

The International Dissemination of Sports Culture and the Shaping of National Image

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Abstract: From the perspective of communication studies, strategies for the international dissemination of China's sports culture and the construction of the national image are proposed. The research suggests that the connotative characteristics of China's sports culture are consistent with the positioning of the national image, and the international dissemination of China's sports culture can effectively enhance the country's cultural soft power, which is conducive to shaping a positive and proactive national image. Based on the "5W" model of communication studies, it is proposed that: in the process of international dissemination of China's sports culture and the construction of the national image, strengthening the construction of the communication subject is the foundation, carefully creating communication content is the core, developing an industrialized and modern communication system is an efficient path, paying attention to and researching the audience is the guarantee of effectiveness, and timely follow-up and in-depth analysis of feedback results are key. The aim is to provide ideas and references for better international dissemination of sports culture and the establishment of the national image in the new era.

Keywords: International Dissemination; Sports Culture; National Image; Communication Studies

1. Introduction

After the 18th National Congress, the Party clearly set forth the strategic goal of continuing to advance the construction of a strong socialist cultural nation, and emphasized the need to enhance the level of cultural openness, expand cultural exchanges with other countries, and strengthen the capacity for international communication and the construction of a discourse system for external communication. Chinese culture is profound and extensive, and sports culture, as an integral part of it with a deep historical heritage, plays a significant role. Enhancing the international dissemination of sports culture is an important means to boost China's cultural "soft power." disseminating its connotative characteristics is beneficial for shaping a positive and proactive image of China on the international stage. this research aims to align with the themes of the times, start from the perspective of communication studies, and based on national image and international communication, combined with the experience of international dissemination of sports culture, to study the strategies that should be grasped in the overall construction of China's international dissemination of sports culture.

2. Harmony: National Image and Sports

2.1. Harmonious Philosophy and Sports Communication

Professor Guo Yucheng, a sports scholar, once said: "Clarifying the positioning of China's national image is a prerequisite for the international dissemination of sports culture. Based on the positioning of China's national image by the Chinese national leaders, 'others,' and the academic community, 'harmony' should be the core positioning of China's national image." [1] "Harmony" is a concept with profound ancient Chinese philosophical implications. In the current world environment where one superpower dominates, China's advocacy of the concept of a 'harmonious world' naturally has great appeal. therefore,

this paper positions China's international image as that of a great power "open to world peace and committed to building a harmonious world."

Chinese traditional sports culture is an important part of the traditional culture of the Chinese nation. The emphasis on "unity of heaven and humanity" and "self-cultivation and self-improvement" in traditional sports culture is highly consistent with the national emphasis on building a harmonious society and a harmonious world. This consistency between the connotative characteristics of China's traditional sports culture and the positioning of China's national image has laid a foundation for the national image in the international dissemination of China's sports culture.

2.2. Sports Culture and National Image Shaping

The national image refers to the relatively stable overall evaluation of a country's tangible appearance, spiritual connotation, national actions, and their results by the international community [2]. the purpose of cultural dissemination is to promote one's own culture, gain recognition, and through the pursuit and imitation of other countries' cultures, to enhance the country's appeal and attractiveness, in order to achieve cooperation, acquiescence, and pursuit by other countries when implementing national foreign strategies. at the current stage, in the face of the "China Threat Theory" spread by western countries and the distortion and misinterpretation of our national image, it is imperative to use various forms of external communication activities to shape a good national image. sports culture has universality, affinity, and compatibility, and in international communication, it has the advantage of breaking through language barriers, making it easy to become a pioneer in cultural exchange and export. sports culture is rich in connotation in our country, focusing on the moral conscience of the human heart, and has significant value for building our country's "harmonious development" image.

However, the "national system" of competitive sports and the "Olympic glory plan" have led Western media to have long-standing prejudices against our country's sports culture, and their understanding of the Chinese national image shaped by sports is also biased. Therefore, we should accelerate the process of opening up our country's sports culture to the outside world, improve the level of international dissemination of sports culture, and actively integrate the "harmony" as the core value of sports culture with oriental characteristics into the world, enhance its soft power, and increase its influence, in order to better achieve the purpose of shaping the national image. However, due to the impact of language barriers and cultural conflicts, it is not easy to spread Chinese sports culture and let people around the world accept it with pleasure. Therefore, how to spread Chinese sports culture in order to successfully complete the important mission of shaping the national image has become the focus of discussion in this paper.

3. The 5Ws of Communication Theory

This paper takes the classic five elements (5W) communication theory in communication studies as the research starting point to explore specific strategies for improving the level of international dissemination of China's sports culture.

Harold Lasswell introduced the basic process and elements of social communication in his 1948 article "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society": Who said what (Say what), through what channel (In which Channel), to whom (To Whom), and with what effect (With what Effect) [3].

(1) Communicator (Who). The communicator is the starting point of the communication act, responsible for the selection, processing, and dissemination of content. The communicator is influenced by communication concepts when disseminating information, which determines the choice of content, and these concepts are a synthesis of politics, culture, and economy.

(2) Communication content (Say what). The content is the core of the communication activity. To achieve valuable information dissemination, the communicator needs to analyze, filter, and process the content.

(3) Communication medium (In which Channel). The medium is the specific means by which communication activities are realized. This paper roughly divides communication media into mass media and interpersonal media. Mass media include television, radio, the internet, print materials, etc., while interpersonal media are based on human beings, referring to information exchange between people through verbal language, paralanguage, and body language, which can also be facilitated by various

communication media for long-distance communication. The appropriate selection of the communication medium is a factor influencing the effectiveness of communication.

(4) Communication audience (To Whom). The audience is the recipient of the communicated information, the new communicator of the next information cycle, and also the feedback provider for the previous communication activities. Communicators often choose the content and medium based on the characteristics of the audience, and even the significance of the entire communication activity is defined by the audience.

(5) Communication effect (With what effect). Communication effects refer to the impact of information on the recipient's established positions, viewpoints, and other ideological concepts, as well as behavioral patterns. The analysis of effects is the most practically significant in communication research.

4. Sports Communication and National Image Building Strategies

The international dissemination of sports culture is an effective means of shaping a positive image of a country. It is a vast and complex systematic project, where the five elements in the communication process play their roles independently and influence each other.

4.1. Enhancing China's Sports Culture Outreach

4.1.1. *The communicator should establish the correct values of sports*

Some scholars have proposed: "To establish a good national image of our country, the first step is to establish the image of our media as fair, objective, and credible communicators." [4] This highlights the foundational role of the communicator in the communication process. For China's sports culture communicators to establish a good image, they must first possess the correct values of sports culture. Communicators should deeply understand the ideological connotation of China's sports culture, fully recognize the core values of their own sports culture, and establish the values of "unity of heaven and humanity, harmonious development" in traditional Chinese sports culture. This is a prerequisite for China's sports culture to gain global recognition and enhance its cultural appeal.

4.1.2. *Communication Philosophy and Subject Awareness*

The communication philosophy that the communicator adheres to directly affects the image of the communicator and the effectiveness of the communication activities. Sports culture communicators should be guided by the correct ideology that neither rejects foreign sports cultures nor passively relies on them, always adhering to the equal concept of "harmony in diversity" in sports culture, and integrating and developing in the "conflict" with Western sports culture.

Currently, international media reports and comments on our country are often unfair and biased, and Western media have a significant communication advantage in the international communication field. To grasp the right to shape our own image, we need to break the established patterns and strong discourse power that Western media have carefully shaped in the image of China [5]. Faced with this not optimistic international situation and the increasingly fierce "global cultural communication war," China's sports culture communicators can only change their concepts, strengthen the cultivation of subject consciousness and international consciousness, establish a sense of competition, change from passive communication to active communication, actively "seize" the national communication positions, in order to powerfully spread the rich connotation of Chinese sports culture to the international community and contribute to shaping a good national image.

4.1.3. *Develop the potential communicator resources*

Promoting the construction of our country's national image through the international dissemination of sports culture is an extremely complex systematic project. Relying solely on official channels of communication is not enough; it is necessary to expand the communication organizations and strengthen the team of communicators.

In addition to increasing those who are specifically engaged in related sports cultural activities, it is also important to actively develop potential communicators. Potential communicators mainly refer to tens of thousands of Chinese overseas investment enterprises, hundreds of thousands of Chinese students

studying abroad, nearly a million Chinese industrial workers engaged in labor and engineering contracting around the world, and a large number of Chinese tourists traveling abroad. they all undertake and are engaged in the tasks and activities of China's sports culture dissemination at different levels and to varying degrees. deeply exploring the communication capabilities of these potential communicators can greatly enhance the international influence of Chinese sports culture and promote the construction of a positive national image.

4.1.4. Create "sports star" communicators to amplify the communication effect

Sports stars, as outstanding representatives of China's sports culture, possess a good image and strong influence and appeal. Their performance on the international stage embodies and disseminates our country's sports culture through their actions. we should fully recognize and vigorously develop the image of sports stars as communicators and their powerful communication capabilities. By leveraging mass media and visual culture to amplify their communication effect, and through the stories and personas of sports stars, we can bring the abstract sports culture to life and make the ambiguous national image more vivid.

4.2. Carefully craft the content of sports culture dissemination

4.2.1. The communication content should highlight the connotations of China's sports culture

Wang Yuechuan once pointed out: "The real sense of human communication is the exchange of ideas and culture. Staying at the practical culture, promoting customs and styles is only a general level of communication. The internal nerves of civilization can only be touched through the exchange at the philosophical level." [6] In the process of international dissemination of sports culture, it is not only necessary to consider the needs of the audience, but more importantly, to take the opportunity to convey to foreign audiences the sports connotation and humanistic philosophy with Chinese characteristics, using rich emotional arts, seizing the resonance points of human emotions, and through the interpretation of the core values of China's sports culture, to have an invisible and soft influence on the cognitive subjects of other countries. This will lead to a consensus in culture, and then form a common value concept of "people-oriented" and "harmonious development", which is consistent with China's national image of "peaceful development".

4.2.2. Traditional Sports as Communication Focus

China boasts as many as 977 ethnic traditional sports items, and the sports culture formed on this basis also presents a rich and diverse state. The dissemination of sports culture should be based on China's traditional sports items, increasing the development and dissemination efforts of traditional sports items [7]. While greatly enriching the world's sports culture and continuously meeting the sports needs of people around the world, it also allows the ethnic traditional sports culture to take root and flourish in foreign lands. Therefore, the international dissemination of China's ethnic traditional sports culture is both a demand of the times and a necessity for the development of China's traditional sports culture itself.

4.2.3. Play the significant role of "agenda setting" in the dissemination of sports culture

The international dissemination of sports culture is an important aspect of enhancing China's cultural soft power and a vital means of shaping the national image. It must be strategically conducted from a national strategic height with purpose and in a tiered manner through "agenda setting." Reasonable thematic settings can make the international dissemination of China's sports culture more targeted.

4.3. Build a modern and industrialized communication system.

4.3.1. Developing Sports Industry for Global Market

In the global development system dominated by the market economy, we should also make full use of the role of market regulation in the dissemination of sports culture. We need to actively develop the sports industry, industrialize China's sports cultural resources, gradually transform them into forms such as cultural services, promote them outward in trade form, actively and prudently open up the international market, and promote the healthy and orderly development of the market for sports cultural products and

services such as China's sports manufacturing, sports film and television industry, sports viewing and performance industry, and sports tourism. this will efficiently establish the advantages of China's sports culture.

4.3.2. Multimedia Platforms for Global Communication

Fast speed, great influence, and wide range are the characteristics of mass communication media, which have always been the main channels for the international dissemination of China's sports culture. However, there are still deficiencies in the flexibility and communication efficiency of China's mass media, which require relevant systemic reforms. for example, relaxing some access standards to increase the total amount, and through market competition, survival of the fittest, ultimately forming a batch of media organizations and communication individuals with great influence and strong competitiveness.

In addition to traditional mass communication methods, the role of other platforms such as interpersonal communication, online communication, and Confucius Institutes abroad should also be valued. Efforts should be made to integrate existing media resources to create a world-class international sports communication system that is multi-lingual, has a wide audience, strong professionalism, large information volume, strong influence, and global coverage.

4.3.3. Utilize the voices of "other countries" for external communication

Borrowing the voices of "other countries" to reflect the situation in China and using the media of "other countries" to convey Chinese culture can make the people of "other countries" more willing to understand and accept the true situation of China's sports culture.

At present, there is a large foreign community in China, which can become an important force in the international dissemination of China's sports. We should attach great importance to the elite group of international students in China. In addition to providing them with language and professional education, we should also focus on educating them about Chinese sports culture. By offering courses in traditional Chinese sports, we can let them experience, feel, understand, and love China's sports culture, and consciously and actively spread it abroad.

4.3.4. Develop the communication function of large-scale sports events

Sports events serve as platforms for cultural interaction and are universally recognized as unique carriers of cultural dissemination [8]. Using sports events as a breakthrough to enhance the international communication of sports culture is an effective way for China to shape its national image at present. The hosting of the Beijing Olympics successfully shaped a positive image of our country as a major power. From the relevant reports in Western media, it can be seen that China's national image has been greatly improved through the Olympics, leaving the world with a new impression of being willing to take on international responsibilities, actively open, trustworthy, having a strong desire to integrate into the international community, and following a path of peaceful development, etc.

China's sports event organization teams should have a clear understanding of the current state of international communication of our country's sports culture and establish a strong sense of responsibility. They should integrate cultural communication as an important content and task of the event from beginning to end. For example, they should strongly promote the event through media before, during, and after the event, create promotional films, posters, emblems, mascots, etc. with Chinese national characteristics, and use modern technological means to fully display our national sports activities. This allows event participants, on-site audiences, and global TV audiences to strongly feel the "Chinese style" that comes with it.

4.4. Strengthen attention to and research on the audience

4.4.1. Cross-Cultural Awareness in Sports Communication

The dissemination of sports culture abroad is a form of cross-cultural communication; therefore, communicators of sports culture must possess a strong sense of cross-cultural communication. They should understand and study in depth the worldview, values, ways of thinking, ethical morals, and religious beliefs of "other countries." by finding the common concerns and interests of the international audience, starting from universal themes such as the pursuit of happiness, the aspiration for social

harmony, and health and leisure, the dissemination of culture can be well-adapted. this approach not only saves communication costs but also achieves good results, thereby constructing the national image in a more "intimate" manner.

4.4.2. Broad and Targeted Audience Engagement

To expand the influence and reach of China's sports culture, widespread dissemination is fundamental; however, to ensure the effectiveness of the communication, it is also necessary to focus on targeted audience selection while disseminating broadly. In terms of the content of sports cultural activities, it is necessary to "tailor the approach to the individual." for example, in primary and secondary schools, one could choose to disseminate some traditional Chinese sports with strong entertainment value and easy to learn, such as kite flying, sandbag throwing, and spinning tops; in universities, one could opt for competitive projects like dragon boat racing, shuttlecock kicking, and pole climbing; in community mass sports activities, one could select leisure and health-oriented activities like Tai Chi and Baduanjin (Eight Pieces of Brocade). By conducting sports cultural exchange activities in such a targeted manner, it can maximize the enthusiasm of the audience to participate in China's traditional sports activities and enhance their sense of identification with China's sports culture and national image.

4.4.3. Pay attention to the research on the audience

In the process of China's sports culture dissemination abroad, it is necessary to form a corresponding "national narrative" of "thematic setting" according to the specific situation of the target country, which cannot be achieved by the strength of individuals or organizations alone. It requires the participation of corresponding scientific research teams to provide intellectual support. the scientific research team should conduct in-depth investigations on the target audience in the target country, deeply analyze the results of the investigation, and provide a basis for the formulation and selection of sports culture communication strategies. this ensures that the country can start from the overall situation, plan ahead, and plan the overall work of sports culture dissemination abroad as a whole, and ultimately carry out targeted external dissemination in a "market-oriented" product and a "popular" form, achieving the effect of getting twice the result with half the effort.

4.5. Follow up promptly and conduct in-depth analysis of feedback results

The dissemination of sports culture is not a one-way communication. communicators of China's sports culture should attach great importance to the feedback from the audience. By analyzing objective data to understand the effectiveness of the communication and adjusting strategies in a timely manner, the effectiveness of the international dissemination of sports culture can be truly ensured. First, communicators should collect feedback information through various channels, such as setting up online evaluation platforms and utilizing interpersonal information feedback methods, to facilitate the timely feedback and collection of audience information.

Second, an evaluation index system for the effectiveness of international dissemination of sports culture should be established based on various factors affecting the communication effectiveness, to scientifically evaluate the effectiveness of China's sports culture dissemination abroad, providing a scientific basis for the strategic adjustment of the country's sports culture dissemination abroad. Lastly, feedback information should be processed in the first place, summarizing and correcting the problems in the communication effectiveness in a timely manner, to ensure the timeliness and guiding value of the feedback information.

5. Conclusion

Building China's national image is a significant strategy and a vast systematic project, thus the academic community continues to focus on and study it from various aspects and perspectives. Sports know no borders, and the international dissemination of sports culture has a unique advantage in building a positive international image for our country. Therefore, sports culture should naturally become an important entry point for research in this field. This paper utilizes the classic 5W communication theory to analyze the various elements and links in the international dissemination of sports culture and to strategize,

hoping to provide a reference for China's sports culture dissemination and the construction of its national image.

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