Taking the City as the Medium: Research on the Construction and Dissemination of City Image from the Perspective of 'Media Event'

—Taking Harbin Traffic Progression as an Example

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Abstract: In the era of media convergence, the dissemination of city images has gradually entered the stage of mobile Internet visual dominance with short video as the main carrier and focusing on urban life. Local mainstream media actively participate in it and play a key guiding role in media events. At the end of 2023, the content of Harbin Ice and Snow Cultural Tourism in the short video platform exploded, making Harbin one of the well-known tourist destinations at home and abroad. Harbin extends the traditional way of expressing the city image of " taking the city as the medium, " with " media event " as the core, supplemented by the sincere hospitality method of " Scene-Topic-Empathy" which enriches the narrative paradigm and discourse system related to the construction and dissemination of the city image, and explores an effective way to promote the internationalization of the city in the era of media integration. This paper takes the event of Harbin cultural and tourism industry's rise to fame as an example. From the perspective of media events, taking the timeline as the axis, it explores how media events can further promote the traffic progression of Harbin city IP from the three dimensions of image construction, brand communication and value shaping, to move towards the international stage.

Keywords: media events, Harbin Cultural Tourism, city image communication, empathy communication, city personification

1. Introduction

With the deepening of China's internationalization and urbanization process, the issue of international communication of urban image has been paid more and more attention. How to create a good international image has become the proper meaning of urban development.

Media events are planned and purposeful events planned and executed by the media; Or events where the media intervenes in objective events to have an impact on them. As a new mode of news production and reporting, media events have three typical characteristics: (1) the media has more subjective initiative in its production process; (2) Media events often occur frequently through public relations promotion, event marketing, and other means; (3) Directly and indirectly affecting the "audience within the event" and "audience outside the event", having a significant impact on

society.[1] Media events, as an intuitive display and concentrated expression of social issues and phenomena, can rapidly spread through new media and other communication channels, attracting widespread public participation and quickly making relevant individuals, events or things the focus of the public. In the process of advancing the traffic of "Harbin", a constant stream of media events is an important lever for multiple parties to work together to promote the construction and dissemination of the city's brand image.

2. Organization of the Text

2.1. Image construction: From discourse reversal to collaborative construction of urban brand image

On December 19, 2023, # Harbin Ice and Snow World apologizes # made it to the hot search. On the first day of the park's opening, the grandeur of the Ice and Snow World attracted more than 40000 tourists to visit. Due to long queue times, some tourists are unable to enjoy the free activities they want to play, such as Ice slides and Ferris wheels. In addition, the cold weather brings some unpleasant experiences, so many tourists crowded together at the scene shouting "ticket refunds". The related videos were uploaded by netizens to social media, sparking intense discussions among netizens. Faced with tourists' demands for ticket refunds on social media, the park official issued an apology letter in the afternoon of the same day, explaining the rectification measures and promising to refund the tickets. After understanding the beginning and end of the media incident, many netizens have called for the Ice and Snow World, and some netizens have stood for the scenic area.

The advantageous opinions prompted by the mass media can lead to a minority group supporting disadvantaged opinions turning to silence or agreement. The spread of silence and the bold expression of advantageous opinions can lead the public to have a wrong perception of the climate of opinions, forming the dissemination phenomenon revealed by the "spiral of silence" theory.[2] In this media incident, the official of Ice and Snow World intervened actively and made timely public relations to prevent the formation of a climate of opinion. It successfully avoided the public opinion crisis caused by disorderly dissemination characterized by emotional rendering. The establishment of a good reputation in the park has laid the foundation for the explosive popularity of Harbin's urban IP, from crisis public relations in response to unexpected situations in the scenic area to reversal of discourse.

2.1.1. IP-based regional cultural resources enrich audience scene experience

Behind the overwhelming traffic, there is a year of dedication from the Harbin Cultural and Tourism Bureau. Harbin boasts a rich historical and cultural heritage, unique Western-style architecture, and the unique ice and snow features of Northeast China. Based on this, Harbin Culture and Tourism Bureau fully explores and integrates the urban resource endowment, clarifies the city's positioning, and cleverly integrates more new gameplay and fun methods into vivid and recognizable city image symbols with local characteristics. The construction of an exotic and IP-based urban image symbol system stimulates the vitality of cultural landscapes and builds the defining feature for urban image display.

Harbin 's creative ' tourism symbol ' satisfies tourists, especially the ' Z generation ' young people who pursue a differentiated experience of fresh stimulation. The short video uploaded by tourists with a strong ' presence feeling ' impact greatly mobilizes the public's physical imagination and constructs the city's media image with a new media scene. However, the dissemination of fragmented and one-sided city image symbols in the online world often stays in the shallow sensory experience, which requires the city culture to ' string points ' to eliminate the fragmented image construction and establish the public's deep and connotative cognition of the city. Harbin Cultural Tourism Bureau's urban image symbol system with ice and snow culture as its characteristic strengthens the organic

integration of urban overall space and creative symbols, and strengthens the cultural attributes of landscape and the expression of urban culture. The city image symbol is deeply bound to the city in the process of IP and realizes the close linkage with the city image in terms of cultural characteristics.

2.1.2. The ' official-resident-user ' tripartite expression collaborative setting agenda

The theory of network agenda setting holds that news media not only tell the public what they think or how they think, but also determine how they connect different pieces of information to form their understanding and judgment of social reality. [3] In the early stages of the Harbin urban IP's rise to fame, the government-led official side union with local KOLs actively guided the development of "media events". By focusing on the top content of OGC (such as Ice and Snow World, Sofia Cathedral), the dissemination of PGC content and scenes (The application of well-known IPs such as Hogwarts, Winterfell, and Iron Throne, as well as the creation of proprietary IPs such as Taoxue Penguin, 18 meter tall snowman, Pegasus, and artificial moon) has been promoted. After igniting the topic, the UGC creative content spontaneously generated by local residents and users（such as sharing, showcasing, and showing off and participating in the creation of various memes on self media platforms）has been widely recognized by the public for its affinity and resonance, thus achieving the standing-out and phenomenal dissemination of the city's image. Among them, the affinity expression of official narratives, the magical tension of local vinegar flavor narratives, and the active participation of individual narratives driven by technology have created opportunities for expressing urban images from three dimensions. The collaborative agenda of " official-resident-user " makes the construction and dissemination of Harbin's urban image more three-dimensional and full, in line with the public's cognitive network.

2.1.2.1. Official government: from propaganda narrative to affinity narrative

In the stage of mobile Internet dominated by short videos, the main content of urban image communication has changed from urban landscape to urban life centered on the dissemination of food, street photography, entertainment, and leisure. Harbin Culture and Tourism Bureau closely followed the hot spots to change the media form, and planned an online activity of "Heilongjiang in the Song" and an unfashionable promotional film of "My Last Name is Ha" with a "network sense" to promote the city image during the warm-up period of ice and snow tourism. Subsequently, the official short video platform account continued to make efforts, and short videos that cater to the preferences of young people, such as "Princess Please Come to Harbin" and "Hogwarts Harbin Campus," were densely released, making netizens exclaim that Harbin's cultural and tourism industry gradually mastered the traffic password. From the rapid response of ticket refund waves in the Ice and Snow World to the gratitude of the Director of Culture and Tourism for the promotion of urban culture and tourism by netizens and their enthusiastic acceptance of @'s suggestions for cultural and tourism development to the serious response to netizens' proposal to "cancel dog sled" and actively regulate market chaos such as "68 yuan pot wrapped meat" reported by netizens The government led official always "wants to be together" and "stands together" with tourists with the most sincere attitude, and timely meets the needs of tourists based on feedback. After each video is released, the Harbin government will pay attention to the comments of netizens, actively participate in topics and hot searches, listen to the voices of the public, guide diverse public opinion, and engage in real-time two-way interaction with the public. Official changes the way of discourse, create and play with memes with netizens, which, to some extent, dispels the public's prejudice against official marketing narrative.

2.1.2.2.Local residents: folk tacit understanding to show the value of urban cultural tourism

The vitality of a city comes from being the main body of the city as residents, who are an important component of the city's image brand. With the development of new media, folk subjects with stronger emotional connections and a sense of identity have become the top priority for urban image promotion and dissemination. The serious image of city leaders and others gradually faded out in front of the camera, and those who entered the public media's view were the citizens of Harbin who shouted, "Harbin, you make me feel unfamiliar", "Don't ask the locals about the travel tips anymore, I as the local haven't seen these either", "I'm going to make a scene!!! I haven't even seen them". This story of "hollowing out the family 's wealth to treat tourists and snubbing their own people" is more true under the roast of Harbin people who take sadness as the background color, joy as the interior, and jealousy as the representation, which gives special emotion and significance to the official tourism services. The vinegar-flavored narrative of Harbin citizens with their own theatrical fun creates a special tension between tourists and citizens in the city. After comprehending the folk's tacit understanding, the Harbin government and the local residents worked together to divide the labor. In the media event, many topics such as "frozen pear cutting plate", "Northeast tiger", "bean curd jelly served with the sauce adding sugar" and so on were successively triggered, and the "wealth beyond measure" was caught.

2.1.2.3.Online users: self-presentation and secondary creation to actively dialogue with cities

Alvin Toffler first proposed the concept of "producers and consumers" in his book "The Third Wave", and with the support of new media technology, "audiences" completed a magnificent transformation towards "users". Compared to the audience, users present a more proactive and active participation and integration. As tourists to Harbin, "Southern Little Potato" was moved by a series of doting actions by "Harbin" and spontaneously posted the "comfort" and "respect" they felt on social media platforms. These interesting, representative, and more approachable stories tell urban stories in individual voices, breaking the traditional formality and monotony of "propaganda narrative" and achieving word-of-mouth dissemination of Harbin culture and tourism. In addition, tourists also transform their experience of tourism scenes into participation in topics, actively seeking short video materials that can express resonance and present themselves. During this process, local mainstream media easily obtained a huge amount of news clues, enabling uninterrupted news collaborative production and dissemination. Meanwhile, the UGC content that netizens actively recreated based on hot words has sparked a scene of nationwide frenzy and interaction. By forwarding, sharing, commenting, liking, and other means, users actively promote the re-dissemination of hot memes, and jointly create a win-win short video dissemination ecosystem with the official.

2.2. Brand communication: From personification of city image to collaborative topic transmission

2.2.1.Harbin aims to build itself into a city with a pleasing personality

Brand personification is a widely used approach in the fields of marketing and communication. Scholar Aaker associates human traits with brands, believing that giving brand personality helps consumers classify their identities and express themselves. Overall, brand personification is the use or arousal of consumers' perceived tendencies toward product or brand personification, causing them to perceive it as possessing human characteristics, thereby influencing their cognition and behavior.[4] In today's era of communication characterized by socialization, mobility, and scene, brand personification not only brings new meanings to traditional marketing models, but also reduces consumer resistance to brand advertising, gradually becoming a battleground for various brands.

Unlike the previous visual-oriented brand personification at the appearance level, Harbin Culture and Tourism Bureau has imbued the city IP with people's character and thought in media events, shaping the city's personality and image at a deeper level. From many videos pushed by Tiktok, it can be seen that the official of Harbin Culture and Tourism regards the short video content reflecting the forthright, honest and enthusiastic character of the northeast people as the check standard, humanizes the northeast of Harbin, and narrows the distance with the public in the social interaction between urban IP and the public, reducing the purpose of marketing. Netizens affectionately refer to the city as "Erbin" and enjoy re-creation, concretizing "Erbin" as the eldest son of the Republic with a gender of "male, height of 185+, liking southern girls, and a pleasing personality". However, Harbin's rise to fame is not solely based on personification marketing, but on respecting and valuing the attitude and service of every visitor. The "Warm Station" that provides free mobile phone charging and hot water ginger tea services for tourists; Anti-slip carpets in subway stations with high passenger flow; Free shuttle service for citizens of the "southern little potatoes" who cannot get a taxi. Sincere and meticulous humanistic care can be seen everywhere. The government lowers its posture and citizens are cooperating. Harbin has created a tangible "pleasing personality" with high-energy social cooperation and urban humanistic spirit.

2.2.2. Topic proliferation creates a grand scene of online "nationwide carnival"

In the Oxford English Dictionary, memes (MEME) are defined as "the fundamental unit of culture that is transmitted through non hereditary means, especially imitation." The Internet meme often have three major characteristics: viral transmission, variability based on simple replication, and selectivity. In the era of Web 2.0, hot memes dominated by internet buzzwords, auto-tune remix-themed contents, and catchphrases are more likely to arouse the public's desire to share and create. The hot meme after continuous mutation and evolution created by netizens will be screened by the public and presented on different websites through algorithmic recommendation mechanisms. In this media event led by the official Harbin Culture and Tourism Bureau, the hot memes that went viral can be said to have diverse creative themes, diverse presentation forms, and rich content. In terms of video form, the "My Surname Ha" video planned and preheated by the Harbin cultural and tourism official has become popular on short video platforms with humorous audio-visual language and easygoing form of expression, causing cultural and tourism officials from various provinces to imitate it and throw down the gauntlet to each other online. The practices of each province have gained popularity on social media platforms and attracted the attention of netizens. In terms of internet buzzwords, the constantly emerging "new memes" provide Heartwarming emotional value points for netizens. From "frozen pear cutting plate "food memes, "truant penguins" animal memes, to "southern small potatoes "tourists nickname memes. The city's IP image and cultural energy are all showcased. Among them, the practice of designing the names of tourists from different cities as IPs through the joint creation of host guest relay not only pioneered the Chinese cultural and tourism industry, but also enhanced the public's sense of participation and value in urban narratives. Various forms of hot memes continue to proliferate online and offline, continuing the lifecycle of Harbin's cultural and tourism topic dissemination, and creating a grand scene of creation, sharing, and celebration for all.

2.3. Value shaping : national empathy from emotional interaction to tourism in exchange form

2.3.1. The host-guest sharing interactive experience pulls up the emotional value

In the post pandemic era, China's cultural and tourism development is gradually moving towards a new plateau of spiritual needs. Tourists have a stronger desire to participate in culture and tourism, and the demand for spiritual and cultural consumption is becoming more prominent. The empathy

and resonance between Harbin citizens and the government in the development of culture and tourism have promoted the formation of a "host-guest sharing" and "a home from home" tourism culture in urban cultural and tourism development. This tourism culture is reflected in Harbin people's enjoyment in treating tourists well, which is a touching kindness and beauty. And it also reflected in the strong fireworks atmosphere of the city. It is sincere Harbin people who preside over justice for cheated tourists; It is the enthusiastic citizens of Harbin actively report feedback from tourists to the scenic area. This kind of "city-wide customer service" provides tourists with unexpected service like doting on children. In the winter and year-end when stress relief is most needed, the interaction between hosts and guests brings rich and positive emotional value to the public. The perfect combination of a service-oriented government and a consumer society has a hustle and bustle of the city life that the people favor.

Empathy communication is the process of forming, transmitting, and spreading common or similar emotions and emotions. [5] In the current era of mainstream media integration and transformation, empathetic communication as a strategy to enhance communication effectiveness can help break the serious discourse image, stimulate audience emotional resonance, reshape a warm media image, and enhance public opinion influence. Therefore, when Harbin's tourism culture is showcased in the media world, the warmth and human care of the city will trigger strong resonance, identification, and diffusion among tourists and netizens, thereby achieving a deeper emotional dissemination effect. The ultimate realm of travel lies in the filling and release of the soul, as well as the deep integration and blending of spiritual culture and society. During the pandemic, people were mostly immersed in fragile social bonds. Nowadays, what people crave is no longer the beautiful scenery, but the profound connection reshaped between people. "Harbin" not only provides tourists with an experience of urban culture and scenery, but also infuses the humanistic sentiment of the entire Northeast into a city, allowing southern friends to experience the sincerity, heat, and generosity of the Northeast, and enjoy the emotional value provided by the entire city.

2.3.2. Traveling in both north and south directions to carry the hometown and national feelings of the Chinese people

As Harbin's tourism culture continues to spread through empathy, 11 children from Nanning, Guangxi, dressed in orange down jackets, attracted attention and quickly became popular online due to their adorable appearance in Harbin. The story of "Erbin" and these children who was known as "Little Sugar Oranges" by netizens has sparked millions of netizens to follow and update. "Harbin" not only dotes on His Highness "Sugar Orange" from Guangxi offline, but also releases relevant video content of "Little Sugar Orange" on the official short video platform, frequently interacting with netizens. Subsequently, "The little maize" from Henan, "The little Chinese angelica root" from Taiwan, "Little Panda" from Sichuan...... Doll groups from all over China have bravely ventured into Harbin. Netizens are immersed in the travel stories of the doll group, enjoying themselves.

At the same time, in order to repay the hospitality of the Northeast "homey" to their children, the southern provinces gave generous gifts, Guangxi sent hundreds of tons of sugar oranges and mandarin oranges, Yunnan sent tens of thousands of boxes of flower cakes, matsutake biscuits While returning thoughtful gifts, residents in Northeast China actively travel south to avoid the cold and enjoy the friendly travel preferential policies of southern friends. This is an interactive experience of different regional cultures and lifestyles, a two-way journey spanning north and south, showcasing the unity and friendship of the 56 ethnic groups in China through reciprocity. The ritual view of communication holds that communication is not only the transmission of information on the surface, but also a ritual activity that brings people together in social relationships and life as a group or collective identity. In the process of the spread of the two-way efforts event between Harbin and various provinces, southern tourists, Harbin people and netizens have established and maintained a shared belief, value and ritual.

The " North-South swap " not only crosses the geographical boundaries and builds a bridge for cultural understanding and communication, but also virtually elevates the value of cultural tourism topics and sublimates people 's emotions. These topics bearing the local complex and national feelings have brought a strong and lasting emotional impact to the public, making them feel the joy and well-being of the Chinese people and engage in value consumption through empathetic resonance.

3.   Conclusion

The phenomenon of Harbin cultural and tourism industry's standing out provides valuable experience for the construction and dissemination of urban image in the era of media integration. Firstly, it is necessary to shape the urban humanistic spirit through high-energy social synergy. Compared with the explosive internet celebrity that was difficult to control and fleeting before, Harbin's cultural and tourism industry has shown an orderly process of providing excellent services and being controllable throughout the entire process. During this process, a high degree of resonance and collaboration between citizens and the government, as well as the government's rapid response to tourist demand, proactive marketing strategies, and excellent urban governance capabilities are key factors for success. Secondly, we need to use media events as the core to enhance the vitality and affinity of the city's image. Mainstream media should comply with the laws of social media communication, transform the discourse style of propaganda and narrative, and combine real-life hot topics to convey warm and powerful vivid urban cases. Finally, we should actively shape and apply urban culture. People have a variety of different faces and characteristics, the city also has a variety of different scenes and characteristics. Different cities are full of mystery and attraction because of their differentiated urban spirit and cultural heritage. In today's world where spiritual needs and life experiences are higher than material enjoyment, a city culture based on precise positioning is the real most distinctive and confident business card in the city's external communication.

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