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Optimization of communication strategies for cultural and tourism short videos

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Abstract. Cultural and tourism short videos have emerged as a pivotal driving force in advancing regional cultural communication and tourism economic development. The tripartite characteristics they manifest—content diversification, rapid communication velocity, and audience interactivity—have fundamentally reconstructed the communicative ecology of the cultural and tourism sector. Notwithstanding, a constellation of issues has been exposed in their developmental trajectory, including ambiguous positioning of official accounts and content homogeneity, which have notably diminished communicative efficiency. Empirical studies indicate that in the current era dominated by the "traffic-oriented" paradigm, the absence of gate keeping functions resulting from insufficient supervision, coupled with the dissolution of cultural uniqueness caused by symbolic inflation, has generated unbalanced experiential outcomes for both localities and users. It is only through the following pathways that a healthy cultural and tourism communication ecology can be established and the high-quality sustainable development of the cultural and tourism industry can be realized: communicators must adhere to communication ethics and accept multi-stakeholder supervision to rebuild official public credibility; local cultures should be deeply excavated, discarding traffic-oriented templates to construct unique cultural and tourism images; and the service quality of cultural and tourism short videos should be enhanced to provide cultural and tourism guidance and information navigation for the public.

Keywords: cultural and tourism, short videos, communication strategies

1. Introduction

In recent years, short videos, with their "short, flat, and fast" communication characteristics, have reconstructed the online communication model of the cultural and tourism industry. From the "phenomenal breakout" of Zibo barbecue and Harbin Ice and Snow World to the cultural IP breakthrough of Xinjiang's Apple Fragrance and Guangdong's "Yingge Dance," short video platforms have become important tools for shaping urban images and promoting cultural and tourism resources. According to the 55th Statistical Report on the Development of China's Internet Network, as of December 2024, the number of short video users in China reached 1.04 billion, and the number of online travel booking users reached 548 million [1]. This shows that the communication of cultural and tourism short videos has significantly increased the exposure of local cultural and tourism industries and the efficiency of resource monetization. However, many problems have also been exposed during the dissemination of short videos: On the one hand, cultural and tourism accounts have fallen into "involution" and "blurred self-positioning" in the fight for traffic, with some content being highly homogeneous and excessively entertainment-oriented, diminishing the uniqueness and sanctity of local culture; on the other hand, cultural and tourism supporting services have lagged behind promotional content, leading to poor tourist experiences and a collapse in the reputation of the cultural and tourism industry. Previous studies have mainly focused on the creative content of cultural and tourism short videos and user participation, but there has been little research on the deep-seated conflicts between the "traffic economy" and "sustainable development" reflected in the above phenomena, making it urgent to explore optimization paths. Therefore, this paper will take the development characteristics and existing problems of "short videos + cultural tourism" as a starting point, combined with practical cases from multiple regions, to explore the transformation logic from "instant fame" to "long-term popularity." This research can not only provide characteristic communication strategies for cultural and tourism short video accounts to avoid blind follow-up but also promote the cultural and tourism industry's shift from "traffic dependence" to "quality-driven development," achieving both social and economic benefits.

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2. Current development characteristics of cultural and tourism short videos

The rise of short videos has brought brand-new possibilities to cultural and tourism communication. From the phenomenal breakout of cultural and tourism topics such as "Harbin Ice and Snow World" and "Zibo Barbecue," it can be seen that the key reason why this media form has shone in the field of cultural and tourism promotion lies in its three major characteristics.

2.1. Diversified content

Short videos feature rich and diverse content, and when combined with cultural and tourism themes, their uniqueness is primarily reflected in the integration of theme excavation and technological innovation. From the perspective of theme excavation, the content of cultural and tourism short videos has expanded from traditional natural landscapes and historical relics to diverse fields such as local cuisine, folk activities, intangible cultural heritage craftsmanship, and travel guides [2]. For example, through short videos showcasing ice and snow scenes, play strategies, and other content about "Harbin Ice and Snow World," users have formed a tourist gaze on the "ice and snow imagery," establishing a three-dimensional communication chain from "online planting" to "offline experience," successfully achieving the transformation from "communication traffic" to "economic increment." From the perspective of technological integration, the introduction of cutting-edge technologies such as holographic imaging, 3D surround screens, Augmented Reality (AR), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) has brought a brand-new cultural and tourism promotion experience to users. For instance, during the 2025 Spring Festival, the Palace Museum launched an "AR" guided tour, where visitors could trigger historical scene restoration by scanning cultural relics with their mobile phones. This technology not only breaks through time and space limitations, allowing visitors to experience immersive environments but also provides new directions for the production concepts of cultural and tourism short videos. Additionally, diversified content can accurately reach users in different interest circles. Previously, short videos themed around the Yingge Dance in Chaoshan, Guangdong, became popular across various platforms, attracting international attention, expanding the audience base, and enhancing communication efficiency.

2.2. Fast communication speed

Short videos with brief duration and large information volume are often more favored by users [3]. To shorten the video length, creators must densely compress information content to maximize communication efficiency. Through highly intensive visual symbol encoding, cultural and tourism short videos condense regional cultural imagery into short videos ranging from tens of seconds to a few minutes by means of rapid switching of landmark buildings, instant presentation of intangible cultural heritage craftsmanship, and wonderful editing of folk activities (e.g., the official Douyin account @Sichuan Cultural Tourism continuously attracts traffic with a dozen-second video of "Panda Huahua" and "Sanxingdui"; the individual Douyin account @Diandilahai brings popularity to multiple check-in spots with a tens-of-second creative costume-changing series "How to Become a City Spokesperson"). This not only avoids the limitation of users' attention threshold but also reconstructs the dimension of time and space through immersive audio-visual language, allowing users' minds to highly focus on this "instant shock" experience and quickly complete the communication of "culture + tourism". In addition, artificial intelligence algorithm recommendation can accurately provide users with personalized content by analyzing users' behavioral data, search traces, and interaction trajectories. This technological advancement has significantly improved the speed of content reaching users, enabling them to obtain video content that matches their personal preferences more quickly [4]. In the field of cultural and tourism communication, the algorithm recommendation mechanism acts as an intermediary for cultural dissemination. The system can accurately recommend tourism content such as ice and snow tourism, ancient town roaming, or food destinations that align with users' preferences to target users, pushing the cultural and tourism industry into a new stage of "second-level reach and precise resonance".

2.3. Audience interactivity

Interactivity with audiences is one of the core characteristics of cultural and tourism short videos [5]. Through technological empowerment and user participation mechanisms, it breaks the constraints between creators and users in traditional media. In terms of cultural and tourism communication, short videos have reconstructed the one-way model of traditional cultural and tourism communication. Functions such as likes, comments, shares, and danmu (bullet comments) in short videos provide users with instant interaction channels, strengthening two-way communication between creators and users. Creators can promptly respond to user feedback and quickly adjust subsequent content to achieve communication goals and effects, which not only enhances user stickiness but also helps local cultural and tourism bureaus optimize cultural and tourism services [6]. From the perspective of perceptual interaction channels, the interactive behaviors between creators and users achieve cultural identity through emotional connections. This interactivity not only improves the effectiveness of cultural and tourism communication but

also deeply shapes the digital identity of a locality. In addition, in the era of User-Generated Content (UGC) and universal co-creation communication, the "Xi'an New Year · Most Chinese" campaign launched by Xi'an in collaboration with Douyin achieved remarkable viral communication effects through the model of "government guidance + universal creation" [7]. Users can independently create content by filming check-in videos to form secondary communication, achieving traffic fission from Professional-Generated Content (PGC) to UGC.

3. Problems in dissemination

Short-videos have achieved remarkable results in facilitating cultural and tourism promotion, greatly promoting the vigorous development of the cultural and tourism industry. However, in the process of disseminating cultural and tourism short-videos, a series of problems have emerged, which have had a certain degree of negative impact on the communication ecology. We must face these problems squarely and actively seek solutions.

3.1. The ambiguous image positioning of official accounts reduces authority

The gate-keeper theory was put forward by Kurt Lewin, a German-American psychologist and one of the founders of communication studies. The core idea of this theory is that in the process of information dissemination, there are specific "individuals" or "organizations" that screen, filter, and edit information, determining which content can enter the communication channels and ultimately be delivered to the audience [8]. Against the background of continuous technological progress and changing times, the media workers in the cultural and tourism bureaus are becoming younger. However, some account managers fail to fully recognize their important role as "gate-keepers" and have a misinterpretation of the social responsibilities they bear, resulting in the uneven quality of the released content. For example, there are typos and improper matching between materials and subtitles in the videos released by some official accounts. This not only reduces the accuracy of information reception by ordinary users, but also damages the authoritative image of the official accounts. In the subsequent communication process, the authority of these accounts as speakers will also be questioned.

3.2. Homogeneous content reduces the uniqueness of local cultural landscapes

The theory of symbolic consumption was proposed by French sociologist Jean Baudrillard, who revealed the essence of consumption in postmodern society—the pursuit of personalized symbolic value. Based on the theory of symbolic consumption, the erosion of the uniqueness of local cultural landscapes by homogeneous content can be understood as "symbolic inflation," namely the devaluation of symbolic meanings caused by overproduction [9]. On the one hand, the mass replication of landscape symbols and the traffic dependence of communication strategies can make users shift from "expecting differences" to "aesthetic numbness." For example, cultural and tourism content in many places has fallen into standardized templates such as "glass walkways + Hanfu + ancient towns" or "aerial scenery + slogan copy + popular BGM." This presentation of symbols strips away the historical context and cultural foundation of a place, replacing them with a blind choice of "traffic templates" that have been validated by algorithmic recommendations. On the other hand, the "slice transition" templates derived from similar popular videos and the splicing of content often neglect the excavation and presentation of deep-seated elements, instead focusing on instant sensory stimulation and shallow emotional experiences, thereby weakening the solemnity and profundity of cultural landscapes. The content presented in short videos is the material carrier of the diversity of local cultural landscapes. Homogenized symbols copied in bulk not only undermine the deep meanings contained in cultural and tourism landscapes but also deconstruct their uniqueness.

4. Optimization strategies

Aiming at the problems encountered in the communication process of cultural and tourism short videos, this paper proposes a series of optimization strategies, aiming to build a more ideal cultural and tourism communication ecology and achieve the sustainable development of cultural and tourism communication.

4.1. Strengthen supervision of communication subjects

Cultural and tourism short videos require joint supervision from three parties: communication subjects, platforms, and users. Only through the collaborative governance of these three can the optimization of the cultural and tourism communication ecology be achieved. As communication subjects, they should take the initiative to apply for qualification verification, clarify the identities of creators, and ensure the authenticity and standardization of content. With the rapid development of the cultural and tourism industry, a large number of accounts focusing on cultural and tourism promotion continue to emerge. As platforms, while

using AI review and algorithm recommendation, they should also strengthen manual review and severely crack down on accounts engaging in improper profit-making. For example, after the sudden popularity of Henan's cultural tourism, many private accounts used the name of "official secondary accounts" to promote travel cards and special product sales links, and even fabricated the persona of "cultural and tourism directors" to perform exaggerated shows for personal gain [10]. As users, they should actively transform from passive consumers to co-governors of the ecology. While reporting poor-quality content, they can also release "filter-free" content through the UGC user feedback mechanism to counter excessive beautification and promotion. The supervision of cultural and tourism short videos is by no means simply "content filtering." Instead, it aims to achieve "de-hyperreality" of the communication ecology through subject self-discipline, platform supervision, and user co-governance, build a trustworthy communication ecology, curb the alienation trend of "craze for data," return to the essence of public services, and rebuild trust between the government and the public.

4.2. Excavate local cultural characteristics and improve content quality

The key to breaking through the bottleneck of cultural and tourism short videos requires two stages: heterogenization and specialization. First, by deeply deconstructing the cultural characteristics of a region, creators should identify differential elements that distinguish it from other places, and then sublimate these elements into emotional symbols that can trigger resonance, achieving sustainable communication among a wide range of users. In this process, creators must deeply excavate the local history and culture, and study the topicality and storytelling of content creation to achieve the goals of heterogenization and specialization [11]. During the heterogenization stage, creators should abandon past homogeneous templates and instead delve into irreplicable local resources. For example, the Chaoshan Yingge Dance focuses on the innovation of "post-90s inheritors' street dance formations," fundamentally cutting off the symbolic inflation crisis of "intangible cultural heritage + inheritance," highlighting its differentiated competitiveness among numerous intangible cultural heritage short videos and significantly enhancing communication effectiveness. In the specialization stage, cultural differences need to be sublimated into emotional resonance, prompting users to transform from bystanders to experiencers. For instance, the Yi-language commentary at the Torch Football Stadium in Liangshan, Sichuan, endows football matches with ethnic group identity and transforms locality into collective memory. This combination of authentic foundations and emotional sublimation can not only stimulate users' emotional resonance but also effectively promote their emotional connection to the region, further extending to tourism practices. Only by integrating cultural depth with emotional thickness and exploring the characteristics of local culture can a qualitative change be achieved from "traffic consumption" to "value precipitation," promoting the sustainable development of the cultural and tourism industry. This is not only related to the benefits of the cultural and tourism industry but also a spiritual defense war against cultural flattening in the digital space.

4.3. Improve the service level of cultural and tourism short videos

With the continuous enhancement of the country's economic strength, people's pursuit of a better life has gradually increased. They are no longer merely satisfied with material abundance but pay more attention to spiritual comfort. Therefore, improving the service level of cultural and tourism short videos can not only more effectively motivate people to pursue spiritual release but also provide effective assistance during users' travel practices. At the user experience level, the application of advanced shooting and editing technologies and emerging technologies can bring users high-quality audio-visual experiences and high-level spiritual satisfaction. Meanwhile, users can also obtain rich information guidance to instantly access cultural and tourism information from various places [12]. For example, diverse travel routes, scenic spot ticketing channels, attraction introductions, accommodation inquiries, and food distributions can help tourists solve immediate problems during travel, achieving genuine short-video "service +" rather than perfunctory " + service". At the same time, while meeting user needs, the convenience of short-video "service +" is indispensable. One-click jumps for map navigation via video links, hotel reservations, and restaurant packages greatly save users' time, and seamless page switching further promotes the consumption transformation of cultural and tourism resources.

5. Conclusion

Relying on three cardinal characteristics—content diversification, communicative velocity, and audience interactivity—short videos have reconfigured the communicative ecosystem of the cultural-tourism industry, injecting novel vitality into its developmental paradigm and catalyzing the consumption-oriented transformation of regional cultural-tourism resources. Notwithstanding, under the impetus of the "traffic-oriented economic logic," profound contradictions have emerged between the symbolic inflation of cultural-tourism landscapes and the ontological uniqueness of cultural values. For communicators, embracing multi-stakeholder supervision and assuming the responsibilities of gatekeepers constitute indispensable ethical imperatives for media practitioners. On this foundational premise, there is a pressing need to deepen engagement with local

cultural contexts, thereby achieving a cultural breakthrough from differentiation to specialization. Accordingly, relevant stakeholders in the cultural-tourism industry should proactively seize opportunities, fully leverage the communicative advantages of short-video platforms, continuously optimize communication strategies, and enhance communicative efficacy. This approach enables users to experience the pluralistic cultures embedded in each communicative chain within the cybernetic space of virtual-real interaction, transforming every visual frame into a carrier of cultural identity and facilitating the mutual learning and integration of global civilizations. This objective not only represents the ultimate developmental vision for the cultural-tourism industry but also embodies an ideal prospect for showcasing national soft power and advancing human civilization.

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