

Construction and Communication of Harbin's City Image under the Background of New Media

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Abstract. The rapid rise of short video platforms has injected new vitality into the construction and communication of city images. In the article, Harbin is the research object. Firstly, it analyzes the communication characteristics of the city image under the background of new media. Secondly, from the communication subject, communication content, communication channels and communication effects, the paper deeply analyzes the characteristics of Harbin's image communication, explores the close relationship between Harbin's popularity and new media, and reveals the potential laws and internal motivations.

Keywords: New Media; Harbin; City Image.

1. Introduction

Harbin, the capital city of Heilongjiang Province, is an important central city in northeast China and a national manufacturing base. With its unique ice and snow tourism resources, Harbin has been ranked as one of the top ten ice and snow tourism cities in China. From December 2023 to February 2024, Harbin exploded on the Internet media, which gave birth to the explosion of Harbin tourism. According to the data provided by Harbin Culture, Radio, Television, and Tourism Bureau, from January 1, 2024, to January 3, 2024, Harbin received a total of 3.0479 million tourists and achieved a total tourism revenue of 5.914 billion yuan. The volume of tourist reception and total tourism revenue reached a historical peak [1]. On the eve of New Year's Day, there were many hot topics on Tiktok about Harbin's pet "Southern small potatoes" and "potato princess", "Taiping International Airport stewardesses dancing to welcome guests", "symphony orchestra performances in shopping malls", "Oroqen compatriots with reindeer appeared in the streets of Harbin to interact with tourists", "frozen pears, frozen persimmon and other fruits were cut and placed in the restaurant and then served to tourists", Harbin became a network red city. It can be seen that short videos can empower the dissemination of city images.

Short video is a multi-modal narrative expression medium and has become one of the leading media in the current social development [2]. This new form of media can cross the restrictions of space and time, and form a network mode of communication, so that users can establish contact with creators and viewers at any time and place, as long as there is a network, to form a huge scale of users and communication effects. In addition, short videos are user-produced content, breaking the propaganda of only the government and tourism companies as the main body, making the communication content richer and more vivid. Video creators can use background music, special effects, subtitles, filters, stickers, plots, and other ways to produce content, and the city image is no longer a graphic or popular science introduction, but more detailed and concrete. Urban landscape, culture, economy, and other combined scenes can be transformed into a characteristic symbol for transmission. Tiktok is a video recording medium, that can transmit information, scene and intuitive to users, and has a strong sense of scene substitution. Therefore, compared with traditional graphic content, video has unique advantages in presentation form, scene presentation and value transmission, and it is easier for users to have emotional resonance. This kind of multi-modal discourse creates a sensory experience for users and stimulates their needs. Individual sensory elements, city location information, the urban picture presented by the public in daily life, and the expression mode and perspective of the people make the city image more civilian, promote the human expression of the city image, and enhance the interaction between the city and people. Short videos can enhance people's perception of space and

place through recording. By recording events that occur in urban locations, the creator realizes multi-dimensional interaction and communication with the city and users, forming a flowing social space [3], which enables people to have a deeper perception of the urban form, build a sense of place, arouse users' local identity and attachment to the city, and enable both sides to establish a closer interaction and connection. Short videos also give the public the right to speak in video communication [4], which means that everyone can participate in the communication, so that the radiation of the transmission is wider and the frequency is higher, and the user is transformed from the viewer of the city image to the practitioner and experiencer of the city image. Big bloggers help promote the city, carefully choreographed content and situational interpretation, and use personal IP to enhance the user's favorable impression of the city, ordinary people can also record various scenes in city life from a personalized perspective, create a multidimensional scene experience, so that users have an immersive experience, and spread through the like, forward and other behaviors. According to the user's viewing behavior, TikTok constantly pushes relevant content to the user, accurately disseminates the image of the city, so that the city characteristics are fully reflected through these characteristic modes, and catalyzes your interest in the city. Taking Harbin as an example, this paper uses urban image theory and communication theory to analyze the construction and dissemination of Harbin's city image on TikTok.

2. Research Status

With the development of new media technology, scholars combine the communication characteristics of new media with city image to study how new media promotes the communication of city image. Cui Ye pointed out that new media communication has broken the shackles of time and space in the construction and communication of city image. The public can photograph and share the charm of the city anytime and anywhere, and jointly contribute to the shaping of a beautiful city image through emotional resonance and social interaction [5]. Zhang Jiajia extracted six elements from Guilin's short video: duration, publisher, emotional tendency, vision, hearing and picture presentation, and analyzed the audio-visual presentation and communication strategy of Guilin's city image in the short video [6]. Zhang Weiyue took the elements of the communication process to study the communication characteristics and effects of Xi 'an's city image under the background of the short video [7]. In addition, Deng Ruiqi, taking the short video about Chongqing food on the BilBil as an example, reveals the similarity and simplification of the current store-exploring videos from multiple dimensions such as material cultural symbols and urban cultural symbols, as well as the deficiencies of template and commercialization of narrative methods [8]. These articles provide theoretical and dimensional references for this article. At present, there are few articles on the communication process and effect of Harbin under the background of new media, but the hot phenomenon in Harbin should arouse the attention of the academic circle. Therefore, starting from Roland Barth's semiotic theory, this article comprehensively analyzes the main subject, content, channels and effects of Harbin's urban image communication, interprets why Harbin can be popular, and provides references for urban image communication under the background of new media.

3. Construction and Communication of Harbin's City Image under the Background of New Media

The city image is mainly composed of three levels: cultural concept, visual image, and behavioral image [9]. City image is a complex of rich materials. City image communication is the main subject of communication such as the government, enterprises and the public, which uses various communication channels to show various image elements of the city to the audience so that the public can form specific perceptions and overall evaluation of a city image [10].

Harbin quickly became popular during the spring break in 2024, attracting a large number of tourists and becoming one of the most popular attractions at that time. To have a deeper understanding of the reasons behind this phenomenon, this article conducted a detailed data analysis using TikTok. By

searching the key term "Harbin" from December 20, 2023 to February 18, 2024, this article selects the top 100 videos with the most views for in-depth analysis. In addition, this article also randomly selected 70 videos related to "Harbin" to get a more comprehensive understanding of the spread of Harbin on TikTok. Through the content analysis of these videos, the article explores the relationship between the Harbin city explosion and new media, and reveals the rules and reasons.

3.1. Main Subject of Communication of Harbin City Image

Harbin adopted the form of "we media" as the main communication subject, supplemented by celebrities and the Cultural and tourism Bureau. Harbin local celebrities also spoke for their hometown. Shen Teng, Ma Li, Li Jian, Zhang Yi, Xu Dongdong talked about their hometown, among which Jia Nailang's "Welcome everyone to Harbin to play" video has 267,000 likes. It can be seen that stars also played an important role in the promotion. "Harbin" and its related topics continued to become hot topics for a month. The director of the Harbin Cultural and Tourism Bureau danced in the ice and snow world, and the dance video also reached 75,000 likes and 7,200 reposts and raised the popularity of "Harbin" once again. Of course, the mainstream in this communication is we media and related Internet celebrities. In the top 30 videos, Internet celebrities accounted for 26.6%, and in the 70 videos randomly selected, the proportion of ordinary media users was as high as 87.1%, while the proportion of star publicity was only 1.43%. It can be seen that ordinary media users have played a decisive factor in the propaganda of Harbin. In the end, the communication in Harbin formed the main body of democratization communication led by the official media.

3.2. Communication Content of Harbin City Image

Experience is the core of city communication content in Harbin. Compared with traditional media's stereotypical historical popularization or popular science pedagogical publicity, experiential communication content can better touch the audience's emotions and trigger resonance. This also makes the influence index of Harbin ice and snow tourism topic as high as 95.2, which even exceeds 99% of social events. To achieve such a remarkable effect, Harbin has cleverly integrated a series of symbolic and interesting iconic elements in the city image communication. The shaping and dissemination of city images cannot be separated from the refinement and presentation of concrete cultural symbols. For example, the Harbin dialect, unique northeast characteristic music, landmark buildings and Harbin cuisine, and the daily life of Harbin people. In the process of viewing, selecting and communicating with the audience, these symbols continuously deepen the memory of the city, and in the process of decoding and re-encoding the visual symbols, build a unique imagination of Harbin [11].

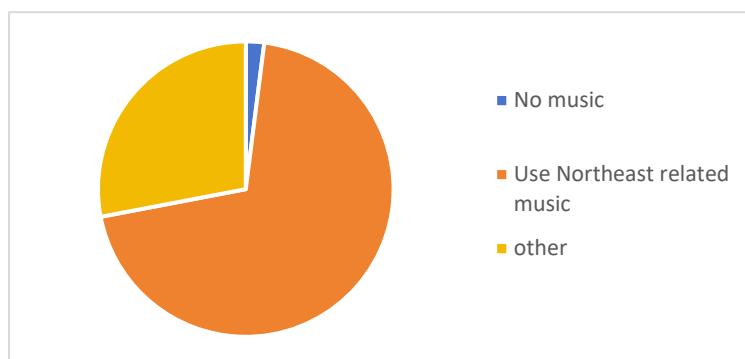


Figure 1. Harbin short video music usage diagram

Harbin dialect and music with northeast characteristics highlight the humor and enthusiasm of Harbin people. In the TikTok research sample extracted in this article, 65% of the videos were shot by people in Harbin, and the bloggers spoke a native Harbin dialect. Dialects such as "Laoke", "Sha Leng" and "Ga Beng Cui" are frequently used. Humorous dialects are paired with dynamic, hot and enthusiastic

background music with the characteristics of the Northeast region. In the background music, 70% of videos use Northeast characteristics music (as shown in Figure 1). Make the short video lively, can make people understand and interested, and has a strong universality. It can be said that the blogger conquers the users with his down-to-earth humor and easy-to-understand language style, showing the image of Harbin people as bold, humorous, warm and hospitable, which not only shows the local folk culture, but also attracts southerners and foreigners to imitate it. It can be seen that sound is an important symbol in the image communication of Harbin.

In addition, this article makes a statistical analysis of the shooting content of video samples, as shown in Figure 2. Special food has become the main content of TikTok short videos, Harbin barbecue, Slow Cooked Pigs Knuckles, Harbin red sausage, Old style popsicles, Fried Pork in Scoop and other special foods frequently appear in short videos. Bloggers not only shoot foods but also combine foods with stories and scenes, such as shooting the making process of foods and the buying scene of a sea of people in the Daoli food market in Harbin. Bloggers walk into a street restaurant and introduce the specialty dishes and the owner's hospitality. For example, the shooting of the century-old dumpling house tells the scene of the 65-year-old boss and his wife and son working together in the restaurant. The boss adheres to the family instruction of his ancestors that "doing business should be honest with conscience" and inherits the dumpling house to this day. The old Man said, "My parents had lived here for 80 years, and they were doing business with good conscience". Netizens wrote to pay tribute to the old man. Many netizens also shared their feelings about doing business, saying that conscience is the most important thing in doing business. This phenomenon shows that video induces a good empathy effect. It not only introduces the characteristic food of Harbin but also reflects the characteristics of the Harbin people, which are simple, kind, hard-working and hospitable. From the perspective of semiotics, in the process of content production and communication, short food videos shape food into a symbolic existence symbolizing quality life and entertainment experience and build a concrete imagination space for users about a better life picture. In this process, short food videos carry the symbolic meaning behind food and become a consumption symbol. The food presents a beautiful image in front of people's eyes, and also presents a beautiful city image, to attract tourists to come and truly feel the real and beautiful of the city. In addition to the special food, some Internet celebrity restaurants and Internet celebrity foods also appeared in the short video, a cake launched by a dessert shop in Harbin, the same shape of Harbin landmark Sophia Church, became popular on the Internet with its exquisite design, and tourists queued up to buy it. The owner of the store also called for rational consumption through a short video, the weather is too cold, do not queue in front of the store too early, and extended the business hours. In addition, "frozen pear slices, egg sauce on the plate" and an exquisite approach to traditional snacks also occupied a place. The video tells the way of eating frozen pear and egg sauce that Harbin people have never seen before in a comparative way. In the video, people in Harbin are asked if they have ever seen a frozen pear sliced, and they reply that they have not seen this way of eating, and Harbin people eat a frozen pear directly. The people of Harbin feel that Harbin is no longer the Harbin we know. The video highlights the prestige of tourists and the delicate and hospitable character of the Harbin people by comparing the traditional way of eating with the aesthetic characteristics and eating habits of Southerners. People are not only surprised by this creative behavior but also praised for the careful Harbin people. It can be seen that food videos combine food, characters and scenes to make food full of human touch. The explosion of this kind of food video full of life also shows that people like close-to-life, real, warm video content.

In addition, Harbin short video scenic spots, historical sites and other shooting content and methods also have their characteristics. The introduction of traditional scenic spots and historical sites is mainly based on popular science content such as historical origin, scenic spot characteristics and cultural connotation. However, in the short video of Harbin, Central Street, Sophia Cathedral and Ice and Snow World reduce the popular science content, but combine them with municipal services and tourist experience. For example, the red carpet on Center Street and the warm pavilions installed in Sophia Cathedral were two of the popular videos of TikTok, which filmed workers laying a red carpet on the central street overnight to prevent tourists from slipping. Workers installed warm booths

outside Sophia Cathedral overnight to prevent visitors from getting cold due to long waiting times. The video does not introduce the measures taken by the Harbin municipal government to improve the tourist experience, but through these two tiny perspectives and the simple words of workers, it shows users a responsible municipal image and warms users' hearts. In the Ice and Snow World and Ice Sculpture video adopted anthropomorphic treatment. For example, in the video of Harbin Snowman, as the weather gets warmer and the snow is about to melt, the snowman is also about to say goodbye to people. The video adopts the first perspective and bids farewell to everyone in the tone of the snowman and promises to meet again next year. With the deep and distant background music, the video shows the snowman's reluctance to part, and also evokes people's feelings for the snowman and Harbin in this winter, causing people's emotional resonance, some users comment: The warm snowman, next year to see you. It can be seen that food, beautiful scenery, meticulous municipal services, careful and enthusiastic Harbin people constitute the image of Harbin city, forming a short video online viewing + offline Harbin check-in + online sharing experience travel mode.

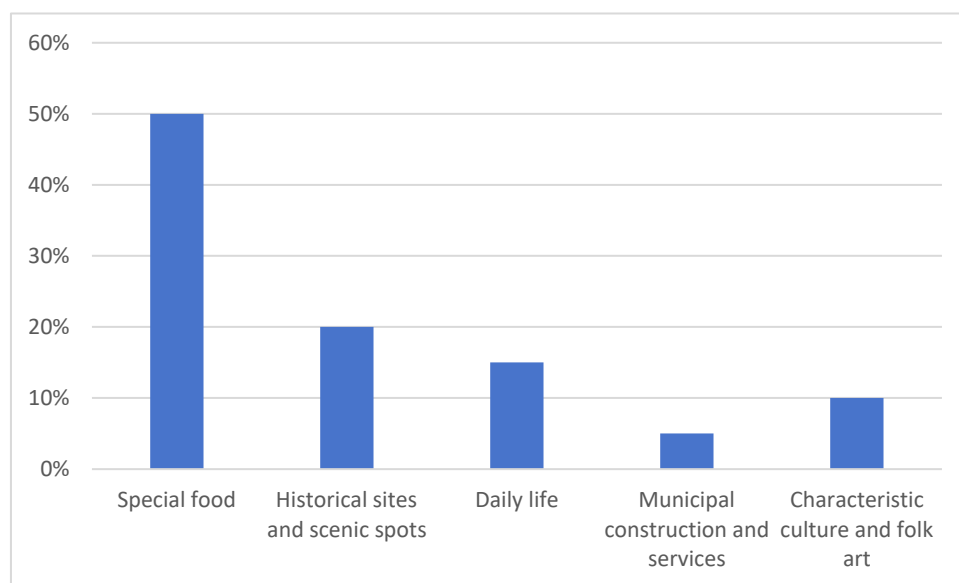


Figure 2. Analysis table of Harbin city image content in TikTok

In addition, symbolized social hot videos have also triggered user interaction, and the topic of "Southern small potatoes" has triggered up to 235 million interactions on the Tiktok platform, fully proving its strong appeal. The topic cleverly combines the regional characteristics of Harbin with the daily life of the citizens, showing the unique customs of Harbin in a relaxed and pleasant way. Landmark landmark symbols such as "Sophia Cathedral", "Ice and Snow world", "Central Street" and so on are also popular on the Internet, its occurrence rate is as high as 31.4%, these landmark buildings have a distinctive style in the network popularity, is affectionately given the "little Paris" reputation by netizens. In addition, the fire in Harbin has also increased the attention of Tiktok Harbin video bloggers. For example, a series of Tiktok bloggers, as Harbin locals, have shown unique experiences such as carpet laying on the central street, airport locker building, and frozen pear cutting in their videos, and have accompanied them with humorous jokes with local accents. Let netizens feel the careful care of Harbin tourists from other provinces in laughter. This down-to-earth way of expression not only narrowed the distance with netizens, but also made the city image of Harbin more vivid.

To sum up, through the clever use of symbolic and interesting iconic elements, Harbin has successfully shaped and spread a unique city image, which has aroused the resonance and attention of the vast audience. This not only enhances the influence of Harbin ice and snow tourism, but also provides useful reference and inspiration for the shaping and dissemination of the city image.

3.3. Communication Channels

This city image communication activity in Harbin adopts the strategy of combining the macro-guidance of the municipal government with the micro-execution of new media, forming the dominant position of new media communication and the auxiliary communication matrix of traditional media communication.

From December 20, 2023, to February 18, 2024, Harbin ice and snow tourism exploded, newspapers and other traditional media have continued to follow up reports. The Harbin newspaper lasted for 40 days and advertised Harbin's tourist attractions in the form of pictures on the front page. However, the widespread of Harbin's urban image is mainly due to the excellent performance of new media. New media, with its unique creativity and presentation, has demonstrated the charm of Harbin from multiple angles and in all directions.

Videos related to Harbin Ice and Snow World have been viewed more than 7.6 billion times on TikTok, which is equivalent to five views per person across the country. The term "Harbin Tourism Guide" has been viewed a staggering 3 billion times on TikTok. In addition, several hot searches related to the Ice and Snow world have triggered widespread attention and discussion on the microblog, with up to 1 billion views and tens of thousands of discussions. On the Xiaohongshu platform, the number of related Harbin notes continues to grow, "This is too northeast", "always go to Harbin" and other topics have more than 69 million page views, and related Harbin notes are as high as more than 3.78 million.

It can be said that Harbin's city image communication activities have achieved remarkable results. Through the extensive dissemination of new media, Harbin's urban charm and tourism resources have been fully displayed, attracting a large number of tourists to visit and experience.

3.4. Communication Effect

In the 60 days that Harbin ice and snow tourism has exploded, it has shown remarkable advantages in several key indicators such as the number of topics played on social media, the number of works, the number of likes and the number of interactions. As a result, the public opinion field of the entry "Harbin" increased from the previous average 2.51% to 51.7% [12]. The index of Harbin's topic comprehensively surpassed that of Wuhan and six other cities, highlighting its unique urban charm and strong influence. This remarkable achievement highlights the Harbin image as a city of food, ice and snow amusement resort, humorous and thoughtful service. The specific data are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison table of communication effect data in Harbin

	Cumulative plays	Number of works	Likes	Interaction number
Harbin	292.92billion	157000	3.81 billion	5.57 billion
Wuhan	68.71 billion	75500	44559500	7,1,270,200
Kunming	36.53 billion	49900	20821600	33,765,400
Hangzhou	92.44 billion	29100	39,142,900	54 million
Guiyang	30.64 billion	20200	19 million	24,714,200
Jinan	46 billion	20200	13,689,600	19,428,500
Nanjing	78.3 billion	22900	29,428,500	41,142,800

The data comes from Tiktok

In addition, Zibo Barbecue in 2023 has also triggered a boom in Zibo tourism. This article makes a comparative analysis of the communication effect between Zibo and Harbin by using Zhiwei News.(as shown in Figure 3). Although the proportion of public opinion of Harbin ice and snow

tourism is lower than that of Zibo BBQ, its public opinion heat time is longer, the influence of the event is higher, and the opinion leaders in the network are more involved. It can be seen that Harbin has achieved a good communication effect in terms of the influence of communication, popularity, and user participation, and has built a friendly, warm, and thoughtful city. The city image full of entertainment atmosphere.

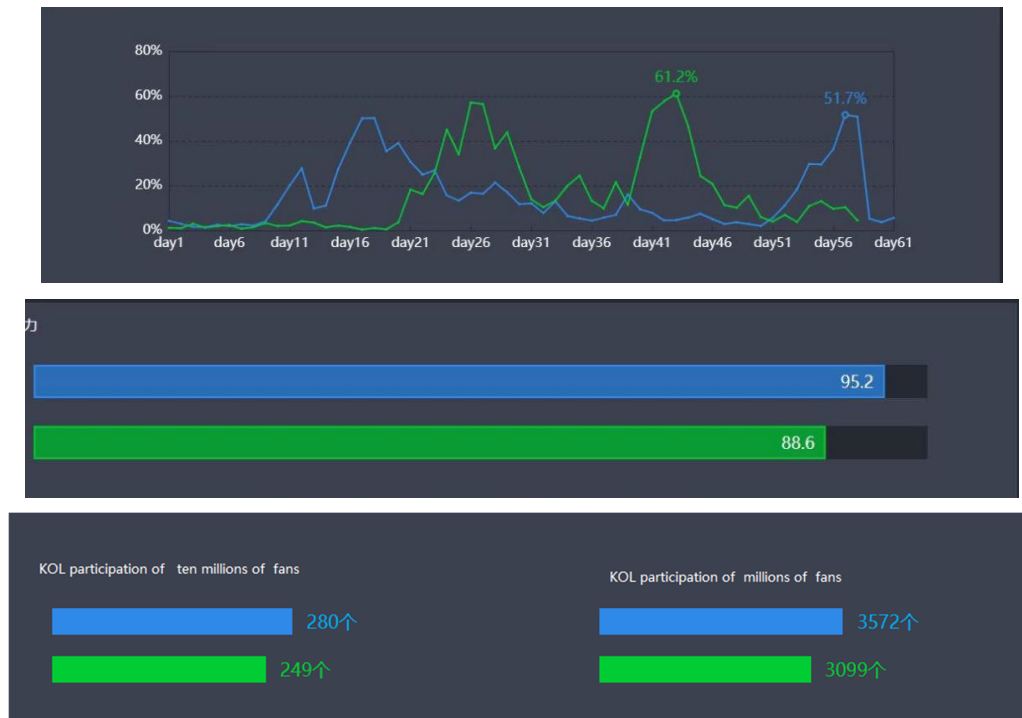


Figure 3. Comparison of city communication effect in Harbin

4. Summary

Under the background of new media, the shaping of city image and the refining and presentation of concrete symbols in communication become the key to the integration of new media and city image. The city image interacts with the public through new media. In the communication of Harbin city image, the municipal government used new media to respond to the needs of netizens and created some hot topics such as "the Central Street is paved with red carpet". Through the wide dissemination of new media, the Harbin city image is shown to the public that it is hospitable, responsible and intimate, warm, gathering the spirit of entertainment, food and beautiful scenery. It can be seen that such down-to-earth, popular and story-based communication methods and contents make the city image of Harbin full of fireworks and intimacy, reduce the sense of alienation between people and the city, widen the distance between people and the city, and promote the spread of Harbin's city image.

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