An Empirical Study on the Influencing Factors of Short Videos in New Mainstream Media Constructing National Image

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Abstract: This paper applies the rooting theory to study and analyze how the short video "China Mosaic" constructs the national image on Facebook. Through three levels of coding: open coding, spindle coding, and selective coding, it summaries the communication influencing factors of the short video in constructing and presenting the national image from five dimensions, such as politics, economy, culture, natural environment, society, with a view to providing reference samples for the mainstream media in constructing the national image.

Keywords: Mainstream media; National image construction; Short video; China Three Minutes (China Mosaic)

1. Introduction

Constructing the national image is the focus of enhancing China's overall image recognition, which plays an important role in improving international political and economic status and enhancing China's national cultural soft power. China Mosaic is a bilingual short video program launched by China's mainstream media China.com for overseas audiences. Since its broadcast in May 2015, as of May 22, 2024, a total of 459 episodes have been launched, covering a wide range of topics such as economy, culture, diplomacy, society and people's livelihood, etc. and the cumulative number of clicks received on Facebook and other international social platforms has exceeded 2 billion, becoming a better window for overseas audiences to learn about China.

In the literature on "China Mosaic", "China in 3 minutes", the research mainly focuses on four dimensions, namely, the dimension of national image construction, the dimension of semiotic theory analysis, the dimension of strategy suggestion, and the dimension of analysis of communication effect. Which is valuable, but the sample is not very timely. From the analysis dimension of communication effect, Zhang Lingyan analyzed how the program tells Chinese stories well and achieves better external communication effects [1]. Deng Guofeng

and Zhang Chengcheng proposed that it is necessary to extract and grasp the characteristic positioning, deal with key issues directly, improve the precision strategy design, and strengthen the localization operation [2]. From the dimension of national image construction, Wang Yishi analyzes the success of the program in the construction of national image from three aspects: national position, positive emotion, and value communication [3]. Zhang Shan analyzes the material and value dimensions of national image and explores whether there is a deviation between the image people want to present on Facebook (self-expected image) and the image of China under public perception (actual image) [4]. From the perspective of semiotic theoretical analysis, Wang Li analyzed how to achieve directional, precise, and penetrating communication effects through the effective construction of content symbols and discourse symbols, and formed a diversified communication matrix [5]. Meng Xingchen analyzes different issues in the program and studies four kinds of Chinese image frames constructed by it [6]. From the perspective of strategy suggestion, Liao Peixu analyzed the program itself from four aspects of international communication, topic selection, language, and audiovisual, and explored the successful experience of how to tell Chinese stories well [7]. Han Xue analyzed and put forward promoting strategies [8]. Wu Gehong analyzes the characteristics and experience of external communication of programs in the new era and discusses its communication strategy [9–10].

2. Research design

2.1. Rationale

In this paper, the authors will apply the rootedness theory to the collected China Mosaic programs broadcasted by China.com on the overseas social media platform Facebook and adopt the classification of the constituent elements of the national image in Liu Jinan and He Hui's "China's Image: The Status Quo of China's National Image in International Communication and Countermeasures", and combine the content of the short video program of China Mosaic with its political, economic and other basic dimensions, using three-level coding to analyze the video content step by step according to the required analysis indexes in terms of several basic dimensions such as politics and economy.

2.2. Content analysis methodology

In this study, the authors first searched the short videos related to China Three Minutes (China Mosaic) posted by Chinese web accounts on the Facebook platform according to keywords, and selected the samples through manual filtering and supplementation; then the authors conducted in-depth analyses of the collected short videos and established quantitative indicator then analyses them in conjunction with the relevant literature, finally get the summarization of the basic features of the short videos.

3. Sample selection and category construction

3.1. Selection of the study sample

From its broadcast in May 2015 to May 22, 2024, the China network short video program "China Three Minutes (China Mosaic)" has launched a total of 459 episodes covering a wide range of topics such as economy, culture, diplomacy, society, and people's livelihoods, and has reaped a cumulative total of more than 2 billion hits on many international social platforms such as Facebook. In this paper, the authors select the programs broadcasted on the Facebook account of China Mosaic from February 1, 2021, to February 1, 2024, which were captured by

Python, and use the N Vivo 12 software to obtain 140 valid samples after the initial screening invalid samples such as repetitive, irrelevant clips and other invalid samples, and constructing the class categories according to the required analytical indexes.

3.2. Category construction

Firstly, the text collected from the program was screened and pre-processed to remove the meaningless content and form a corrected text sample. Then, the text samples are imported into the N Vivo 12 software for "word frequency search." In this step, the "synonym grouping" function is set to ensure that semantically similar words are correctly categorized, and the minimum text length is set to two characters to exclude unnecessary single-character noise. By applying a list of deactivated words, words that are common but irrelevant to the analysis are filtered out. By analyzing this data, the authors can gain an in-depth understanding of the core topics and focus of the program content. The results of the word frequency analysis show (**Figure 1**) that the word "China" ranks first with a high frequency of 543 occurrences, followed by "development" (152 occurrences), "put forward" (145 occurrences), "achieve" (145 occurrences), and "development" (145 occurrences), "realize" (135 times), and "world" (126 times). These high-frequency words not only show the main focus of the program's content, but also reveal the core messages and values that the program aims to convey, such as China's development, its role on the world stage, and China's attitudes and solutions to international problems.
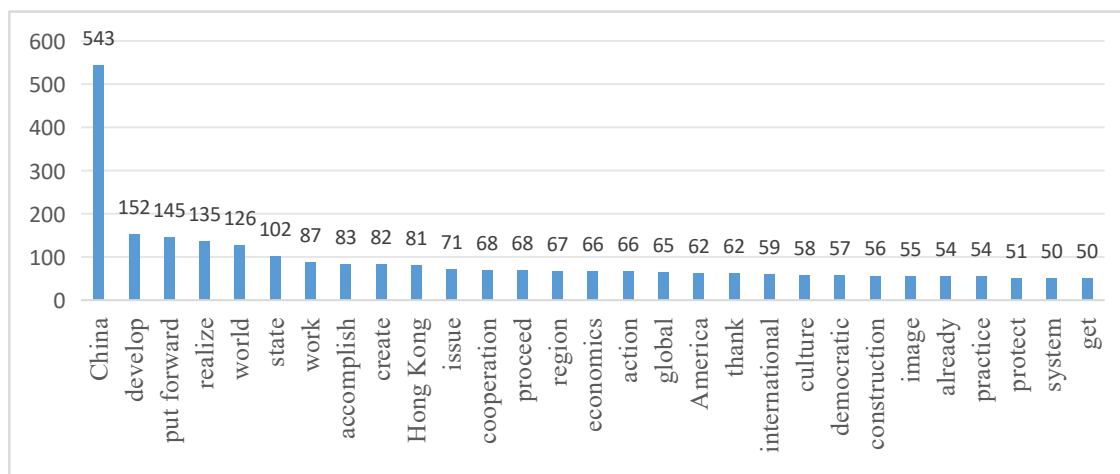

Figure 1. Keyword frequency chart

By analyzing the keywords and themes of the 140 programs, it was found that the contents of the programs covered a wide range of fields such as politics, economy, society, culture, etc. Then the sentences were taken as the unit of analysis and coding analysis was carried out by using three levels of coding, namely open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Coding analyses were conducted and supported by quantitative statistical results.

3.2.1. Open coding

Open coding refers to the process of breaking down, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing the data collected at the beginning of the study, that is, an operationalization process that breaks up heavy data according to certain principles, assigns concepts to them, and then reassembles them with key high-frequency words as

markers. The aim is to identify the same or similar types from the primary data collected and at the same time to name the types to define their concepts and dimensions.

3.2.2. Spindle code

NVivo12 the second step of the qualitative analysis is the main axis coding of the textual material. The main axis coding is a secondary inductive analysis based on the key nodes marked by the open coding, to discover the relationship between the new main core concepts, and to achieve the organic association of multiple concepts such as politics and economy, and the authors refer to the category that combines and associates the new concepts as the "main category." N vivo 12 is encoded step by step, and 31 free nodes are initially obtained to form the initial concepts. According to the frequency of utterance and the theoretical significance of the nodes, 9 secondary nodes are summarized and merged to form the main category, and the correspondence between each category and the free node is shown.

3.2.3. Selective coding

Selective coding, also known as "core coding", is a distillation of the category genera that encompasses the entire analysis system. It is the core of the whole model, and all levels of categories form a connected whole around the core code. According to the five categories of politics, economy, culture, natural environment, and society, they can be grouped into one main category: China's image construction.

4. Reliability test

Combining the results of the statistical analysis of the content coding of all the samples of short videos, the elemental composition and proportion of the national image presented by the short video are summarized from five dimensions, including politics, economy, culture, natural environment, and society.

4.1. Composition and share of elements of the political dimension

Domestic political coding, accounting for 54.8 percent of the total, highlights the intrinsic elements of China's political stability and governance capacity. The international political codes, accounting for 45.2 percent of the total, show China's interaction and influence in the international arena, as well as its posture of actively participating in international affairs and contributing to global governance. It focuses on the composite nature of China's political image, which includes both the stability and efficiency of domestic political governance, as well as China's role and foreign relations in international politics, reflecting the multi-dimensional character of Chinese politics and its active participation in international politics.

4.2. Composition and share of elements of the economic dimension

The coding of the economic system, with the highest share of 50 percent, emphasizes the state of macroeconomic management and industry development, showing the characteristics of China's economic structure and policy environment. People's living standard codes, accounting for 22.7 percent of the total, reflect how the fruits of economic development are reflected and improved in people's lives. Product codes, accounting for 2.3%, though small in number, highlight the influence and brand value of Made in China. International economic exchange codes, accounting for 18.2 percent, demonstrate China's interaction and contribution to the global economy. Infrastructure codes, accounting for 6.8%, reflect the material foundation

and supporting conditions behind economic development.

4.3. Composition and share of elements of the cultural dimension

Art coding, accounting for 14.3 percent of the total, shows the prosperity and diversity of Chinese art and emphasizes the role of art in cultural inheritance and innovation. Cultural heritage coding, accounting for 10.2%, highlights the importance of cultural heritage and national identity. History coding, at 16.3%, highlights the importance of history in shaping national and ethnic identity. Cultural exchange coding, with the highest percentage of 46.9 percent, highlights China's active participation and contribution to global cultural exchange and cultural diplomacy. Folklore coding, with a share of 12.2%, highlights the role of folklore in maintaining cultural diversity and promoting cultural understanding.

4.4. Composition and share of elements of the natural environment dimension

In the analysis of the natural environment dimension of the short video content of "Three Minutes in China (China Mosaic)", two open codes, geographic environment, and ecological environment, were formed by observing and categorizing the features of the natural environment shown in the video. The geographic environment code, accounting for 26.7% of the total, shows the rich and diverse natural landscapes and geographic features of China, emphasizing the contribution of natural beauty to tourism and cultural values. The ecological environment code, with a larger share of 73.3%, reflects China's efforts and challenges in ecological protection and environmental management, highlighting the importance of ecological environmental protection in sustainable development.

4.5. Composition and share of elements of the social dimension

Social ethos coding, which occupies a great proportion of 84%, reflects the main trends and characteristics of Chinese society amid rapid development and change, such as emerging lifestyles, cultural trends, and the evolution of social values, emphasizing the dynamic nature of society and the spirit of the times. Social order codes, accounting for 12.3 percent of the total, demonstrate the governance capacity and social stability of Chinese society, highlighting the importance of the rule of law and order in social development. The public facilities code, with a relatively small percentage of 3.7%, reflects the role of public services and infrastructure development in improving people's quality of life and meeting social needs.

5. Conclusion

Through analyses and research, the authors have come up with a suggested strategy for the mainstream media to build a national image. Firstly, focusing on the theme of the community of human destiny. Considering the acceptance characteristics of foreign netizens, analyzing and selecting themes that are common among different countries and regions, it is easier to break the high and low contexts and country-specific cultural barriers, and arouse the emotional resonance of netizens, so that it is easy to reach a consensus. Secondly, the authors take the initiative to respond to international news hotspots. News hotspots are fleeting, actively respond to international news hotspots, purposeful and selective information to set the topics, and proactive, timely response can effectively stimulate netizens to pay attention to deepen the image. Thirdly, the authors will use the language that is easy to be accepted by overseas netizens. The authors will create new concepts and expressions that link the world, and interpret the special practices of China's development. The discourse system comes from

how China faces the world and needs to explore the acceptance habits and characteristics of overseas netizens from a global perspective. The mainstream media should fully embody the value of an inclusive and open communication discourse system in the process of foreign communication, and China's worldview of "beauty for each" and "beauty for all" should be disseminated to foreign audiences.

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Disclosure statement

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