

Original Paper

The Data-Based Study on the International Communication of Mount Tai Culture

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Abstract

As an important part of excellent Chinese civilization, Mount Tai culture is a key link in “telling Chinese stories well” in international communication. Based on Lasswell’s model, this research group takes the communication of Mount Tai culture on international platforms as the core research content, with tweets about Mount Tai culture on the international social platform TikTok as the main research object. It explores the current situation of Mount Tai culture in international communication, analyzes its advantages and disadvantages, and proposes feasible paths according to specific circumstances, so as to promote the international communication of Mount Tai culture and facilitate the export of excellent Chinese culture.

Keywords

Lasswell’s model, Mount Tai culture, international communication

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, proposed at the National Conference on Publicity and Ideological Work that “we should tell China’s stories well, tell the stories of the Chinese people well, clarify the history of each country, and make it clear that Chinese excellent traditional culture is the outstanding advantage of the Chinese nation and the deepest cultural soft power of China”. As an important part of excellent Chinese civilization, Taishan culture is a key part of “telling China’s stories” in international communication.

The research background of the international communication of Taishan culture is unique and profound, rooted in the historical status of Taishan as an important symbol of Chinese civilization. In the wave of globalization, Taishan culture has gradually gone abroad and become a bridge connecting Chinese and foreign cultural exchanges. With the increasing frequency of international exchanges, Taishan culture

has attracted the attention of the world with its unique charm. At the same time, the international communication of Taishan culture also faces new challenges and opportunities. In the context of globalization, how to better inherit and carry forward Taishan culture and make it shine more brightly on the international stage has become an important research topic. Therefore, the research on the international communication of Taishan culture is not only helpful to deeply explore the connotation and value of Taishan culture, but also provides strong support for promoting cultural exchanges and mutual learning between China and foreign countries.

1.2 Research Significance

As a treasure of Chinese culture, the international communication of Taishan culture is of primary significance in strengthening the global understanding of Chinese culture. The international communication of Taishan culture is an important way to promote the Chinese national spirit. The spiritual qualities such as the courage to climb peaks, the fearlessness of difficulties, and the pursuit of excellence, which are contained in Taishan culture, can show the excellent qualities and spiritual outlook of the Chinese nation to the world through the display on the international stage, and promote the international community's recognition and respect for the Chinese national spirit.

In addition, the international communication of Taishan culture is conducive to promoting cultural exchanges and integration. As an important part of Chinese culture, Taishan culture can enhance cultural exchanges with other countries and regions through international communication, promote world cultural diversity and the exchange and mutual learning of civilizations, and contribute to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

The international communication of Taishan culture can also promote the development of the tourism economy. As a world - heritage site of both natural and cultural significance, Taishan has extremely high tourism value. Through international communication, more international tourists can be attracted to visit and feel the unique charm of Taishan culture, thus driving the development of the tourism economy in Taishan and its surrounding areas.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Lasswell's Communication Model

The 5W communication model proposed by Lasswell in 1948 is a classic theory in the field of communication. This model systematically describes the basic framework of the communication process through five key elements: the communicator (Who), the message content (Says What), the communication channel (In Which Channel), the audience (To Whom), and the communication effect (With What Effect). These five elements not only provide a specific starting point for understanding the structure and characteristics of the communication process but also lay the foundation for the five major research areas in mass communication studies: control research, content analysis, media analysis, audience analysis, and effect analysis (Jia, 2021).

2.2 Research Status of Mount Tai Culture

Research on the overseas dissemination of Mount Tai culture has taken initial shape but still needs to be deepened and expanded. Future prospects point to diversified and interdisciplinary development.

As a precious treasure of traditional Chinese culture, the overseas dissemination of Mount Tai culture has become a focus of academic attention in recent years. Scholars have explored the history of Mount Tai culture's spread overseas from a historical perspective. According to research, as early as the Western Han Dynasty, Mount Tai had close ties with the world, and ancient rituals such as the Fengshan ceremonies even attracted envoys from various states to pay tribute, laying a solid foundation for the overseas dissemination of Mount Tai culture. With the increasingly prosperous foreign exchanges during the Tang and Song dynasties, Mount Tai culture was further spread to various parts of the world via trade routes such as the Silk Road, becoming an important representative of Chinese culture (Cui, 2024).

In terms of international exchanges, research on Mount Tai culture has also achieved remarkable results. Mount Tai had contact with the outside world very early, and its cultural history is a journey from Shandong to the whole country, and then from China to the world. Through ancient rituals like the Fengshan ceremonies, Mount Tai culture spread overseas, attracting the attention of many international friends. In recent years, the Tai'an Municipal Party Committee and Government have attached great importance to the construction of Mount Tai culture. By organizing large-scale international sports events and cultural forums, such as the Mount Tai International Mountaineering Festival and Sino-foreign Cultural and Tourism Exchange Activities, they have continuously enhanced the international influence of Mount Tai culture and promoted Sino-foreign cultural exchanges and cooperation (Gao, Liu, Zhang, Na, Dong, & Chen, 2023).

In terms of specific paths and methods of overseas dissemination of Mount Tai culture, scholars have also made significant achievements. Taking "Taishan Shigandang" as an example, this cultural symbol with strong Mount Tai characteristics has a wide distribution and influence overseas. Its dissemination is often closely related to activities such as overseas Chinese migration, commercial exchanges, and cultural exchanges, demonstrating the cultural adaptability and variability of Mount Tai culture in its overseas dissemination. These studies not only provide specific cases of the overseas dissemination of Mount Tai culture but also offer valuable insights for in-depth understanding of the evolution and influence of Mount Tai culture in overseas dissemination.

However, there are still many deficiencies and areas requiring further research in the study of overseas dissemination of Mount Tai culture. On the one hand, the historical depth and breadth of the overseas dissemination of Mount Tai culture need to be further explored and expanded. It is necessary to more deeply investigate the historical background, cultural origins, and dissemination paths of Mount Tai culture in overseas dissemination to comprehensively understand its influence and status abroad. On the other hand, the cultural adaptability and variability of Mount Tai culture in overseas dissemination are also worthy of in-depth study. Attention should be paid to how Mount Tai culture integrates with

local cultures during overseas dissemination, how new cultural forms and expressions emerge, and the impact of these changes on Mount Tai culture itself and overseas audiences.

In summary, research on the overseas dissemination of Mount Tai culture has achieved certain results but still needs to be deepened and expanded. Future research should be more diversified and interdisciplinary, focusing on cultural consciousness and innovative communication methods to promote the widespread dissemination and in-depth influence of Mount Tai culture worldwide.

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Questions

- (1) Within the framework of Lasswell's model, analyze the advantages and disadvantages of each communication element in international communication.
- (2) Targeting diverse audiences from various countries on international social platforms, analyze which Mount Tai-related topics attract more user attention, which themes achieve better communication effects and positive dissemination, so as to enable media and relevant departments to act with clear goals in selecting communication themes and implementing communication paths.

3.2 Research Objects and Methods

This study focuses on specific time nodes: in 2022, TikTok became the social application with the highest global download volume, followed by a tourism boom triggered by the relaxation of pandemic restrictions, especially the significant growth in tourism to Mount Tai. Against this background, the study selects the period from September 18, 2022, to February 18, 2024, as the key time frame, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of Mount Tai-related social media dynamics during this period through data analysis.

To conduct an in-depth exploration, this study uses Python programming tools to systematically collect user-generated content (UGC) on the TikTok platform with "Mount Tai" and "Mount Tai culture" as core search terms. The data crawling process involves multiple key fields, including username, account ID, posting timestamp, text content of the posts, user interaction metrics (such as comment count, like count, and share count), and multimedia information (e.g., image links, direct post links).

In the data preprocessing stage, this study conducts strict quality control on the collected 3,853 raw records. By deleting incomplete records, removing duplicates, and excluding content irrelevant to the research theme, a refined data-set of 1,945 high-quality posts closely related to "Mount Tai" and "Mount Tai culture" is finally obtained. This series of rigorous data cleaning measures ensures the accuracy and reliability of the analytical foundation, laying a solid groundwork for subsequent in-depth analysis.

4. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Current Status of the Communication of Mount Tai Culture

4.1 Communicators

(1) Advantages: The communicators of Mount Tai culture cover a wide range, including official media such as @XinhuaTravel (Xinhua Culture & Travel) and @ChinaDaily (China Daily), as well as tour guides, tourism practitioners, ordinary users, tourists, internet celebrities, and content creators.

(2) Disadvantages: In the crawled data, content from official media accounts for only 12.35% of all content, with the remaining majority coming from ordinary users and content creators. This leads to the promotion of Mount Tai culture being more focused on entertainment and the appreciation of landscapes, lacking sufficient depth and breadth in explaining its connotations.

4.2 Message Content

(1) Advantages: In the international communication of Mount Tai culture, the content mainly covers Mount Tai travel information, promotional materials, natural landscapes, historical culture, and climbing experiences. Among these, natural landscapes account for 32.18%, climbing experiences for 29.58%, historical culture for 25.67%, travel promotions and related content for 12.43%, and other content for 1.4%. The proportions show that the main communication content focuses on Mount Tai's natural scenery and climbing experiences, while the dissemination of its historical culture and official promotional content accounts for a relatively low proportion.

(2) Disadvantages: In the communication of Mount Tai culture, the dissemination of its historical culture---especially that from official sources---is insufficient, accounting for only 25.67%. Existing content related to Mount Tai's historical culture mainly focuses on explanations of stone carvings and inscriptions, with inadequate coverage of aspects such as Taoist culture and historical development, which account for a mere 2.21%.

4.3 Communication Channels

(1) Advantages: The communication channels of Mount Tai culture on TikTok are characterized by diversity and interactivity.

Combining platform features and user behaviors, the communication channels are mainly reflected in: professional content production by official accounts and institutional media, participation of mainstream media, User-Generated Content (UGC) and PUGC (Professional User-Generated Content) models, in-depth participation of professional users through the PUGC model, platform functions and algorithm-driven communication, as well as cross-platform integration and collaborations with internet celebrities.

(2) Disadvantages: The phenomenon of cultural discount may lead to insufficient understanding of the deep connotations of Mount Tai culture among international users; there is a need to balance entertainment and cultural solemnity to avoid superficial content. Among ordinary users, those with research backgrounds in Mount Tai culture account for only 3.32%. This results in a lack of explanations from professional researchers in the communication of Mount Tai culture, leading to

superficial and insufficient dissemination of its connotations and depth.

4.4 Audience

(1) Advantages: The audience of Mount Tai-related content on TikTok is mainly young users, especially Generation Z (digital natives born between 1995 and 2009) and groups with an open attitude towards multiculturalism.

(2) Disadvantages: Among the communication audience, the main user group is concentrated under 30 years old, who pay more attention to novel and exotic content. This may lead to the phenomenon of cultural discount, resulting in insufficient understanding of the deep connotations of Mount Tai culture among international users. There is a need to balance entertainment and cultural solemnity to avoid superficial content.

4.5 Communication Effect

(1) Advantages: The communication effect of Mount Tai culture is remarkable, with high popularity and influence internationally.

The dissemination of Mount Tai culture itself has become more extensive. As the foremost of the Five Great Mountains, Mount Tai, with its magnificent natural landscapes and profound historical and cultural heritage, has attracted a large number of tourists, especially foreign visitors, to sightseeing tours, thereby promoting the spread of Mount Tai culture. From the works published on TikTok, it can be seen that publishers, likers, and commenters are interested in Mount Tai culture and attempt to learn more about it.

(2) Disadvantages: In the communication of Mount Tai culture, the dissemination of its historical culture, especially that from official sources, is insufficient, accounting for only 25.67%. Existing content related to Mount Tai's historical culture mainly focuses on explanations of stone carvings and inscriptions, with inadequate coverage of aspects such as Taoist culture and historical development, which account for a mere 2.21%.

5. Research Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Research Conclusions

(1) The communicators of Mount Tai culture cover a wide range

Communicators of Mount Tai culture include both official media such as @ChinaDaily (China Daily), as well as tour guides, tourism practitioners, ordinary users, tourists, internet celebrities, and content creators. However, content from official media accounts for only 12.35% of all content, with the remaining majority coming from ordinary users and content creators. Among ordinary users, those with research backgrounds in Mount Tai culture account for only 3.32%. This results in a lack of professional researchers' explanations in the communication of Mount Tai culture, leading to superficial and insufficient dissemination of its connotations and depth.

(2) The content of Mount Tai culture communication is rich, but the dissemination of its historical culture is inadequate

The content of Mount Tai culture communication mainly includes travel information, promotional materials, natural landscapes, historical culture, and climbing experiences. Among these, natural landscapes and climbing experiences are the main content, while the dissemination of historical culture and official promotional content account for a relatively low proportion. Furthermore, existing dissemination of Mount Tai's historical culture primarily focuses on explanations of stone carvings and inscriptions, with insufficient coverage of aspects such as Taoism culture and historical development. This inadequacy is mainly due to the fact that disseminating Mount Tai's historical culture requires professional knowledge and expertise, whereas social platforms are dominated by ordinary users such as tourists and climbers who lack such expertise. Professional researchers of Mount Tai culture rarely popularize historical and cultural knowledge on such social platforms, resulting in scarce and unprofessional content related to Mount Tai's historical culture.

(3) The dissemination of Mount Tai culture exhibits characteristics of diversity and interactivity

The dissemination of Mount Tai culture integrates professional content production by official accounts and institutional media, participation of mainstream media, user-generated content (UGC) and PUGC (Professional User-Generated Content) models, in-depth participation of professional users through PUGC, as well as platform functions, algorithm-driven communication, cross-platform integration, and collaborations with internet celebrities.

In the process of spreading Mount Tai culture, modern technologies have been integrated alongside traditional methods. The application of AI technology enables the vivid presentation of content related to historical culture, enhancing people's sense of experience. For example, Mount Tai's natural and cultural landscapes are showcased through VR/AR technologies or 360-degree panoramic videos. People can take an immersive tour of Mount Tai temple fairs or Taoist rituals via virtual technologies, which strengthens their experiential understanding of Mount Tai culture.

However, in the integration of AI technology and Mount Tai culture, the phenomenon of cultural discount exists. In pursuit of better experiential and comprehensible presentation of historical and cultural knowledge, international users may lack an in-depth understanding of the profound connotations of Mount Tai culture. It is therefore necessary to balance entertainment and cultural solemnity to avoid superficiality of the content.

5.2 Paths and Recommendations for the International Communication of Mount Tai Culture

(1) Strengthen Mount Tai brand building and enhance the dissemination of its historical culture

Mount Tai culture encompasses unique historical and cultural elements such as Taishan poetry, stone inscriptions, *Shigandang*, and *Nü'ercha* (daughter tea) culture. Strengthening the international dissemination of these distinctive contents is crucial for the spread of Mount Tai culture. These historical and cultural elements can be integrated through the creation of a clear brand to facilitate the external communication of Mount Tai culture.

In brand building, VR/AR technologies can be employed to transform contents like Taishan poetry, *Shigandang*, and *Nü'ercha* into visual cultural products. People can immerse themselves in the process

of how Taishan poetry came into being and its developmental history, experience *Shigandang* culture as if they were there, and personally feel the planting, picking, and production of *Nü'ercha*. With the support of science and technology, foreign tourists can have an immersive experience of Mount Tai culture, understanding its cultural heritage and unique charm. When people mention “Shigandang” or “Nü'ercha”, they can naturally associate them with Mount Tai, which not only enhances Mount Tai's popularity but also deepens people's cognition and recognition of Mount Tai culture. Therefore, making efforts to build Mount Tai's cultural brand and promote its profound and rich culture is undoubtedly of great significance for the international communication of Mount Tai culture.

(2) Expand international publicity channels and strengthen the publicity efforts of official media

As a treasure of Chinese culture, Mount Tai culture must enhance its publicity efforts and adopt multi-channel, multi-media external communication strategies to maintain vitality and communication power. In today's era of rapidly advancing AI technology, leveraging digital media and digital technologies to build platforms, along with hosting international events and other strategies, can all expand the international influence of Mount Tai culture.

On official platforms, AI technology can be integrated to create short-experience AR content featuring Mount Tai culture, allowing overseas users to personally experience it and strengthen their cultural engagement. Meanwhile, organizing international competitions or events can boost offline exchanges of Mount Tai culture, further raising its popularity and influence.

The integration of AI, VR/AR technologies with Mount Tai culture, combined with the collaboration between official media and ordinary users as well as the integration of online and offline efforts, enables people around the world to immerse themselves in the charm of Mount Tai, perceive its culture, and comprehend Chinese civilization. This facilitates the “going global” of culture, promotes exchanges and mutual learning between Eastern and Western cultures, and such external communication efforts not only help elevate the international status of Mount Tai culture but also contribute to the dissemination and development of Chinese culture.

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