crisis occurs, the enterprise receives extensive attention from the media and various social interest groups, which will produce huge threats. At the same time, it also has potential opportunities. The enterprise crisis public relations must be based on dealing with emergencies and minimize the losses of the crisis through planned professional handling. At the same time, successful crisis public relations can also take advantage of the crisis, so that enterprises can establish a better image after the crisis. Therefore, the study of corporate crisis public relations strategy is worthy of attention and discussion.

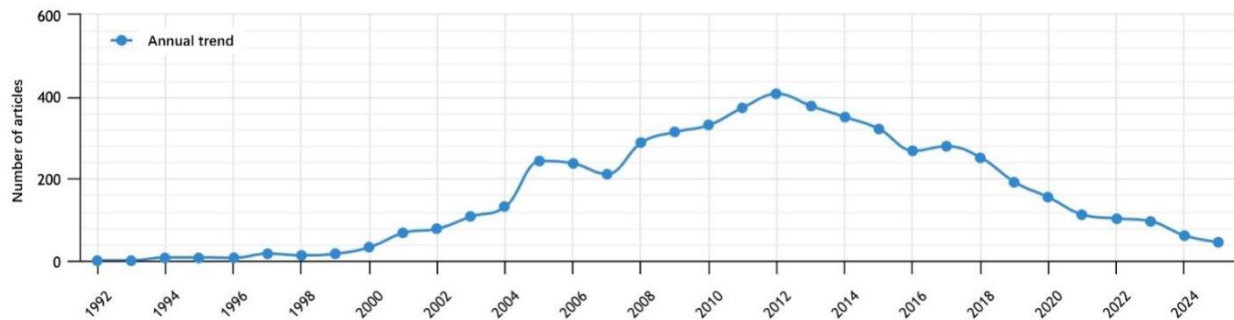
In the "post-epidemic era", although the epidemic itself may have been controlled or subsided, the long-term changes it has triggered continue to emerge, including profound changes in people's lifestyle, work patterns, social interaction, public health system, economic structure, etc. The post-epidemic era not only refers to the physical transition period of the epidemic, but also covers the psychological, social and cultural impact of the epidemic. Specifically, the post-epidemic era has accelerated people's "digital survival"; As the epidemic has exposed the fragility of the global system, many social and economic structures have entered a period of uncertainty and change; Public health, mental health and public safety are receiving more attention. In short, the post-epidemic era not only refers to the physical recovery after the epidemic, but also reflects and adapts to the global social change. As a result, enterprises place more emphasis on flexibility, resilience and innovation in management, operation and crisis response. In recent years, the research on crisis public relations in the academic circle of China has gradually deepened, involving many aspects, including the theoretical construction, practical application and performance in different fields of crisis public relations. Research objects are mainly focused on corporate, government and public crisis public relations, especially in the era of media and social platforms. The speed and scope of information dissemination have a profound impact on crisis management (Li Junhua, 2018). On the theme, the research focuses on the strategies, communication modes and public sentiment management of crisis public relations (Zhang Xiaohui, 2020). Scholars generally believe that crisis public relations should focus on timely response, transparent communication and information integration, especially in the social media environment, enterprises or organizations need to build trust relationship with the public to reduce the negative impact of the crisis (Wang Jue, 2019).

However, there are still some deficiencies in the existing research, which are mainly reflected in the insufficient development of the localization of the crisis public relations theory, especially in the cross-cultural background, the crisis management strategies have not been further explored. Western countries' enterprises have experienced decades or even hundreds of years of development before they established their position in the commercial field today. They are far more mature than China's enterprises in terms of internal management mechanism and adaptation to external environment. With the development of China's market economy and the diversification of media technology, negative reports and false information about enterprises will quickly cause adverse effects on enterprises, pushing enterprises to the forefront of public opinion. It is necessary for Chinese enterprises to learn from the experience of crisis public relations in western countries. In addition, some empirical studies lack systematic assessment of the effect of crisis public relations and fail to fully consider the impact of industry differences and cultural factors (Li Nan, 2022). Based on the above research, this paper will analyze the impact of crisis public relations strategy on corporate image, deepen the thinking on the relationship between crisis public relations and corporate image through research, and provide support for enterprises to formulate appropriate management strategies, and increase the weight for the healthy development of enterprises.

## **2. Theoretical Basis**

### **2.1 The History and Current Situation of Domestic Development**

On the whole, the research focus on the theme of "crisis public relations": according to the research papers on the key word "crisis public relations" on HowNet from 1992 to 2024, a total of 5,459 results were retrieved; When searching for academic trends, as shown in Figure 1, it can be seen that academic attention has maintained a significant growth trend since 1992 and reached a peak around 2012; As shown in Figure 1, corporate economy-related crisis public relations accounts for the largest share of all types of crisis public relations, and the author's research direction is also focused on corporate crisis public relations. From the above analysis, with the continuous development of economy, society and the Internet, crisis public relations have gradually received more and more attention and research in China. Among the many research topics, corporate economy-related crisis public relations research accounts for the largest proportion. After 2012, the academic contribution to the research of crisis public relations showed a downward trend, and showed a small peak from 2016 to 2018. 2018 is the first year of the development of new media. After 2018, with the development of new media and the normalization of the post-epidemic era, the research on crisis public relations is relatively absent and needs to be supplemented urgently.



*Figure 1.1: The Number of Posts Related to the Key Words of "Crisis Public Relations" in HowNet*

The research on China's crisis public relations theory started relatively late. However, with the rapid development of market economy and the complication of business environment, it has gradually attracted the attention of academic circles since the 1990s. The first HowNet paper was produced in 1992. The early research was mainly influenced by the crisis life cycle theory and situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) proposed by European and American scholars such as Coombs (1999) (Wu Zhijun, 2000; Guo Qingguang, 2003). At the beginning of the 21st century, domestic scholars combined with China's social and cultural background, put forward "public satisfaction model" (Li Xiguang, 2005) and "crisis graded response model" (Cheng Shian, 2008) and other theories, and systematically discussed the whole life cycle management of the crisis. Entering the era of social media, the rise of new media such as Weibo and WeChat have changed the crisis communication path from one-way communication to networking and multi-dimensional communication (Shen Hao, 2013), while Zhao Dingxin (2015) proposed a "distributed crisis response model" which emphasizes the role of decentralized management and public coordination. China's theory of crisis public relations has made remarkable progress, and the domestic research materials on "crisis public relations" are relatively rich, which provides a solid theoretical basis for our future research. However, there are still problems such as insufficient theoretical innovation, weak empirical research and insufficient integration with data science and other disciplines.

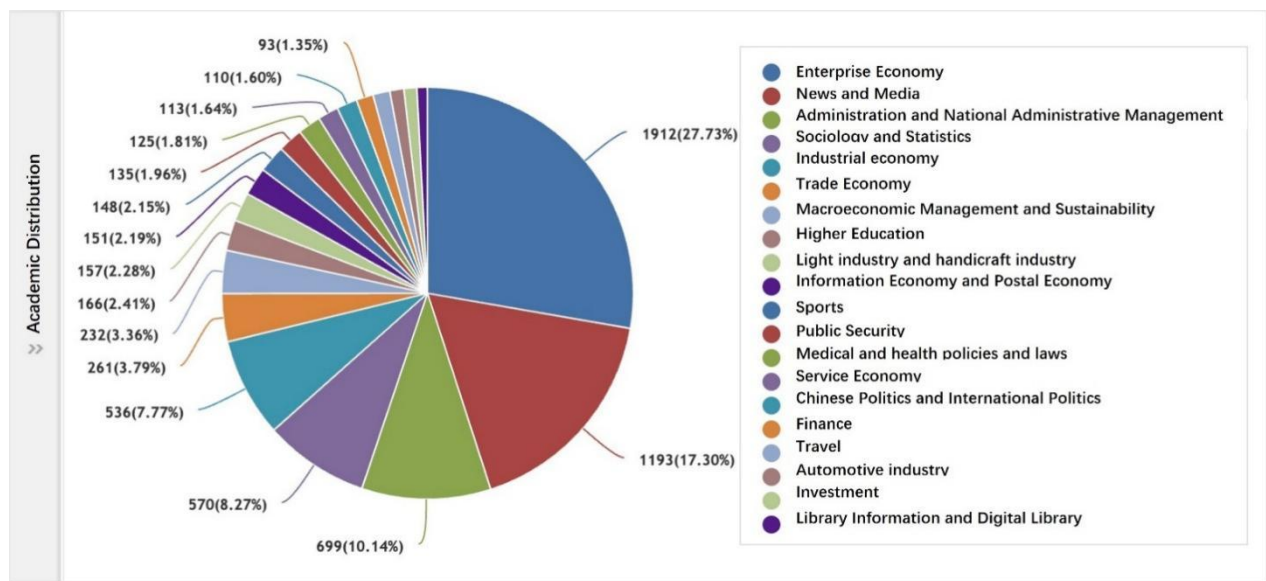


Figure 1.2 "Crisis Public Relations" Research Discipline Distribution

## 2.2 The History and Current Situation of Foreign Development

Today's world ushers in a brand-new era of crisis public relations. Crisis public relations have increasingly become a crucial component in the economic development and social stability of countries, covering from government crises to enterprise crises. However, how to manage the relationship between the emergency response plan and the actual response measures, and how to translate theoretical principles into practical application in real crisis public relations remain significant challenges faced by countries around the globe.

Take the United States as an illustration. The "United Airlines" incident and the "Katrina" hurricane incident are two typical cases of crisis public relations that the American society experienced between 2012 and 2018. In the "United Airlines' Incident of Forcibly Removing Passengers", the crisis communication process involving grassroots netizens, opinion leaders, and media organizations demonstrated a new tendency of transnational, social, and emotional crisis communication (Shi Anbin, 2018). In the earlier "Katrina" hurricane event, the U.S. government encountered issues in pre-disaster emergency preparedness, inter-governmental cooperation and coordination mechanisms, as well as social and psychological control mechanisms during the occurrence of Katrina. This incident also inspired us to utilize new media to establish a sound social and psychological control mechanism (Yuan Guodong, 2013).

In 2018, Facebook drew global attention due to the data leak scandal, namely the "Cambridge Analytica" incident. Scholars' research indicated that Facebook's sluggish response and lack of transparency in the early stages of the crisis led to a further erosion of public trust. Subsequently, the implementation of the user privacy policy and global public relations efforts partially restored its reputation (Marwick & Boyd, 2018). Research suggests that technology platforms need to strengthen their early warning mechanisms and adopt diversified communication strategies during crises.

In 2020, following the Boeing 737 MAX air crash, Boeing Company faced a reputation crisis due to insufficient information disclosure and irresponsible behavior. Research and analysis revealed that Boeing failed to effectively address the media and the public's inquiries, overly emphasizing the avoidance of legal responsibilities while neglecting emotional communication (Schultz et al., 2020). Enterprises should attach importance to humanistic care to alleviate the long-term impact of crises on

their brands.

From the perspective of the research field, the supervision by foreign governments is relatively lenient, which results in a broader research scope of crisis public relations in foreign countries. In terms of the research perspective, foreign research on crisis public relations generally takes a public-oriented stance, rather than merely focusing on the outcomes of corporate operations. There is more research from the perspective of critical platform capitalism, exploring the social responsibilities that platforms should assume. In contrast, there is relatively limited research in this field in China. Generally speaking, the research history of crisis public relations abroad is longer, and the research scope and depth are more extensive. Understanding the relevant mechanisms, methods, and principles of crisis public relations abroad holds certain reference value for us to understand and predict various crisis public relations behaviors in our own country in the future.

### **2.3 The Theoretical Basis**

Crisis public relations has indeed earned a good reputation for the field of public relations work. However, simultaneously, it represents the most challenging aspect to control and master within public relations. Crisis events are characterized by their sudden occurrence, and at the same time, they possess the characteristic of having a significant influence during the process of dissemination. In China, the management of crisis public relations communication began relatively late, and the related theories are still in the process of maturing. Just as every management approach needs to be scientific and standardized, crisis public relations work should be further standardized and unified. This is to better enable enterprises to apply it in practice. In this regard, it requires extensive research and summarization by scholars and professionals. Additionally, it also calls for continuous exploration during the actual operation of enterprises. In the academic community, the quantitative calculation method for the prevention of crisis public relations has gradually emerged as a research focus in the field of crisis management. Relevant scholars have offered theoretical support for the prediction and prevention of crisis public relations through quantitative methods such as data analysis, model construction, and public opinion monitoring.

#### **2.3.1 Analysis of Public Opinion and Emotion**

The emotion analysis method, which makes use of natural language processing technology to dissect the emotional inclination of text data from social media and news reports, has evolved into a vital instrument for crisis public relations prevention. As put forward by Liu in 2015, the emotional analysis model is capable of quantitatively assessing the negative emotions existing on social media and forecasting the emergence of potential crises. This approach has been extensively applied in the academic realm, particularly in the early-stage monitoring of crisis events. Through this method, it becomes possible to detect the public's emotional changes and potential crisis signals at an early stage, enabling relevant parties to take timely preventive and response measures, thus helping to better manage and defuse potential public relations crises. It provides a new perspective and effective means for crisis public relations work in the era of information explosion.

#### **2.3.2 Crisis Early Warning Model**

Based on regression analysis, data mining, and machine learning techniques, numerous scholars have built crisis early warning models with the aim of predicting the crisis risks that brands or enterprises are confronted with. Coombs' Crisis Lifecycle Theory, put forward in 2007, places great

emphasis on each stage of a crisis. Subsequently, a large number of studies have developed quantitative early warning models founded on this theory. These models leverage historical data to analyze the time points and risk coefficients at which a crisis breaks out. Employing statistical methods like regression analysis and time series analysis, these models conduct a quantitative evaluation of the likelihood and impact of a crisis. By utilizing these models, enterprises can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the potential crisis situations they may encounter, enabling them to take preventive measures in advance, allocate resources more effectively, and formulate more targeted response strategies. This helps enterprises to better deal with crises, reduce losses, and maintain their normal operations and brand images. Additionally, these models also provide valuable references and tools for relevant research and practical work in the field of crisis management, promoting the continuous development and improvement of crisis management theories and methods.

### **2.3.3 Social Network Analysis (SNA)**

Social Network Analysis (SNA) helps identify key nodes in social media and propagation paths of potential crises. As Borgatti proposed in 2009, it can find potential crisis sources and their transmission channels by analyzing information flow network structure. Through quantitative social network modeling, scholars can predict the spread speed and impact scope of crisis information, providing a quantitative basis for crisis response.

### **2.3.4 Simulation of Public Opinion Communication**

Communication diffusion models like the SIR model (infection - prone - infection - recovery model) are extensively applied in the quantitative analysis of crisis transmission. Zhu in 2016 suggested that the SIR model is capable of simulating how crisis information spreads in social networks, as well as predicting the crisis's spread speed and public response. Such an approach enables enterprises to evaluate the risks of information diffusion and devise effective countermeasures.

### **2.3.5 Brand Reputation Scoring System**

The scoring system for quantitatively evaluating corporate reputation is popularly utilized in crisis prevention. In 2004, Schwaiger put forward a brand reputation model. Through analyzing consumers' perception and evaluation of brands, a comprehensive scoring system was built to assess the changing trend of brand reputation. On the basis of this model, scholars can use weighted index and regression analysis to quantitatively analyze the fluctuation of brand reputation and predict potential crisis risks.

### **2.3.6 Text Mining and Topic Model Analysis**

Scholars can extract potential crisis topics from massive social media and news data through text mining and topic model analysis, and conduct quantitative analysis on them. The LDA (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) model proposed by Blei et al. in 2003 is widely applied. It can identify the changing trends of topics by analyzing text data, providing data support for crisis public relations. These quantitative methods offer data-driven solutions for scholars and enterprises in crisis public relations prevention. Methods such as public opinion analysis, crisis early warning models, etc., provide quantitative tools for enterprises to deal with crises. Future research can integrate these



methods to improve the accuracy and timeliness of crisis prevention. However, these methods originate from crisis management research. Due to the differences between crisis public relations and crisis management, there is still no quantitative prevention method that is fully applicable to crisis public relations.

In terms of qualitative management, the expert opinion method, where relevant in - and outside - enterprise experts are consulted to determine prevention work focus and measures, is representative. It often yields good results but has errors due to subjective opinions in the evaluation. Experts have different understandings of crisis public relations and lack a mature theoretical system, which can't promote theory development. Thus, based on qualitative and quantitative research, constructing a corporate public relations crisis communication management model and providing theoretical support from aspects like corporate organization, system, culture, and procedures is crucial. When using HowNet for an advanced search on the author's topic with multiple keywords (such as corporate crisis public relations, star public relations), no similar research is found currently. The author's research focuses on the commonalities of successful corporate crisis public relations and the inspiration of star crisis public relations to corporate public relations. Selecting this cross - cutting theme for the first time makes the research results more implementable and a full complement to existing theories.

### **3. Research Purposes and Methods**

#### **3.1 Research Purposes**

In any country, the aim of public relations staff is to enable their own enterprises to leave a favorable impression on the audience. However, in the Internet age, achieving this goal has become extremely challenging, and enterprises are frequently embroiled in cyber - battles. Nevertheless, the outcome at that particular moment is not of utmost importance. What truly matters are the long - term interests of the enterprise. The realization of long - term interests demands that the enterprise endure the test of time and consistently adhere to its core values.

For example, take the Huawei Meng Wanzhou incident as a successful case of crisis communication management. When Meng Wanzhou was unjustly detained, Huawei actively responded through various channels. The company clearly presented the facts, showed its firm stance, and won the understanding and support of the public and the international community through continuous communication, which not only safeguarded the company's dignity but also enhanced its brand image. In contrast, the Samsung Galaxy Note 7 explosion incident was a failure in crisis communication. Samsung's initial slow response and inconsistent statements disappointed consumers, resulting in a significant decline in brand reputation and market share.

By taking the change and development process of typical crisis public relations cases in different stages as the research content, a comprehensive, in - depth, and detailed analysis can be carried out to reveal the rules of crisis public relations and propose valuable crisis public relations strategies. For instance, when a product - quality - related crisis occurs, the enterprise should immediately recall the products, openly communicate with consumers, and show its determination to solve the problem. When a public - opinion - related crisis occurs, the enterprise should actively interact with the media, clarify the facts in a timely manner, and guide public opinion.

The scientific research on crisis public relations meets both academic and social needs, thus having the purposes of deepening academic understanding and guiding social practice. In academic

research, based on the above - mentioned research, the author will analyze the impact of crisis public relations strategy on corporate image, deepen the thinking on the relationship between crisis public relations and corporate image, and provide support for enterprises to formulate appropriate management strategies, adding weight to the healthy development of enterprises. In social practice, during a crisis, the enterprise attracts extensive attention from the media and various social interest groups. Therefore, enterprise crisis public relations must focus on handling emergencies and minimize the losses caused by the crisis through planned and professional handling. Simultaneously, the enterprise should also strive to establish a better image after the crisis. These two aspects can promote the enterprise to proficiently use crisis public relations management and contribute to the formation of an environment conducive to enterprise development.

## **3.2 Research Methods**

The author has made a comprehensive study of crisis public relations by using various methods such as questionnaire survey, field visits, telephone interviews, literature review, quantitative modeling and case analysis.

### **3.2.1 Questionnaire Survey (Quantitative Analysis)**

A questionnaire entitled "Research on Public Opinion on Corporate Crisis Public Relations" was released to ask the public's opinion on recent corporate crisis public relations events. The questionnaire selected the "food hygiene and safety incident" of Beijing Taiyanggong store in Haidilao in August 2017 and the incident of violent dragging of passengers off the plane by United Airlines on April 9, 2017. The questionnaire took Haidilao as a model of excellent crisis public relations, while the United Airlines incident was compared as a failed crisis public relations case. The main contents include whether they have heard of the incident, the impact of the incident on consumption willingness and whether the company's crisis public relations management has saved the impression of the incident. We collected 101 questionnaires. From the survey results, 91.08% of the respondents believed that Haidilao's good crisis public relations behavior saved the corporate image after the crisis to a certain extent, and 70.29% of the respondents believed that the failed crisis public relations behavior of United Airlines did little to save the corporate image.

### **3.2.2 Field and Telephone Interviews**

In addition to putting in a questionnaire to investigate the public's response to the crisis public relations, and making analysis, the author also interviewed the staff of the public relations company to gain a deep understanding of the operation and role of the public relations company. In order to get a better understanding of the current situation of crisis public relations and further understand the operation and role of public relations companies in crisis public relations events, we selected three industry-renowned public relations companies, namely Ogilvy, Boya and Edelman, to conduct interviews. As well-known public relations companies in the current market, these three public relations companies have more business varieties, more diverse sources of customers, stronger strength, more complete public relations system and more effective public relations means, and have comprehensive advantages in many aspects, which are suitable for the research object of this article.

### **3.2.3 Reference**

At the same time, in addition to relevant research papers, the author analyzes domestic and foreign

literature and monographs, finds commonness and individuality in different schools of crisis public relations theory, and conducts in-depth research. There are numerous books on public relations. The author has selected two books which are more in line with the research content of this paper for in-depth study, namely "Public Relations Bible-A Complete Book of Public Relations Theory and Practice" and "Crisis Public Relations in the New Media Era-Brand Risk Management and Case Analysis". Based on the analysis of the current literature, we can draw a conclusion that this is our theoretical source and research foundation.

### 3.2.4 Case Study (Quantitative Analysis)

Through the analysis and summary of typical public relations cases, including corporate and individual public relations cases, find out the reasons for success and failure, and list the different influences, find out the internal logical relationship, and summarize the general rules from the case study. In the quantitative case analysis stage, the research focus is shifted to the stage of both analysis and summary. At this time, the impact direction and significance of crisis public relations on the company will be analyzed more macroscopically, and horizontal and vertical comparative analysis will be carried out for enterprises of the same industry and the same scale, and better public relations cases will be compared with less effective public relations cases, to explore the impact of crisis public relations on enterprises. Exploring the impact of crisis public relations is also exploring the feasibility of measures in future crisis public relations, summarizing and extracting principles in crisis public relations. These include the traditional general 5S principle of crisis public relations, as well as some special principles combined with the characteristics of enterprises or the vigorous development of new media in the post-epidemic era. And try to establish a data model between the crisis public relations plan and the impact.

## 4. Research contents

### 4.1 The Preliminary Discussion of Crisis Public Relations

The author released a questionnaire titled "Research on Public Opinion on Corporate Crisis Public Relations" to ask the public's opinion on the recent corporate crisis public relations events. We selected the "food hygiene and safety incident" of Beijing Taiyanggong store in Haidilao in August 2017 and the incident of violent towing of passengers off the plane by United Airlines on April 9, 2017, and took Haidilao as a model of excellent crisis public relations handling, while the United Airlines incident was compared as a failed crisis public relations handling case. The main contents include whether the company has heard of the incident, the impact of the incident on the consumer's willingness and whether the company's crisis management has saved the impression of the incident.

The contents of the questionnaire are as follows:

Table 1.1 Survey on Public Perception of Crisis Events: Haidilao and United Airlines

- 
1. Have you heard of the "food hygiene and safety incident" at Beijing Taiyanggong Store in Haidilao in August 2017?  
☐ Heard ☐ Never heard
  2. After this incident, will you still choose to spend money at the bottom of the sea?  
☐ Won't visit anymore ☐ Will reduce the number of visits ☐ No influence, still go
  3. Haidilao issued a letter of apology 3 hours after the outbreak of food hygiene and safety
-

incidents at Beijing Jinsong Store and Beijing Taiyanggong Store. More than two hours later, it issued another seven handling notices on the crisis. Some people have summed up Haidilao's reaction into three words: this pot is mine; this mistake is mine, and the staff is mine. To what extent do you think Haidilao's three-hour public relations campaign has saved your impression of this incident?

- ☐ It is very useful                      ☐ There are some effects                      ☐ There is no effect

4. Have you ever heard of the incident on April 9, 2017 when United Airlines violently dragged passengers off the plane?

- ☐ Heard                                      ☐ Never heard

2. Does this incident affect your willingness to take the United Airlines flight?

- ☐ It is very influential and will never be taken again  
☐ There is some impact, but will still consider taking  
☐ No influence, and still take

3. In response, United Airlines issued a statement saying: "Flight 3411 from Chicago to Louisville was overbooked. We first asked whether any passengers had volunteered to make way. One passenger refused to cooperate in making way, so law enforcement officers were called in to help. We apologize for the over-booking. Please contact the relevant authorities for details of this incident. " To what extent do you think the public relations actions of United Airlines have saved your impression of this incident?

- ☐ It is very useful                      ☐ There are some effects                      ☐ Almost no effect

A total of 101 questionnaires were collected in this survey. From the survey results, 91.08% of the respondents believed that Haidilao's good crisis public relations behavior saved the corporate image after the crisis event to a certain extent, and 70.29% of the respondents believed that the failed crisis public relations behavior of United Airlines did little to save the corporate image. At the same time, we went to the Haidilao Sun Palace Store to visit the back kitchen and conducted on-site interviews. We interviewed customers, ordinary employees and managers respectively, and carefully sorted out the results of the interviews. Before the interview, we made an interview outline:

Table 1.2 Survey Questions on Haidilao's Hygiene Crisis and Crisis Public Relations

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To the customers of Haidilao

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- (1). Understand the hygiene problem of the kitchen in Haidilao on August 25, 2017?
  - (2). How did the incident affect your dining attitude?
  - (3). Understand the subsequent crisis public relations statement of Haidilao?
  - (4). What is the evaluation of the crisis public relations statement? Will it improve Haidilao's corporate image?
  - (5). Does the crisis public relations statement have any impact on your dining satisfaction?
- 

To the employees or managers of Haidilao

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- (1). What was the attitude towards the staff within the enterprise before and after the hygiene problem of the kitchen in Haidilao broke out? Is there a difference in job satisfaction?
  - (2). After the problem broke out, did the enterprise take punitive measures against the employees? Or how is it handled internally?
  - (3). After the problem broke out, did Haidilao take measures to improve the sanitary environment? How effective is it?
  - (4). How was the customer's attendance before and after the problem?
-

According to the contents of this interview, we can know that Haidilao has improved its catering service level and social credibility to a certain extent through this public relations activity. Haidilao's public relations crisis this time was undoubtedly very successful. It admitted its own mistakes and issued a new staff supervision system at the same time, which made the public realize that Haidilao's enterprises are sincerely introspecting and making practical changes.

#### **4.2 According to the Preliminary Results of the Questionnaire Combined with Literature**

After analyzing the current literature, the theories of crisis public relations can be categorized into five main groups.

The first is the Corporate Apologia Theory. It contends that once a crisis hits, organizations should utilize rhetorical strategies to safeguard their own interests. This helps in minimizing the adverse effects of the crisis on their brand image (Ware & Linkugel, 1973).

Secondly, there's the Image Repair Theory put forward by Benoit in 1995. This theory posits that an individual or an organization's most precious asset is its reputation. It has been successfully applied in cases like the AT&T crisis and the British royal family's image - maintenance efforts.

The third is the Stage Theory (Four - Stage Crisis Model). According to Fink (1986), the development of a crisis can be broken down into four distinct stages: the incubation stage, the outbreak stage, the expansion stage, and the resolution stage. This framework offers systematic guidelines for formulating crisis public relations strategies.

Fourthly, Birkland, T. A. (1997) proposed the Focusing Events Theory. Rooted in the Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) and public policy research, it argues that major unexpected events can rapidly draw public attention and have an impact on government decision - making and public opinion guidance.

Finally, the Excellence Theory, introduced by Grunig & Hunt in 1984, is based on four public relations models: the news agency model, the public information model, the two - way asymmetric model, and the two - way symmetric model. It emphasizes the significance of conversational communication during crisis management (Grunig, 2008). Collectively, these theories form a crucial foundation for modern crisis public relations research and offer a theoretical basis for organizations' crisis management practices.

In the present day, the emergence of new media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Xiaohongshu, and Douyin has provided a platform for corporate crisis public relations. Through these, companies can promptly understand industry information, new government regulations, media reports, and public opinions. By leveraging technical tools and platforms like network data statistics, enterprises can conduct real - time and meticulous monitoring of public opinion, the actions of peer industries, government responses, and factors that might trigger a crisis chain reaction. This allows them to keep track of dynamic information related to the corporate brand image and potential crises at all times.

#### **4.3 Carry Out a Deeper Questionnaire Survey and Mathematical Statistics**

Based on the results of the preliminary study, the author conducted a deeper questionnaire with more comprehensive and extensive questions, found the relationship between corporate crisis public relations and corporate image from the statistical data, and further found out crisis public relations cases that meet the public expectations. Through the above investigation and analysis, the author has

designed a public relations questionnaire for enterprise crisis which is more suitable for the current domestic public.

In designing the questionnaire and analyzing the results, we adhere to the following principles:

(1) Seeking truth from facts, all background information and question design need to proceed from reality. Before the formal issuance of questionnaires, we put a small number of questionnaires through WeChat and other online platforms for pre-experiments;

(2) Collect valid questionnaires, eliminate invalid information, and pay attention to the typical distribution of geographical and age groups in the analysis;

(3) When analyzing the results, attention should be paid to the benchmarking analysis of enterprises in different industries. By comparing the results of typical enterprise cases in the industry, more valuable conclusions can be drawn.

The results of the questionnaire "Opinions on Corporate Crisis Public Relations" are as follows:

**Question 1:** What do you think is the most effective public relations method for crisis? [Single Topic Selection]

Table 1.3 Public Crisis Response Strategies and Their Proportions

Options	Subtotal	Proportions
Divert public attention	12	13.33%
"Rhythmising" on a large scale through marketing numbers and other online channels.	11	12.22%
Paraphrasing of events	8	8.89%
Straighten up one's attitude and apologize/issue a statement	59	65.56%
Number of valid entries for this topic	90	

**Question 2:** What's your opinion/attitude towards the apology statement and post-event rectification measures of Haidilao? [Single Topic Selection]

Table 1.4 Consumer Reactions to Public Crisis Incidents

Options	Subtotal	Proportion
Trust the enterprise more and visit it more frequently.	19	21.11%
It doesn't matter, still will go to eat Haidilao	35	38.89%
Have certain influence, will hesitate to eat not to eat	34	37.78%
Not at all	2	2.22%

Table 1.5 User Responses to Netease Cloud Music Crisis

Options	Subtotal	Proportion
Consider replacing another music APP (QQ music)	53	59.18%
No impact, will continue to use Netease cloud music	35	38.78%
Resolutely Unload Netease Cloud Music	2	2.04%
Number of valid entries for this topic	90	

Based on the 90 questionnaires collected, we can see:

(1) More than 65% of people think that the most effective way of crisis public relations is to correct one's attitude and apologize/issue a statement.

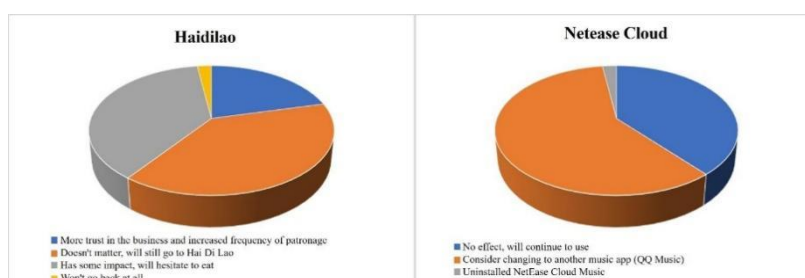


Figure 4.1 Pie chart of feedback from users of Haidilao and Netease Cloud

(2) The questionnaire data were collected separately, and Haidilao's crisis public relations received 60% positive feedback, and Netease Cloud's crisis public relations received 38% positive feedback (Figure 3).

After processing the questionnaire data, the questionnaire data (Table 1) are divided into good, average and poor (i.e. the first two items of Haidilao can be combined), and the statistical results of the data are summarized and mapped as shown in Figure 4.1. It can be intuitively felt that users of Haidilao have higher evaluation than Netease cloud after different public relations strategies are adopted.

Table 1.6 Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Data for Haidilao and Netease Cloud Music

Haidilao	Netease Cloud
Average	Average
2.57	2.36

	7778		6667
	0.05		0.05
Standard error	6924	Standard error	5755
Median	3	Median	2
Mode	3	Mode	2
	0.54		0.52
Standard deviation	0033	Standard deviation	8938
	0.29		0.27
Variance	1635	Variance	9775
	-0.5		-1.0
Kurtosis	7428	Kurtosis	2062
	-0.7		0.09
Skewness	5508	Skewness	1112
Zone	2	Zone	2
Minimum value	1	Minimum value	1
Maximum	3	Maximum	3
Sum	232	Sum	213
Number of observations	90	Number of observations	90
Confidence level	0.11	Confidence level	0.11
(95.0%)	3108	(95.0%)	0784

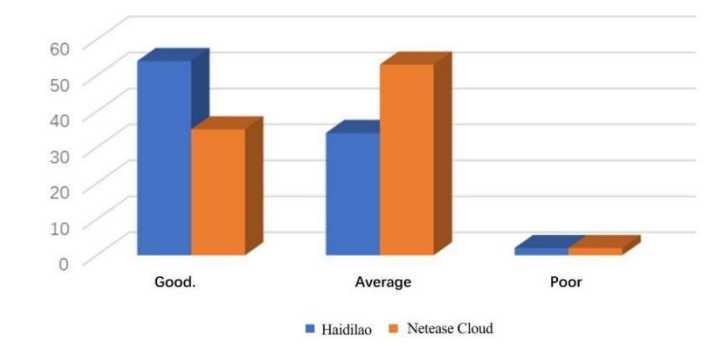


Figure 4.2 Histogram of feedback from users of Haidilao and Netease Cloud

(4) After further hypothesis testing of the data, the following results can be obtained:

Table 1.7 T- Test: Paired Double Sample analysis of means

Parameters	Haidilao	Netease Cloud
	2.57	2.36
Average	7778	6667
	0.29	0.27
Variance	1635	9775
Observed value	90	90
Poisson Correlation	0.70	
Coefficient	5417	



Hypothetical average	0
df	89
t Stat	4.88
P(T<=t)	0256
Single tail	2.31
T single tail	E-06
Boundary	1.66
P(T<=t)	2155
Double tail	E-06
T double tail	1.98
Boundary	6979

According to the results, after adopting different public relations strategies, Haidilao's evaluation is significantly higher than Netease Cloud's (Table 2).

In addition to putting in a questionnaire to investigate the public's response to the crisis public relations, and making analysis, the author also interviewed the staff of three public relations companies, namely Ogilvy, Boya and Edelman, to gain a deep understanding of the operation and role of the public relations companies by means of telephone, email and on-the-spot interviews.

After investigation and inquiry, the contact information of the above public relations companies is as follows:

Table 1.8 Public Relations Agencies Contact Information

Public Relations (PR)	Address	Contact number	Email
Austrian-American PR	9/Floor, Huali Building, No. 58 Jinbao Street, Dongcheng District, Beijing, China	+86 10 85206688	
Boya PR		010-5816 2525	bmchina@126.com
Alderman PR	No.3301, Tower A, Beijing Fortune Center Office Building, No.3 Hospital, No.7, Dongsanhuan Middle Road	010-5828 6588	

The interview is summarized as follows:

Question 1: What are the daily activities of your company? Do crisis public relations belong to your business?

On the one hand, public relations companies mainly provide strategic advice to customers. For example, some companies choose to turn to public relations companies for help when they cannot judge the impact of the decisions on the enterprise for the sake of making decisions such as name changes and acquisitions for their own development prospects. On the other hand, the company sometimes assists in formulating publicity strategies, writing press releases, maintaining media relations, planning high-end events, issuing press releases and withdrawing press releases, while crisis public relations mainly fall into the second category.

Question 2: Under what circumstances will the enterprise seek your help? What kind of crisis do

your customers generally face?

At present, the market of crisis public relations is not yet mature. Some large enterprises, for various internal reasons, often choose to solve the problem through coordination and planning among departments within the enterprise. However, many small enterprises lack public relations awareness and fail to realize the important role of corporate image-building and management in the enterprise. Public relations activities of large enterprises usually choose to be outsourced to public relations companies, and sometimes multiple public relations companies will compete for bids. Enterprises will turn to public relations companies for help when they encounter unexpected events that threaten the corporate image and the choice of development path.

Question 3: What is your PR process? Such as reaction time, division of labor plan, public relations release and other events.

After receiving the public relations task, the first thing to do is to quickly set up a special team to deal with the crisis. The team will discuss and diagnose the incident and put forward corresponding countermeasures. Then, instructions were sent to all departments to participate in the first aid, and the basic principles, policies and countermeasures of crisis management were announced to all staff and stakeholders of all parties, to make concerted efforts. After that, the media and community opinion leaders will be informed of the truth of the matter in a timely manner, indicating the measures to be taken to solve the problem, handling the loss caused by the victims of the crisis, and negotiating well. Finally, investigate the causes of the crisis, evaluate the handling and decide on rewards and punishments.

Question 4: How does your company evaluate the effectiveness of public relations? Is there a quantitative assessment of the effectiveness of public relations?

For the evaluation of the effect of crisis public relations, the customer's response is a very important part of the impact. The degree of response from fans, subsequent social influence and the post-event profit of the enterprise can all reflect the public relations effect to a certain extent. The key elements of quantitative evaluation mainly include coverage rate, efficiency, accuracy, cost per thousand people, communication strength, sales promotion rate, etc. The specific assessment criteria also relate to customer requirements.

#### **4.4 The Conclusion of Mathematical Statistics**

(1) The crisis public relations of the enterprise is of great significance to the reconstruction of the enterprise image after the crisis.

(2) Haidilao's positive feedback from the crisis public relations with a clear attitude of rightness and apology was significantly higher than that from Netease Cloud. It highlights the importance of enterprises making correct statements.

(3) Based on the questionnaire, we developed a crisis public relations model:

The process of crisis events is generally divided into four steps (Figure 4.3): origin, expansion, formation and resolution. The enterprise's crisis public relations model is established strictly according to the development sequence of crisis events

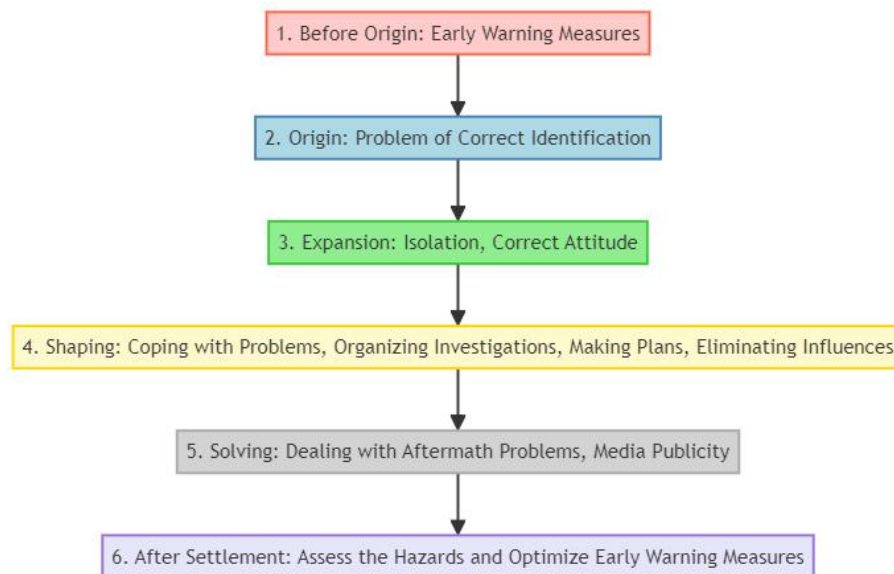


Figure 4.3 The Process of Crisis Events

#### 4.5 Combining the Preliminary Conclusions with the Literature

At the same time, starting from the theory, we have read many documents and gained some experience. The author analyzes the domestic and foreign literatures and monographs, finds commonness and individuality in the theories of different schools of crisis public relations, and conducts in-depth research. The author mainly selects two books which are more in line with the research content for study and discussion, namely *the public relations bible-the public relations theory and the practice complete book* (Lesly, 2000) and *the crisis public relations in the new media age f-brand risk management and case analysis* (Luo ziming, 2013).

The Public Relations Bible is still a necessary reference book for most public relations practitioners. The editor of this book, Philip Lesly, is an authoritative figure in the public relations field with many years of public relations experience. However, one regret is also mentioned in the third edition of the Chinese version. The impact of the rise of the Internet on public relations in the past decade or so is not discussed in this book, nor is it explained how the development of computer technology and new media have changed the traditional way of public relations. The book "Crisis Public Relations in the New Media Era" focuses on the analysis of the characteristics and causes of crisis public relations in the new media era with unlimited information circulation, the key points and principles of crisis management and the case analysis of crisis public relations in the past decade.

In the new media era, great changes have taken place in the way information is disseminated. Traditional media, such as newspapers, magazines and television, cannot cover up and hide negative information. Self-owned media, such as Weibo, WeChat, Twitter, ins, Little Red Riding Book and others, enable everyone to be the publisher of information, and every consumer (KOC) can expose negative information of the enterprise at any time. Although this is indeed a drawback of the information explosion, people's ability to think critically is declining, which brings higher cost to the enterprise in maintaining reputation and image, and poses a huge challenge to the crisis public relations of the enterprise. However, at the same time, the development of new media has also created platform opportunities for many enterprises and entrepreneurs, using the platform's high exposure and diffusion to help them establish entrepreneurs, build corporate brand image, and establish closer and sticky relationship with customers and fans.

After reviewing many domestic and foreign crisis public relations cases, it can be concluded that behind good crisis public relations, most of them have followed the "3T" principle proposed by Lijester (2008), a British crisis public relations expert, namely "tell you own tall. tell it fast. tell it all". The principle emphasizes that crisis organizations should firmly grasp the initiative of information release when dealing with crises. They should not only take the initiative to contact the news media, but also contact the news media immediately to release information and tell the public all the crisis facts they know, which may bring harm to the organization, but can prevent the organization from getting deeper and deeper in the crisis. At the same time, they should strive to gain the understanding and support of the public and the media. The principle of authenticity is the most difficult thing for an enterprise to do when facing a crisis. However, the public is increasingly distrustful of the enterprise's practice of finding a branch or a specific responsible person to take the blame. Users are more willing to see the enterprise take the initiative to admit their mistakes and offer sincere apologies and solutions.

#### **4.6 Macro-case Statistics**

When analyzing and comparing public relations (PR) events and their handling effects, correlation analyses were conducted on the influencing factors of different PR events, and in more than 30 existing cases, the PR handling and external reaction effects of enterprises were evaluated and scored based on 5S, including the speed of PR, responsibility sharing, communication handling, authority confirmation, system operation and other aspects, and were based on a percentage system (Figure 4.4).

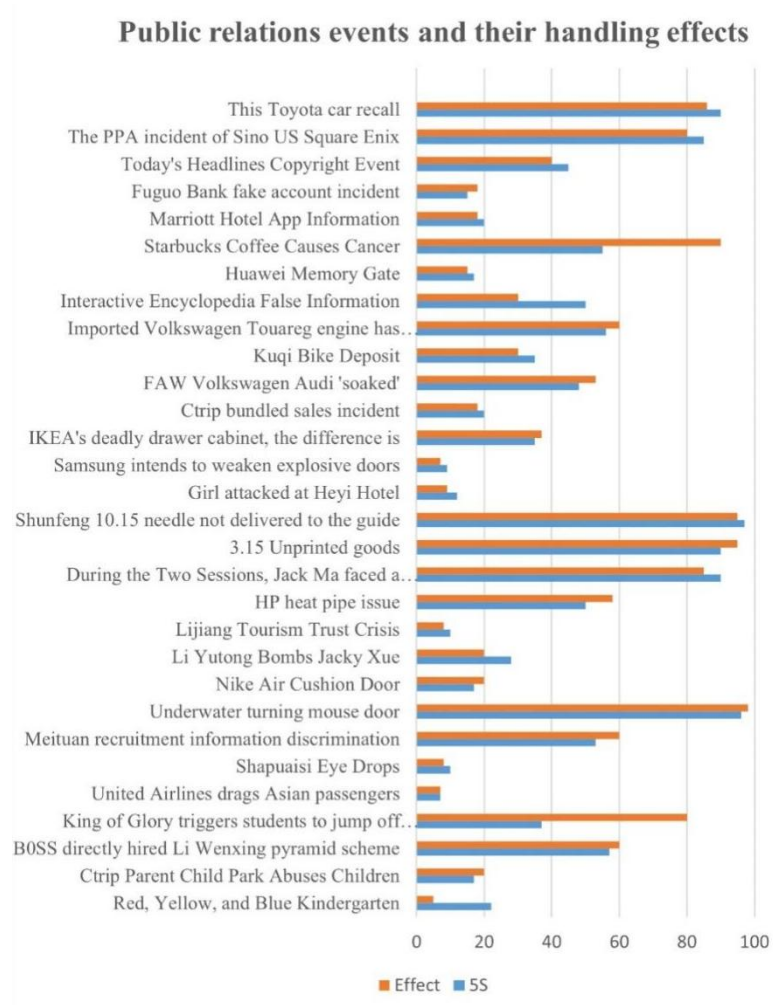


Figure 4.4 Evaluation Results of Corporate Public Relations Events

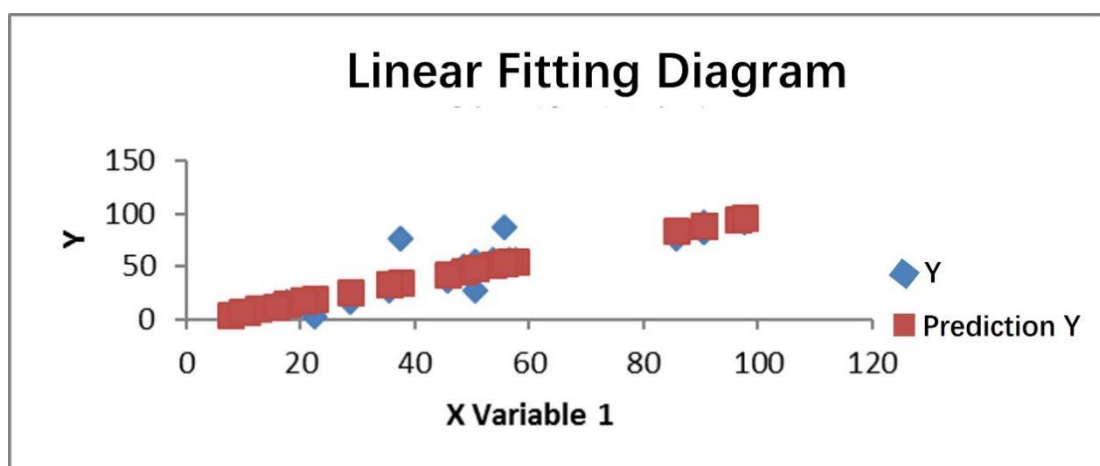


Figure 4.5 Linear Fitting Diagram

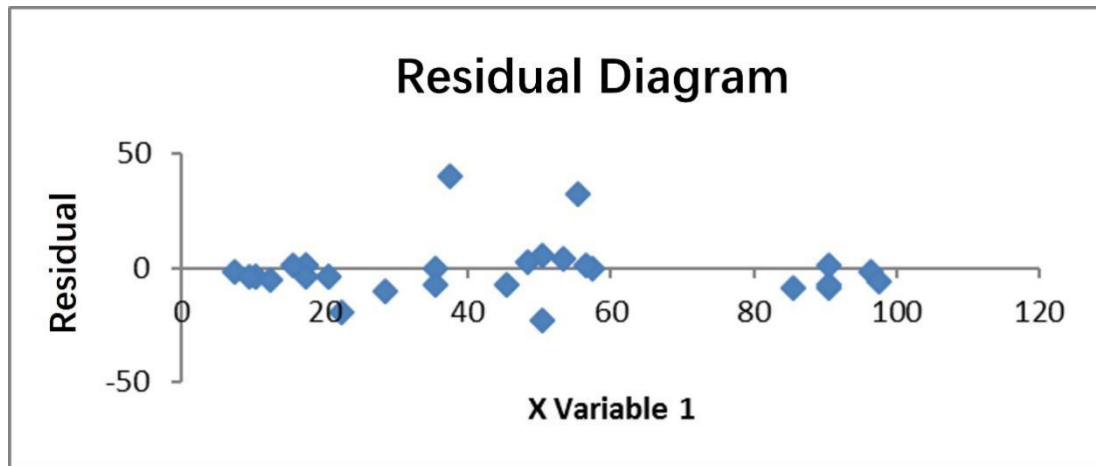


Figure 4.6 Residual Diagram

From the data, the public relations measures taken by the company for major crisis events will directly affect the company's reputation (Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.6). If the company can achieve quick response, proper communication and handling, high-level self-presentation, and a sustainable operation mechanism, it will not only reverse the external public opinion, but even sometimes achieve the function of emphasizing the company's value and optimizing the brand image.

## 5. Research findings, conclusions and recommendations

### 5.1 The Importance of Crisis Public Relations Research

Crisis management guru Norman Augustine once stated, "Each crisis encompasses both the root of failure and the germ of success." The core of crisis management lies in uncovering and fostering this latent potential for success. A common pitfall in ineffective crisis management is the tendency to misjudge the situation, exacerbating the problem.

As China's market economy advances and media technologies diversify, negative reports and false information about enterprises can rapidly exert adverse impacts, thrusting companies into the spotlight of public opinion. When a crisis strikes, enterprises draw extensive attention from the media and various social interest groups, which brings both substantial threats and latent opportunities. Corporate crisis public relations must center on emergency handling and, through well - planned professional approaches, minimize the losses caused by the crisis. Moreover, successful crisis public relations can even turn the crisis to an advantage, enabling enterprises to build a better image post - crisis. Nevertheless, overall, many enterprises lack a crisis prevention system and countermeasures. Most are still accustomed to the traditional "blocking and covering - up" methods. Some enterprises attempt to gloss over their issues, only to damage their corporate image as a consequence. This research aims to facilitate the proficient application of crisis public relations management and contribute to creating an environment conducive to enterprise development.

Despite the diverse manifestations of different crisis triggers during a crisis, a comprehensive review of existing crisis management literature reveals that successful crisis public relations adhere to two principles. First, respond swiftly and identify the root causes. Second, be honest and straightforward when facing the media and the public, and take the initiative to assume responsibility. An organization's prudent stance and emphasis on crisis management can fully demonstrate its sense

of social responsibility and its own maturity. Publicizing the analysis, assessment, and summary of crisis public relations efforts can more effectively reshape the organization's new image, presenting a more complete, mature, and robust social entity that has weathered setbacks and tests. Evidently, crisis public relations have a profound influence on enterprises, and there are established procedures to follow in crisis handling. Thus, studying the significance of crisis public relations for enterprise development will become increasingly crucial.

## **5.2 According to the Case Study to Develop the Central Task of Each Step of Crisis Public Relations**

Crisis events typically unfold across four key stages during their development: the onset, the spread, the formation, and the resolution. In line with this logic, an enterprise's crisis public relations model ought to mirror the sequential evolution of these events and roll out corresponding strategies and measures step by step.

At the very beginning, prior to the emergence of a crisis, an organization must identify potential risks at an early stage. This can be achieved by setting up early - warning systems and closely monitoring both the internal and external environment, and then formulate preventive plans accordingly. Once the crisis hits the onset stage, the most crucial task is to precisely define the nature, scope, and the likely evolutionary trajectory of the problem. This provides a solid decision - making basis for the subsequent response actions.

As the crisis continues to spread further, enterprises are required to act promptly. They should isolate the core of the problem and communicate in a proper manner to prevent the dissemination of negative public opinion or false information. When the crisis gradually takes shape, the public relations team needs to conduct a comprehensive investigation. Based on this, a practical disposal plan should be formulated to comprehensively address various impacts and strive to minimize the losses.

During the resolution stage, through well - executed rehabilitation efforts and effective media communication, the public's trust and support for the enterprise can be effectively restored. Finally, after the crisis has subsided, a full - scale evaluation of the entire incident should be carried out. This involves a deep - dive analysis of the root causes of the crisis and the weak points in the response process. Subsequently, the early - warning system and the organization's management mechanism should be optimized. These improvements will offer a more robust safeguard for future risk prevention.

## **5.3 The Combination of Research and Post-epidemic Era Characteristics, Crisis Public Relations Strategies and Inspiration**

In the post - epidemic era, the global social environment and media ecology have experienced profound changes. The long - standing public health challenges and economic turmoil brought by the epidemic have caused new alterations in the public's trust, psychological expectations, and emotional needs regarding the government, enterprises, and various organizations (Chen, 2021). Meanwhile, with the rapid development of new media technology and the wide application of various social platforms, short - video apps, and instant - messaging tools, the speed of crisis information dissemination, the scope of public opinion diffusion, and the difficulty of crisis public relations management have all been notably elevated. Against this backdrop, crisis public relations are no longer confined to information release and image restoration but rather focus more on transparent

communication, emotional resonance, and multi - element collaboration (Coombs, 2020). Consequently, the crisis environment faced by enterprises in the post - epidemic era is more complex, putting forward higher requirements for their crisis public relations strategies.

### **5.3.1 New Media Development and Social Psychological Changes in the Post-epidemic Era**

The development of new media, marked by the rise of platforms like Weibo, WeChat, short - video platforms and a multitude of self - media accounts, is a pivotal factor in the transformation of the crisis public relations environment in the post - epidemic era, revolutionizing the way and speed of information dissemination. The public has shifted from being passive information recipients to active participants in crisis discussions and information production, emerging as active UGC speakers and giving rise to a highly interactive and fragmented communication ecosystem. The epidemic's outbreak and its lingering impacts have further deepened the public's focus on public safety and health information, leading to the rapid fermentation of social public opinions in these areas on the Internet, with the potential to trigger large - scale public opinion unrest. At the same time, the post - epidemic public psychology has seen significant changes; long - term exposure to uncertainties, social isolation, and economic pressures from the epidemic have made the public generally more risk - aware, more psychologically anxious, and more willing to engage in public affairs (Chen, 2021). During a crisis, the public not only looks forward to getting timely and accurate information but also hopes to feel understood and supported by enterprises or the government, a stark contrast to the past when some were indifferent to relevant information, as public attention and participation have notably increased in the post - epidemic era. Therefore, crisis public relations has transcended mere media response and image maintenance to encompass social and psychological comfort and emotional empathy, and only by fully understanding the dissemination rules of new media and the deeper - seated psychological needs of the public in this era can effective communication and management be achieved during a crisis.

### **5.3.2 In the Post-epidemic Era, Crisis Public Relations Should Pay More Attention to Information Transparency and Instant Communication**

In the post - epidemic era crisis scenario, the persistent public safety anxiety from the epidemic has made the public extremely sensitive to information accuracy and timeliness, rendering information transparency and instant communication as the core elements for organizations to gain public trust. The non - transparency and non - immediacy of some information during the epidemic caused the deterioration of public health events and a public trust crisis. If an organization or enterprise lacks transparency in the early crisis stages or delays information release, rumors may start to spread and cause panic. Therefore, the crisis public relations team should set up a sound information collection and release mechanism to quickly assess the severity of the incident after a crisis and make the facts public through authoritative channels. In practice, many successful crisis response cases stress the "first time" principle; for example, timely media conferences and simultaneous key - information release on official social media accounts can effectively reduce the spread of false information. Additionally, enterprises or organizations should continuously provide updated dynamic information so that the public can get the latest progress, thereby reducing the negative influence of speculation and rumors (Wang, L., & Zhang, H. 2022). This can not only boost the organization's credibility but also help gain public opinion space for follow - up crisis response



measures.

### **5.3.3 In the Post-epidemic Era, Emotional Resonance and Humanistic Care Have Become Important Bridges for Enterprises to Link Consumers**

In the post - epidemic era, the public, when faced with crisis, generally exhibit higher levels of anxiety and insecurity and are in urgent need of emotional support from organizations or the government. Thus, based on maintaining information transparency, crisis public relations should attach greater importance to emotional communication and humanistic care than ever before. Concretely, organizations, while handling crisis public relations, can make the public feel the warmth and humanistic care of enterprises by expressing empathy, organizing social welfare activities, or offering psychological support to consumers. Psychologically, negative emotions are prone to trigger mass anxiety and social panic during the spread of a crisis. If an organization can focus on the public's emotional needs at the early stage of the crisis and communicate with the public in a warm and sincere way, it will be more likely to gain public understanding and support. Offering more humanistic care from the audience's perspective not only provides practical help to the audience but also establishes positive brand associations in the public's mind. This kind of emotional resonance and humanistic care is especially crucial in the post - epidemic era. It has become a key link in establishing a trust relationship between the organization and the public and an important bridge for enterprises to connect with consumers.

### **5.3.5 In the Post-epidemic Era, it is Necessary to Flexibly Use the Characteristics of Various Media Platforms to Achieve Multi-party Coordination and Integration**

The rapid development of new media has significantly accelerated the spread speed and expanded the scope of crisis information, presenting enterprises with a complex and dynamic public opinion environment where it's nearly impossible to achieve comprehensive and efficient crisis responses relying solely on a single public relations department or one - way information dissemination. Therefore, multi - party coordination and platform integration have become crucial strategies for post - epidemic - era crisis public relations. Internally, organizations need to establish an inter - departmental cooperation mechanism that links marketing, public relations, legal affairs, human resources and other departments for seamless information sharing and coordinated decision - making. Externally, they should actively collaborate with government agencies, industry associations, non - governmental organizations, and media platforms to handle the potential social impacts of a crisis. In terms of new media platform integration, organizations should fully utilize the distinct features of different media channels to form a multi - level and full - coverage communication network matrix. For example, on social platforms like Weibo and WeChat, which see rapid public opinion growth, timely responses to users' concerns are a must; on official websites or at press conferences, which are active voice platforms easily connected to the media, authoritative and in - depth information should be provided. Additionally, maintaining close cooperation with traditional media can enhance the enterprise's credibility and expand the influence of positive information. Overall, the aim of multi - party coordination and platform integration is to generate an information resultant force, enabling organizations to take the initiative in the public opinion field.

## **6. Existing Problems and Research Limitations**

## **6.1 The limitations of Research**

### **6.1.1 Theoretical Difficulties**

Although crisis public relations is a relatively hot research topic, it plays a very important role in establishing and maintaining corporate image. However, in the field of crisis public relations, systematic, normative and practical research is scarce, and reference data, reference papers and reference research are also scarce. In addition, due to the innovative use of more mathematical and standardized analysis methods to conduct systematic and rigorous analysis of crisis public relations disposal, this research will encounter certain theoretical difficulties in data collection, model establishment, data fitting and other aspects. We need to consult many books to refine and strengthen our ability of data analysis and mathematical analysis.

### **6.1.2 Practical Difficulties**

Due to the different nature of each enterprise, the public relations crisis faced by each enterprise, the severity of the crisis and the public opinion, the effective ways to deal with the crisis public relations are also different, and the research direction is more complex and diverse. It is very difficult for the author to consider every aspect in a large and comprehensive way, so he must make a choice in the research and select the most important one to discuss and deepen, which is a great test for the researchers' determination and scientific research vision.

Before and after the crisis, the strength and social influence of enterprises have no specific evaluation criteria and are difficult to measure, which makes it difficult to accurately judge the effect of public relations, which may result in the lack of corresponding data in the establishment of the model. In addition, due to resource constraints, it is relatively difficult to contact or interview senior public relations workers of enterprises suffering from public relations crisis, which makes it difficult for the author to understand the real impact and practical importance of the crisis on the enterprise, and it is also difficult to access the real internal public relations team, public relations model, etc., which will hinder the further advancement of the research.

### **6.1.3 Limitation of Timeliness**

The author started this study in 2017. The selected cases have a long-time gap from the present. During this time, crisis public relations cases emerge in endlessly. Therefore, the selection of this case has a time lag. Moreover, the social environment faced by the enterprises at that time and the technologies and media available at that time were quite different from those at present. If we can select recent cases, the research will be of more referential value to the crisis public relations strategies of the enterprises at present.

## **6.2 Main Issues**

In the process of researching this research topic, the author faces many challenges. First, different research methods have their own characteristics. It is difficult to judge which method is most suitable for the research object, and its effect cannot be accurately evaluated in advance. Secondly, when an enterprise is facing a crisis, it is quite difficult to obtain first-hand information, and it is even more difficult to identify the authenticity of information. At the same time, there is also a high technical threshold to quantitatively model the abstract concept of crisis public relations. The crisis public relations situations of different enterprises or individuals are often significantly different, and it is difficult to extract a universal process or strategy through a few typical cases. In addition, the

existing case studies are relatively scattered and lack systematic integration and improvement. The author also found in the field interview that the opinions and measures of the company staff on their own public relations events tend to be beautified, which may lead to distorted conclusions. Finally, although the questionnaire has been spread to a certain extent, the sample size and population distribution are still limited. The respondents are mainly students and lack of coverage for the middle-aged and above, which affects the universality and representativeness of the research results.

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