Research on the International Communication of City Image of the Asian Games Hangzhou 2022——Based on YouTube Platform Analysis

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Abstract: City image is the overall impression of the public based on a city's natural geography, history and culture and cultural life, which forms a sense of identity. It is an important symbol of a city's core competitiveness and cultural soft power, and also an important part of the national image. The 19th Asian Games Hangzhou 2022, following 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games, is another important opportunity to enhance national image and promote Chinese culture, as well as an essential way to tell China's story and enhance international discourse power. The Asian Games is not only a grand event for sports culture in Asian countries, but also an important window for China to showcase the comprehensive national strength, spread the national culture, and shape and enhance the national image. From the perspective of YouTube platform, this paper analyzes the impact of YouTube on the international communication of city image of Hangzhou Asian Games and introduces corresponding communication strategy suggestions.

Keywords: Asian Games Hangzhou 2022; city image; YouTube platform

1. Introduction

The study of city image can be traced back to the United States in the 1960s, when the American book *The Image of the City* and *Locality and Non-locality* were regarded as the earliest research literature on city image[1]. Lewis Mumford explained "city image" in this way: "People's subjective impression of a city is formed by the combined effects of mass media, personal experience, interpersonal communication, cultural memory, and the physical environment.[2]" In China, the early promotional videos of city image were almost always broadcast through the medium of television. With the development of the Internet, the dissemination channels for city image promotional videos have become increasingly diverse, reaching wider audiences. Many promotional videos of city image have gained international recognition, spreading the city image to foreign people. Furthermore, the city image often represents the image of China. Through the city promotional videos, the image of China becomes more three-dimensional and comprehensive.

Since October 2022, Hangzhou Culture and Tourism has been actively exploring the marketing mode of "Culture and Tourism + Sports" on the three major overseas social media platforms of Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, planning and releasing Asian Games-themed activities, videos, route products and news through the mechanism of original information collection and editing, lightweight interaction and cooperation with overseas celebrities. The focus is put on interpreting the Asian Games and Hangzhou from the perspective that foreigners can understand and find interesting, thus leading overseas fans to "virtually" experience the Asian Games and Hangzhou. As of October 8, 2023, the total exposure of Asian Games-themed content on overseas social media platforms exceeded 7.36 million times, with a total of over 559,000 interactions and more than 3.16 video views. The related content exposed over 1.039 million times in domestic media, such as Xinhua News Agency[3]. The international communication of the city image of Asian Games Hangzhou 2022 on YouTube shows a vibrant, culturally rich and technologically innovative city, and also injects new energy and vitality into the future development of the city. The study of how to utilize new media tools to tell the story of Chinese cities, show the charm of Chinese cities, and create a new reputation overseas is of great research value.

2. City image and international communication shaped by the Hangzhou Asian Games

2.1 Vitality and modernity

Hangzhou, as the host city of the 2022 Asian Games, has shown its vibrant and modern image to the world. Hangzhou attracts the world's attention with its beautiful natural environment, advanced infrastructure and first-class stadiums. In addition, Hangzhou is one of China's key cities for science and technology innovation, with many high-tech enterprises and research institutions. During the preparation and hosting of the Asian Games, Hangzhou demonstrated its strength in science and technology innovation, such as intelligent venues and 5G communication technology.

2.2 Green ecology

Focusing on environmental protection and sustainable development, Hangzhou is committed to creating a green, eco-friendly environment for the event. The city will actively promote low-carbon travel methods to reduce its impact on the environment, while also making full use of its large number of parks, lakes and nature reserves to provide athletes and spectators with opportunities to get close to nature. Meanwhile, Hangzhou has demonstrated efficient organizational and execution capabilities in the preparation and hosting of the Asian Games. The city's infrastructure development, event preparation and organization were widely praised and recognized.

2.3 Rich culture

Hangzhou has a profound historical and cultural heritage and is a famous historical and cultural city in China. The hosting of the Asian Games further enhances Hangzhou's presence in the international community and allows more people to understand and appreciate its history, culture and traditions. The hospitality of Hangzhou people and their focus on etiquette and culture provides strong support for the success of the Asian Games. During the event, athletes and spectators from all over the world felt the friendliness and warmth of Hangzhou people.

3. Analysis of the international communication effect of city image of Hangzhou Asian Games

3.1 Expanding Hangzhou's influence

By posting videos about the Hangzhou Asian Games on the YouTube, more overseas viewers can learn about the event, expanding the influence of the city's image promotion. The social media matrix can be used for promotion and dissemination, forming an all-round, three-dimensional promotional network to further enhance the exposure and popularity of the city's image. The majority of the English transcripts were also released on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube platforms at the same time in addition to the regular channels such as Xinhua News Agency's Circular Line and Xinhua.com, with uniform # AsianGames#HangzhouAsianGames and #China hashtags for matrixed coverage[4]. The multi-pronged release channels have expanded the dissemination and influence of external reports. Through elaborate promotional videos, the rich history, culture and modern development of Hangzhou are displayed to make the international audience understand the historical heritage and modern vitality of Hangzhou. During the Asian Games, various kinds of cultural exchange activities, such as art performances, forums and exhibitions, were organized to promote exchanges among people from different countries and regions and to enhance understanding and friendship. Food programs and travel guides can also be used to introduce Hangzhou's authentic cuisine and famous tourist attractions to international audiences and stimulate people's interest in visiting Hangzhou.

3.2 Improving organizer-audience interaction

Due to the differences in cultural traditions and values in international communication, video expression and dissemination through YouTube has unique value compared with text expression, and visual communication plays a more direct role in effectively reducing the cultural gap. Therefore, Xinhua News Agency took the initiative to set up topics on overseas media platforms around the nodes of "Asian Games meets Mid-Autumn Festival" and "Asian Games meets National Day"[5], broadcasting visual products such as atlases, posters, and vlogs, which triggered heated discussions among overseas netizens. For example, series of Vlogs such as "Our Asian Games", each with a different theme, ranging from the

introduction of the West Lake in Hangzhou to the business opportunities of the Asian Games in Yiwu, were introduced by Xinhua reporters together with expatriates living and working in China, making the international dissemination of the story of the Asian Games in Hangzhou more diversified and vivid through the immersive and scenario-based expression of expatriates, and enhancing user stickiness and participation through such an interactive approach[6].

3.3 Enhancing city brand value

By showcasing Hangzhou's strength and charm in history and culture, science and technology innovation and public services, the city's brand value and reputation are enhanced, attracting more domestic and foreign tourists and investors to visit, travel and develop. In addition, during the preparation and hosting of the Asian Games, the city's level of public services, such as transportation, health and security, ensured the smooth running of the event, leaving a good impression on the international scene, with the international mainstream media showcasing Hangzhou's charms from multiple perspectives. Outside of the stadium, the organizers focused on Hangzhou's science and technology parks, innovative enterprises and advanced technologies, highlighting Hangzhou's position as a center of science and technology innovation and attracting international attention. Advertising, public relations and digital marketing were utilized to promote Hangzhou's city brand globally, closely linking Hangzhou's image with the Asian Games.

4. Optimization suggestions for the international communication of city image of Hangzhou Asian Games

4.1 Content planning

It is important to produce high-quality and attractive video content to show history, culture, natural scenery and modern development of Hangzhou. This should be combined with the theme and events of the Asian Games, with focus on Hangzhou's preparations for the Asian Games, the construction of venues, and the exciting moments of the events. Inviting internationally renowned KOLs or bloggers to visit Hangzhou and share their experiences and feelings can provide viewers with a first-hand visual experience. Some domestic KOLs on TikTok continue to share relevant content during the Asian Games, achieving good results. In terms of content planning, it is also necessary to pay attention to multilingual support, add subtitles in English, Arabic, Hindi and other languages to the video to meet the needs of viewers in different countries and regions, and add keywords in the video description and title so that the search engine can better capture the content. Meanwhile, we also need to regularly analyze the viewing data of the videos to understand the interests and preferences of the audience, thus providing a basis for subsequent content planning, and optimizing the video content, release time and promotion strategy based on the results of data analysis.

4.2 Focusing on interaction and response

For one thing, it is necessary to cooperate with famous bloggers or KOLs on YouTube to jointly promote the content of Hangzhou and the Asian Games, and utilize YouTube's advertisement to accurately promote the content to the target audience. Utilizing Hangzhou's local media resources, such as TV stations, radio stations and newspapers, to complement the YouTube platform can jointly promote Hangzhou and Asian Games-related content. Other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter can also be utilized to complement YouTube and expand content dissemination[7]. For another, it is also necessary to encourage viewers to leave messages and respond to comments in the comment section, which can establish a good interactive relationship with viewers, and respond to negative comments in a timely manner to avoid misunderstandings and the spread of negative emotions. In addition, special attention should be paid to crisis response in the process of interaction and response. In the process of content production and release, possible risk points should be predicted in advance and response strategies should be formulated, so that when negative public opinion occurs, positive response content can be released in a timely manner to avoid worse situation.

4.3 Increasing the exposure of the Hangzhou Asian Games on the YouTube

First of all, it is important to produce high-quality video content and make sure that the video picture is clear and colorful with quality sound. At the same time, some unique perspectives and creative

elements in the video can be added to increase the impression and interest of the audience. In addition to traditional video forms, short videos, pictures, GIF motion pictures and other diversified forms can be utilized to show the beauty and cultural charm of Hangzhou. Secondly, cooperating with international friends and inviting foreigners to shoot videos about the Hangzhou Asian Games can show their love for the city and their concern for the Asian Games. This unique perspective can attract the attention of more viewers. Online activities can also be carried out by organizing some interesting online activities, such as lucky draws and Q&A sessions, to attract more users' attention and participation. The theme of these activities can be associated with the Asian Games, or it can also be the introduction of Hangzhou's history, culture and customs and other content. In addition, the focus can be put on cooperating with other Asian cities or countries to co-produce and promote video content about Asian culture and the Asian Games. Through joint marketing, the overall exposure and influence can be enhanced. Finally, the influencer effect can be utilized to leverage their fan base and influence to drive more users to follow and share relevant content (As shown in figure 1).
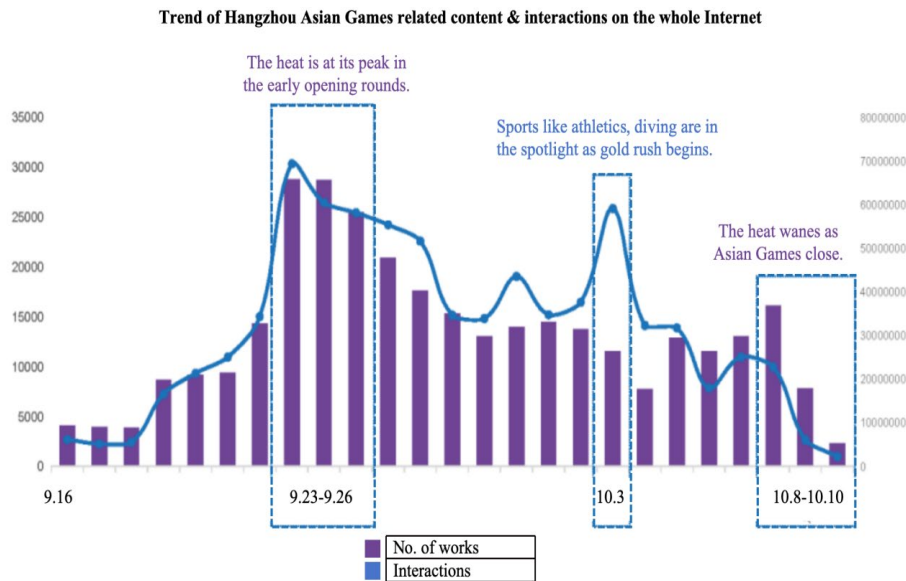

Figure 1: Content interactions across the Internet about the Hangzhou Asian Games[8]

4.4 Increasing audience participation the Hangzhou Asian Games on YouTube

Audience participation is the key to promoting the international communication of the Hangzhou Asian Games city image, so it is necessary to encourage the audience to actively participate in discussions and exchanges, and to enhance user stickiness and participation by providing opportunities for feedback and suggestions. For one thing, it is necessary to establish a good communication mechanism with users to stimulate their enthusiasm and motivation by building trust and emotional ties. Personalized services for users can be provided through data analysis technologies to analyze users' interests and viewing habits to send personalized content and services to them. According to the feedback and opinions of users, the content and experience can be optimized to improve the satisfaction of user experience. For example, special programs can be produced for specific audience groups (e.g., sports fans, culture enthusiasts, etc.). For example, professionals can be invited to introduce the competition events, history and cultural background of the Hangzhou Asian Games and other information to meet the needs of specific groups.

5. Summary

The task of promoting a city's image is a long and arduous one. The Asian Games provide a significant platform for enhancing the cultural exchange and cultural integration among countries, and they demonstrate Hangzhou's diversified tourism and cultural resources to the whole world. In today's interconnected world, shaping a city's image requires not only the improvement of hard power but the building of soft power in communication. Effective use of city brand, city culture and city characteristics to shape and spread the city image can expand the city's influence in the international community and gain wider recognition and reputation.

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