International Communication Strategies of Hangzhou's City Image under the Visual Communication Perspective

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Abstract

With the upgrading and optimization of visual communication, major cities are actively and urgently promoting themselves and optimizing international communication. In order to better understand the current situation of Hangzhou in the visual communication perspective and optimize the international communication strategy for better communication, I choose this topic to carry out investigation and analysis. This paper aims to explore the visual communication strategy of Hangzhou city image in international communication. In this study, literature analysis is used to discuss and analyze the status quo and characteristics of international communication of Hangzhou city image, and put forward corresponding international communication optimization strategies. Based on the research results, it is found that in the process of urban image communication of Hangzhou, there are problems such as "more traditional content topics", "ignoring the time difference of international hot spots", "the main body of reporting content is simple, ignoring the diversity of urban landscape", and a series of visual communication strategies are proposed, aiming at improving the international image recognition and reputation of Hangzhou through visual communication means. Attract more international tourists and investors, and promote the economic and social development of the city.

Keywords

Visual, International Communication, Strategy, Hangzhou, City Image

1. Introduction

Visual communication is a communication activity that appeals to the eyes. However, in general, it does not include the dissemination of text, but refers only

to dissemination activities utilizing images, which are categorized into two forms: static and dynamic (Zheng, 2007). This includes the communication of images combined with words, and the communication of images composed of words as materials. Traditional visual communication includes printed materials, photography, movies and television. With the development of computer technology and communication technology, new media have been added and the mode of communication has changed. Visual communication corresponds technically to communication technology, and the development of visual communication depends on the development of image communication technology, and even forms an increasingly close relationship with image communication (Liu, 2013).

From the perspective of a single form of communication, the form of visual information communication can achieve the maximum communication effect. There are more professionals e-gaged in visual communication than ever before. Newspapers, magazines, radio stations and television stations all use various multimedia tools to attract audiences to visit their websites (Kenney, 2008). Hangzhou has made more efforts in the visual communication of the city image. For example, the design of the city logo "Hangzhou" has always been relatively out of the loop, and many people outside the province and even overseas are also familiar with it. It can be seen in the subway, road billboards, urban buildings and famous landscapes. The logo has become one of the business cards of Hangzhou.

In the preparation process of international conferences and events such as G20 and Hangzhou Asian Games, Hangzhou has designed unique, appropriate and impressive logos; during the process, Hangzhou media, We Media and others actively released pictures, videos and even created short films, which greatly enhanced the popularity of Hangzhou city and made it have a place in the visual communication field.

2. Current Situation of International Communication of Hangzhou City Image

2.1. The International Communication Environment of Hangzhou City Image

The international communication environment for Hangzhou's city image is generally healthy and favorable. Opportunities to appear on the international stage have increased, and so has its international influence. Overseas self-media content about Hangzhou is more innovative and has a higher exposure rate. We counted the nature of the top 100 comments in the first relevant video on the YouTube recommendation page, and the statistical results are shown in Figure 1.

The comment section below the video is very active, not only foreign friends are discussing positively, but also many Hangzhou citizens are popularizing the culture of their hometown.

As a city with a long history, Hangzhou is famous for its urban geography, urban design, and cultural environment. Especially after the G20 Summit and the Asian Games, Hangzhou's international influence has rapidly increased, its

quantity

positive   negative   neutral
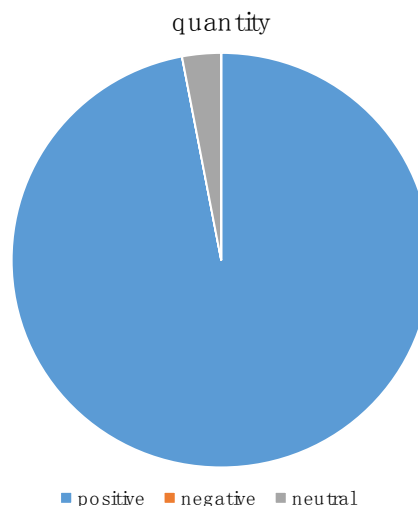
Figure 1. Critical nature.

international status has gradually risen, and it also plays a very important role in national publicity. Hangzhou's beautiful scenery is also widely reported in foreign media reports on Hangzhou (24 in total, accounting for 15% of the total), which mainly constructs the image of the city with beautiful, natural, romantic and other words, such as a brilliantly lazy beauty, picturesque scene, etc. (Wu & Pan, 2017).

The reports on Hangzhou's history and culture often appear in tourism reports, which shows that in the eyes of foreign media and tourists, Hangzhou is a tourist city with a long history and culture, beautiful scenery and unique landscape, and has a better international communication environment from the perspective of visual communication. However, the report focuses more on the West Lake scenic spot, which creates a mindset for foreign tourists, ignoring many scenic spots and a long history. Hangzhou has not established a comprehensive and three-dimensional city image in the world. On the whole, Hangzhou's city image is mostly positive in the world. The city image has a high popularity and a healthy international communication environment. This paper selects typical videos on the recommendation page on YouTube for statistical comparison of reports, as shown in Table 1.

2.2. The Selection of Content Is Dominated by Official Cultural Communication

Hangzhou, as an ancient and modern city, its unique culture, scenery and innovative atmosphere make it one of the cities that attract international attention. In the process of investigation, the top three accounts in each search page were selected for the comparison of official media and self-media traffic, as shown in Table 2.

After investigation and statistics, we can see that the content of the international social platform is not only the official account, but also We Media, which has released a lot of videos, with a high number of views and good response,

Table 1. Report investigation.

The main body of the story	reporting on the subject matter	Views (million)	Release time
JERRY GOODE	History and culture infuse life in Hangzhou	4.63	February 2024
Two suns show	The past and present life of Hangzhou	8.1	September 2023
Expat Natt	Hangzhou scenic spots, tea plantations and history and culture	0.6	January 2023
Blondie in China	Hangzhou specialty snacks	11	September 2023
Sky Travel	Hangzhou's historic attractions	1.5	September 2022
Travel light	Hangzhou's natural landscape, history, culture and specialties	74	August 2019

Table 2. Content selection.

The name of the account	content selection	account type	Views
Hangzhou feel	Traditional festival shooting	The official media	236
Hangzhou, China	Landscape photography	The official media	364
HANGZHOU TOURISM and CULTURE	Landscape photography	The official media	563
Soph	Tourism	self-publishing	19,000
Hangzhou Walker	Hiking daily	self-publishing	4412
Rafa Goes Around!	Tourism	self-publishing	52,000

indicating that Hangzhou is a relatively well-known presence in international communication, and many international friends have come to admire it. However, the content production of the official account is straightforward. Although the quality is advanced, the shooting and editing technology is high, and the content is rich, the official culture communication is dominant, and there are few platforms opened. YouTube, the largest video platform, is not settled, which is less interactive and vivid compared with We Media.

According to the publicity department of the Hangzhou Asian Games Organizing Committee, the number of Chinese and foreign media reports on the Asian Games amounted to 2.88 million articles, with more than 186 billion clicks and readings, and the number of these media reports exceeded the number of previous Olympic Games and Asian Games. The countries or regions with the highest number of reports were South Korea, Japan, India and the United States. According to the "China City Brand Influence Report (2023)", Hangzhou's brand influence ranks 3rd among 288 cities, which is in the head echelon (Alleyne, 1995).

As the third city in China to host the Asian Games, Hangzhou has successfully accomplished the important mission of "hosting a good meeting and improving a city", and stood on a higher stage, seizing the opportunity to communicate in a circle, showing the world Hangzhou's distinctive Jiangnan flavor and advanced scientific and technological economic strength. As a provincial capital city with

strong comprehensive influence, Hangzhou's communication content is mainly based on official communication, which is more formal, but the city's visual communication is rich in materials and has many breakthrough points.

2.3. Distinctive City Image, Neutralized in Visual Communication

Hangzhou has a distinctive city image on the international stage and is more active on the self-media platform. Official accounts post high quality and rich video content; self-media accounts post new content and high interaction. On international social media platforms, Hangzhou is a true tourist city, ranking high in both natural resources and economic resources, with many comments exclaiming "I want to go to Hangzhou for a visit".

As one of the six ancient capitals recognized in the world, Hangzhou is famous for its "famous county in the southeast" and is one of the first national historical and cultural cities. Hangzhou has always been at the forefront of the times. The beautiful scenery in the south of the Yangtze River mirrors the modern high-rise buildings. The excellent traditional culture and fashion culture dance together, and peace and busyness coexist. In May 2015, the Action Plan of Hangzhou to Accelerate Urban Internationalization (2015-2017) was officially released, which clearly proposed to build Hangzhou into a city with both international vision and local characteristics. The cultural landscape of the West Lake, the Grand Canal of China (Hangzhou Section), and the site of Liangzhu Ancient City have been included in the World Heritage List. Hangzhou has become a Chinese city with the second largest number of world heritages after Beijing. Hangzhou also has five (7 sub items) world-class intangible cultural heritage of mankind (Li & Zhang, 2023).

Hangzhou, with its huge historical and cultural heritage, has always been an important tourist city in the world, focusing on "the city of paradise on earth" and "the city of innovation and vitality", with a distinctive image. The building of "the first city of the national digital economy" has opened the gate of Hangzhou's entrepreneurial traffic. More and more Internet celebrity IP, budding companies, entrepreneurial teams and other enterprises have settled in. The flow of fresh blood has enabled Hangzhou to have a continuous flow of traffic, and has made Hangzhou's visual communication activities more diverse and leading.

Hangzhou, where ancient charm and modern art coexist, is taking the initiative to neutralize its image in visual communication, making it more three-dimensional and vivid in the visual communication field, thus optimizing its international communication strategy.

2.4. A Single Path of Communication, Seeking a Way in Visual Communication

At present, the communication path of Hangzhou's city image is mainly domestic social platforms, which are mainly official. It is relatively narrow for international social platforms such as Instagram, X, YouTube, etc. Through the statistical comparison of the attention of the official accounts of each platform, Hangzhou is

still looking for the export of international communication platforms from the perspective of visual communication. The specific data comparison is shown in Figure 2.

As a city of "digital economy", "e-commerce" and "net roots industry", Hangzhou has a huge amount of topics on streaming media platforms, and the presence of net roots companies and other media entrepreneurial teams makes Hangzhou a city that has opened up more paths in diversified communication, but lacks richness in content creation and lacks development on international social platforms. Hangzhou has opened up more avenues for diversified communication, but it lacks richness in content creation and development on international social media platforms.

The single path of communication has hindered the diversified communication of Hangzhou's city image to a great extent, and in the high-speed international communication nowadays, how to diversify the communication and increase international influence and exposure is a major key to optimizing the international communication. How the relevant government departments can optimize the policy of introducing international communication talents, how to avoid the homogenization and templating problems in content creation and editing, how to strengthen innovative and diversified communication paths and communication methods, and how to put videos according to the characteristics of streaming media platforms to better increase the amount of broadcasting are the effective ways to optimize the international communication strategy and find the way in the visual communication field.

3. Hangzhou City Image Communication Problems

3.1. The Selection of Content Is Traditional

The communication of Hangzhou's city image in multimedia is more traditional
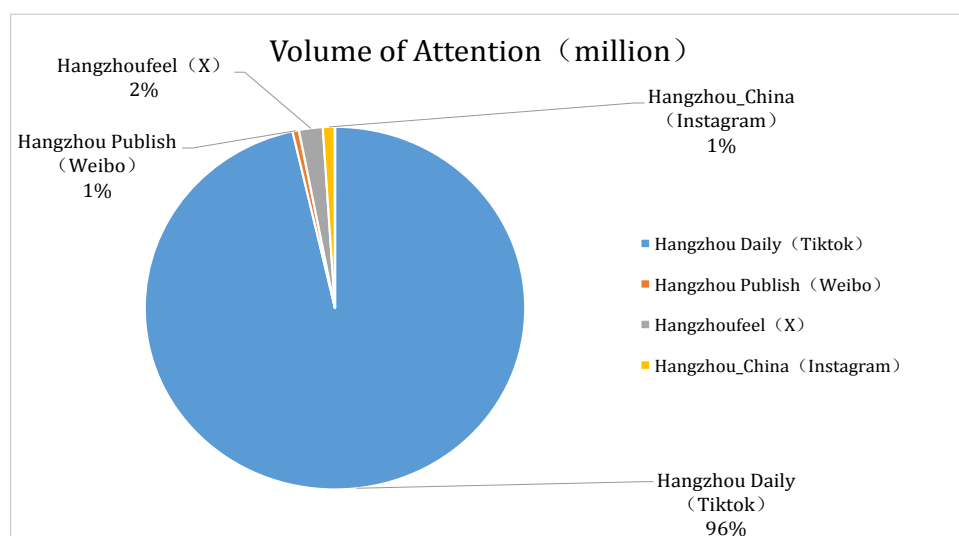
Figure 2. Dissemination paths.

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history and culture, music, painting and calligraphy, etc. Although these can well establish Hangzhou's international image as the "ancient cultural capital", it is difficult to leave a deep and lasting impression on the international audience. How to enhance storytelling and tell the "Hangzhou story" is a communication problem that needs to be solved. How to pay attention to the stories behind the athletes and volunteers at home and abroad, combine the stories of the characters with the culture, keep abreast of the times, and carry out international communication is a problem that needs to be thought about in the process of international communication of Hangzhou's city image (Yan, 2023).

Telling the "Hangzhou Story" well requires not only enhancing the storytelling, but also apt and vivid language is also very necessary. Language is a very important factor in telling a good story, and the lack of international talent is also one of the major factors in the failure to tell the story clearly. Through the statistical comparison data of content theme, publisher's country, video broadcasting volume and account subscription volume released by each type of account, we can see that there is still a gap between the international audience's understanding of the Chinese content and incomprehension, and the concise and official subtitle can't dissolve the linguistic and cultural differences, so the information transmission efficiency is not high. Moreover, the high homogeneity of video editing, which is suspected of "delivery" and cannot realize the purpose of communication well, is essentially the lack of international communication talents, and some staff members are not yet qualified for the job. A comparison of the data is shown in Table 3.

This survey mainly investigated the accounts about Hangzhou city content published on YouTube platform. Both domestic and overseas accounts have official accounts and we media accounts, which are published frequently. It can be seen from the data in the table that the data of official accounts are relatively

Table 3. Selection of topics for dissemination.

Account ID (type)	Publisher's country	Publishing platforms	content topics (Form)	Airplay (million)	Subscriptions (million)
Hangzhou, China (Official)	China	YouTube X Facebook Instagram	Photographs, documentaries, propaganda films	Tens of thousands	11.4
Zhejiang Wonderful China Documentary Channel (Official)	China	YouTube	documentaries, promos, variety shows	Few break the 10,000	0.406
MONGABONG (self-published)	China	YouTube	Tourism vlog	2.9	11.2
Blondie in China (self-published)	Australia	YouTube	Tourism vlog	14	37.5
Ke En (self-published)	Malaysia	YouTube	Tourism vlog (challenge poor travel)	58	16.7
Rafa Goes Around (self-published)	America	YouTube	Tourism vlog (Around China)	4.9	6.16

backward, mainly because the topics of content are more official, not vivid and interesting enough, and less attractive. We media accounts at home and abroad published good data. The themes of "International Friends Touring China" and "I take you to China" made audiences at home and abroad feel more involved, so that they could more intuitively feel the cultural customs and people's life in Hangzhou, and be closer to the lives of all living beings, with better communication effect.

3.2. Ignoring the International Hot Spot Time Difference

At present, it seems that Hangzhou in the international publicity for the content is not comprehensive enough, not enough directed. Hangzhou in the city image publicity closely follows the domestic hot trend, but ignores the international hot time difference, the lack of international audience cast good.

The publicity methods of Hangzhou Culture and Tourism on the domestic platform follow the trend, such as the recent "homophonic stem", "local flavor BGM" and so on, which make all Internet users join the entertainment ranks, and the promotion effect is obvious. The short video platform is the most important media platform in the vision of visual communication, but Hangzhou Culture and Tourism more pursues "hot spots", ignoring the elements of international communication. The short video content lacks the impact of visual content, and the content is not rich enough and monotonous. Therefore, such publicity is not feasible in international communication. First, language barriers prevent international audiences from understanding the video content even if subtitles are used to explain it. The communication effect is poor; The second is the time difference of hot spots. The time and effect of hot spots at home and abroad are different, and the relevant hot spots may not resonate with international audiences. Communication is related to human situation, communication media, things that can be added and accumulated, facts, valuable, useful, use-less or knowledge (He, 2023). The "hot spot" abroad needs opportunities. The key to seizing the domestic and foreign Internet hot spots and following the international network trend is to study the preferences of international audiences and cultural backgrounds.

Short videos and other works can be placed on international platforms, which requires the quality of the work and audience orientation, and streaming media with high quality and catering to public interests are more likely to be explosive and spread more widely and for a longer period of time. While creating high-quality works, researching the audience's orientation and preferences is the key to the efficiency of distribution.

This part investigated the amount of video broadcasts about Hangzhou City published by relevant YouTube. As shown in **Figure 3**, @ Kern Ke En has the highest amount of broadcast. Its title is "Here I am in Hangzhou! How can Malaysians spend five days without any cash", and its content is to spend five days in Hangzhou and watch the Asian Games without obstacles using online pay-

ment such as Alipay. It has grasped the famous online payment in China and publicized Hangzhou's all-around and convenient services for overseas friends to attend and watch the Asian Games, which reflects Hangzhou's advanced technology and comprehensive services. The broadcast data of the official account @ Hangzhou Cultural Tourism is standard. Although it will focus on hot spots, it is not very attractive. The way to obtain traffic data is more about the technology and level of video content and shooting methods. There is a lack of investigation on the video preferences of international audiences, and some special content is also needed to break the circle during official publicity.

3.3. The Main Content of the Report Is Single

As a diversified historical city, Hangzhou has a huge historical and cultural heritage, and its natural landscape and urban architecture are world-famous. Hangzhou West Lake Cultural Scenic Spot was listed as a world cultural heritage in 2011, and domestic and foreign communication about Hangzhou city basically focuses on the introduction of the West Lake Scenic Spot, the main body of the report is relatively single, and it is easy to create stereotypes for overseas audiences. The city image communication in the field of visual communication should not ignore the diversity of urban landscape, and should emphasize diversified communication and exchange, so that more historical monuments and landscapes can go out of the country.

Hangzhou is also famous for its visual design of urban planning. How to spread more from internationally known scenic spots is an urgent problem to be solved. More historical sites and urban landscapes need to be integrated into the streaming media works to improve their exposure so that international audiences can understand a more comprehensive image of Hangzhou.

This part of data mainly uses the top 20 videos that are broadcasted most frequently on YouTube and published by overseas people, and analyzes four more classic Hangzhou travel clocking offices, as shown in Figure 4. The West Lake appears in every video, which is a well-deserved city card of Hangzhou; As a historical and cultural scenic spot and around the West Lake Scenic Area, Xiaohezhi Street has a very high number of appearances, and most publishers taste Hangzhou food in the Xiaohezhi Street; Hangzhou CBD, as the city center, is a famous business district with many appearances; As a famous scenic spot in Hangzhou District and County, Qiandao Lake is not well known overseas, but in recent years, the publicity effect is good and the number of appearances is considerable.

To sum up, Hangzhou city attractions are numerous, and business district gathered, but the overseas people's travel card place is relatively single, the fundamental lies in the official tourism publicity and development of districts and counties is not enough, the focus to be thought, the analysis of Hangzhou's historical and cultural scenic spots and the content of the publicity needs to be strengthened, the main body of the report needs to be diversified.
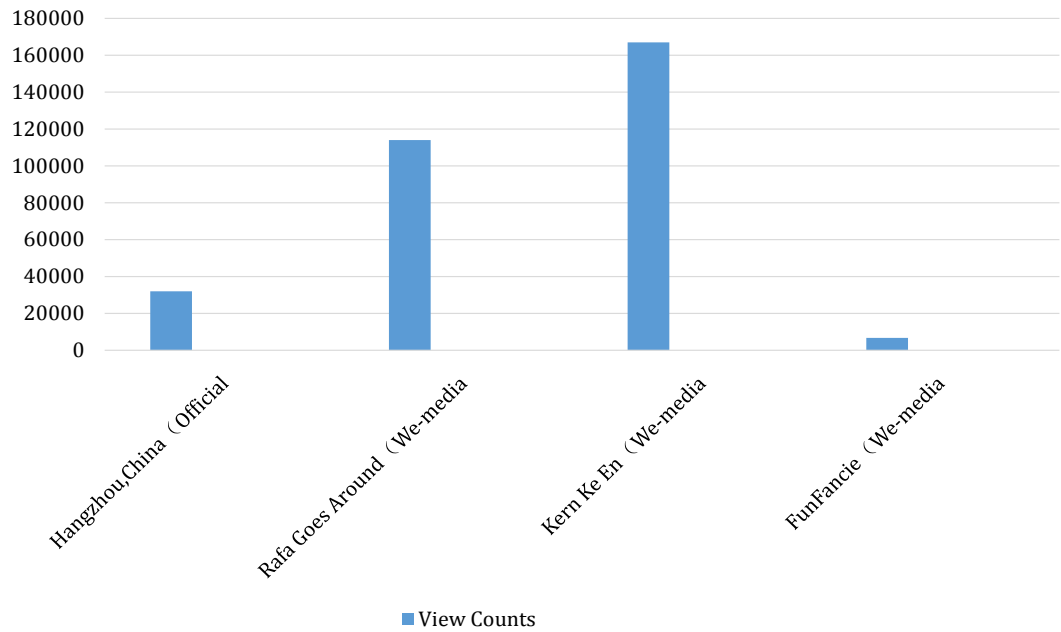
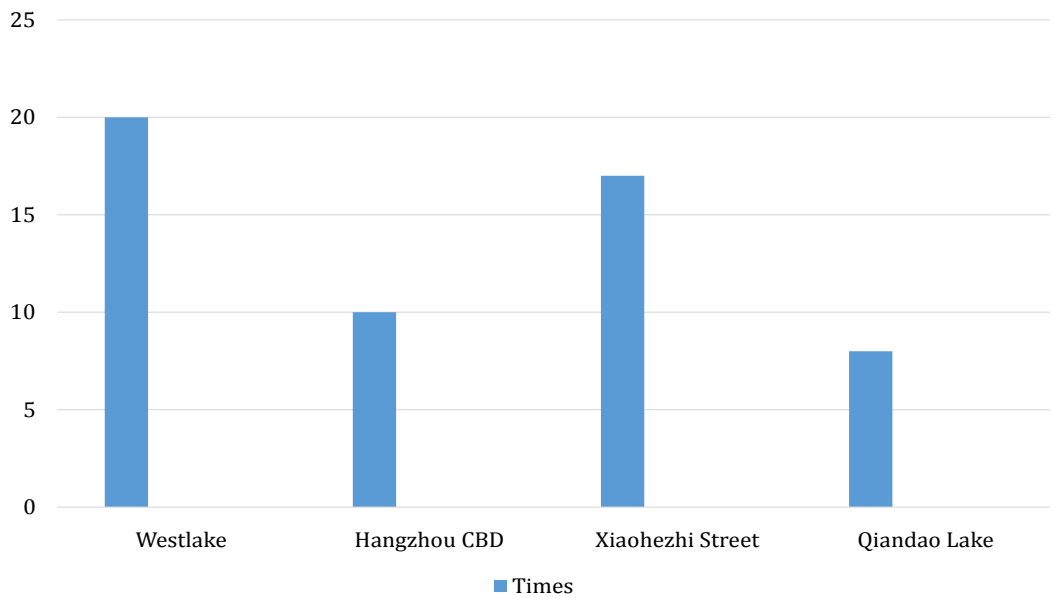**Figure 3.** Comparison of video content heat.

Figure 4. Subjects of coverage.

4. Hangzhou City Image Communication Strategy Optimization

4.1. De-Emphasize the Rigid Official Coloration and Cultivate International Communication Talents

Weakening the official political work to meet the work needs by telling a good "Hangzhou story"; Cultivate and accept international communication talents and specialize in professional fields. From the perspective of visual communication, we should attach importance to the visual communication of Hangzhou's exter-

nal image in video creation, use more appropriate and vivid language to clear up cultural barriers, catch the audience's eyes, and at the same time let them better understand the content and enhance their cultural identity. We can introduce Hangzhou from the perspective of famous landscapes, combine the experiences of historical figures, explain the history and culture behind it through celebrities such as athletes, or introduce Hangzhou from the perspective of ordinary citizens, so as to enhance the storytelling and enhance the audience's interest.

As a famous tourist city with beautiful scenery and ancient residences in the south of the Yangtze River, Hangzhou should take eye-catching pictures as the main body in video production, and make use of character stories or historical stories with strong content to enhance the curiosity of the audience. The two complement each other to improve the level of video content, so that more people can stay because of the visual nature of the screen, and because of the high-quality content of the video, so as to achieve the goal of optimizing the international communication strategy.

4.2. Strengthening Research on International Audiences and Improving the Efficiency of International Communication

HCM City keeps up with the hot traffic in the city's integrated media publicity, which has a good communication effect in China. However, in order to improve the efficiency of international communication, the first step is to understand the concerns and interests of the target audience through surveys and data analysis. For example, we should know which media report more about Chinese cities, especially Hangzhou; which aspects of Hangzhou are concerned by international media; and the overall image of Hangzhou in most international media. Based on the effective data analysis, we will optimize our international communication strategy.

For international concern and positive aspects, can focus on in-depth reports, for negative reports, should actively make targeted reports feedback, break the international stereotype of Hangzhou city. To improve the international news release mechanism, better launch reports, take the initiative to promote Hangzhou city image, open the international perspective, and let the world see a more comprehensive image of Hangzhou city.

4.3. Focusing on Enhancing Visual Communication and Deepening Internal Image Communication

Grasp the key points of urban image communication, follow the laws of visual communication, and dig deeply into the internal image. In international communication, taking the audience context as the core, adapting to the values and interests of different countries and groups, hierarchical, classified and group based communication is where the "traffic password" lies. For example, Xi'an writes "Tang Culture", makes good use of the brand symbol of "Terracotta Warriors", and deepens the comprehensive foreign understanding of Xi'an; While promoting the brand of "Canal City", Yangzhou focuses on "oriental gardens" in Europe and "oriental cuisine" in the United States; As the "hometown of pan-

das", Chengdu has made contributions to China's international ex-changes, making use of the national treasure image of pandas to create a city logo, and opening up a path for international communication; Shanghai has set up an "international city", based on its unique urban history and culture, taking its unique urban landscape as its external image, and grasping the media flow to create a "magic city" setting. These communication strategies have achieved good communication results. Hangzhou can start from the well-known West Lake cultural scenic spot, introduce around it, and present Hangzhou's "visual card" to the world.

Digging deep into the inner image and creating Hangzhou's unique city image card according to the laws of visual communication. Using microfilms, short videos, photographs and other media to deepen the visual image of Hangzhou, reorganize and recreate the rich visual cultural factors, enhance the visual impact, improve the interactivity, or use scenarios to integrate the traditional Chinese culture into daily life scenarios (Wu, 2022), and optimize the international communication strategy from the external landscape to the internal image.

5. Conclusion

The communication efficiency of Hangzhou's urban image is generally high, and the international communication environment is good, but there are still some problems in the communication strategy, such as the more traditional selection of topics, the lack of research on the preferences of international audiences, and a single main body of the report, etc. This is a common problem encountered in the international communication of urban image. This is a common problem encountered in the international communication of city image, and the phenomenon of the convergence of the positioning of China's city image is becoming more and more prominent, everywhere is a "tourist city", "livable city", "leisure capital", "Chinese Tea Capital", "City of Vitality", etc. (Zhao & Shen, 2010) the identical image positioning is difficult to give international audiences a distinctive impression. The main reason for this phenomenon is that the city's own characteristics have not been fully explored, Some cities just blindly copy and imitate, without fully exploring their own natural history and cultural characteristics, but only based on the city's economic development and the subjective needs of the drive for functional positioning. In the current international environment, we should find the right positioning and take the initiative to promote. In the field of visual communication, Hangzhou should grasp the unique natural landscape and urban architecture, use multimedia technology to create rich, high-quality photography and video works as the foundation of communication, improve the content quality of streaming media works, introduce international communication talents, connect high-quality communication works to international platforms, and optimize the international communication strategy.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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