

Postprint: A 5W Perspective Analysis of Short Video Publicity for Tangshan Anti-Epidemic Reporting

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Abstract

[Purpose] During the epidemic response, short videos have played a significant positive role and exerted substantial effects. [Method] Based on Lasswell' s 5W theoretical model, this study analyzes the promotion through short videos and the popularization of scientific epidemic prevention knowledge in Tangshan during the anti-epidemic process, aiming to harness their positive ideological guidance role. [Result] This research reflects on the experiences and shortcomings in the reporting and promotion of Tangshan' s anti-epidemic short videos. [Conclusion] Clarifying the important positions of relevant communication subjects, objects, content, and channels in the field of short video dissemination guides them to maximize their positive functions and roles in emergency event publicity.

Full Text

Analysis of Short Video Propaganda in Tangshan' s Anti-Epidemic Reporting from a 5W Perspective

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Abstract

[Purpose] Short videos played a significant positive role in the process of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. [Method] Based on Lasswell' s 5W theoretical model, this article analyzes the propaganda and popularization of scientific epidemic prevention knowledge through short videos in Tangshan during the anti-epidemic process, aiming to leverage their positive ideological guidance function. [Result] The study reflects on the experiences and shortcomings in Tangshan' s

s short video reporting and propaganda during the anti-epidemic campaign. [Conclusion] It clarifies the important positions of relevant communication subjects, objects, content, and channels in the field of short video communication, guiding them to maximize positive functions and roles in emergency event propaganda.

Keywords: 5W theory; anti-epidemic spirit; communication strategy; short video communication; media environment

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On March 19, 2022, breaking news shattered the tranquility of life in Tangshan, triggering tension across various districts: Tangshan reported 7 new locally confirmed COVID-19 cases and 0 new asymptomatic infections. Tangshan' s municipal Party committee leadership quickly convened relevant meetings and press conferences, with comprehensive and immediate actions taken in high-tech zones, Lubei District, Lunan District, Yutian County, and other areas to implement strict lockdown management. This study attempts to analyze the communication process and characteristics of Tangshan' s anti-epidemic spirit based on Lasswell' s 5W communication theory, aiming to provide reference for the innovative development of spiritual civilization in the new media era.

1. The 5W Theoretical Framework

1.1 Connotation of 5W Theory

This article adopts Lasswell' s 5W theory as its foundational framework. The "5W" represents the first letters of five interrogative words in English, constituting the basic elements in communication process analysis: Who, What, Which (channel), Whom, and What effect. Current popular short video communication analysis also applies to the 5W theory, examining from the perspectives of communication subject, content, channel, audience, and effect to deeply analyze Tangshan' s short video communication strategies during the severe epidemic period. The purpose is to provide valuable reference for communication practices that disseminate urban image and promote ideological and cultural values.

In communication studies, "Who" refers to the communicator responsible for information collection, transmission, and processing. In the entire internet communication system, virtually anyone can become an information disseminator. "What" refers to the content—the specific information resources in the communi-

cation process, consisting of a series of relevant and meaningful symbolic texts arranged for transmission. These symbols can be further divided into linguistic and non-linguistic symbols. Given that internet communication content is currently vivid, highly interactive, and caters to public tastes, it becomes even more crucial for communicators to precisely grasp the characteristics of audiences “surfing” the internet. “Which” refers to the channel—the communication intermediary or material carrier necessary for information transmission, which profoundly influences communication effects. Therefore, careful selection of communication methods is essential to ensure public acceptance and willingness to engage. “Whom” refers to the target audience—the core component that generates motivation for communication activities and a key focus of the communication process. “What effect” refers to the impact and reactions triggered after information is successfully delivered to the audience, serving as the crucial criterion for judging whether a communication activity has succeeded. According to current internet information dissemination patterns, short videos can significantly enhance communication effects.

1.2 5W Theory in Communication Studies

From a communication studies perspective, “Who” refers to the communicator who bears responsibility for information collection, transmission, and processing work. In the entire internet communication system, virtually any individual can become an information disseminator. “Say What” refers to “what content” is being communicated, indicating the relevant information content resources in the specific communication process. “What,” or content, refers to the arrangement and combination of information to be transmitted, composed of a series of relevant and meaningful symbolic texts. The symbolic components can be further subdivided into linguistic symbols and non-linguistic symbols. The current situation is that internet network communication content is vivid, interesting, and highly interactive, catering to public tastes. Precisely because of this, communicators need to accurately grasp the characteristics of audiences “surfing” the internet. “Which” refers to “channel,” the communication intermediary or material carrier that must be utilized in the process of transmitting information. Channels have a profound impact on communication effects, so careful attention must be paid to the selection of communication methods to ensure the public can accept and is willing to accept them. “Whom” refers to “to whom,” the target audience group that communicators face. It is one of the important core components that generate motivation for communication activities and is also the focus of the communication process. “What effect” refers to “effect,” the reactions caused after information is successfully transmitted to the audience. The quality of communication effect is an important measure for judging whether the communication activity has been successful. According to the current situation of information dissemination on the internet, the short video format can greatly enhance communication effects.

2. Analysis of Tangshan Anti-Epidemic Short Video Communication

2.1 Communication Subject: Government-Led with Mass Participation

The main force in Tangshan's anti-epidemic short video propaganda work consists of the Tangshan Municipal Party Committee's propaganda department, relevant municipal government departments, and associated media outlets. Strong government support and multi-institutional collaboration enable communication subjects to better play their leading role. Taking the "Flowers Along the Way" public security anti-epidemic promotional video released by Tangshan Kaiping Public Security as an example, when the epidemic broke out in Tangshan, the public security organs released this promotional video featuring numerous daily anti-epidemic 影像 records of police officers. Photographers rooted themselves at the grassroots level, authentically documenting scenes and conducting multi-dimensional, multi-angle in-depth excavation and recording of the heroic and fearless spirit demonstrated by Tangshan during the anti-epidemic process.

Many media professionals, including self-media creators, have depicted the real-life scenes of Tangshan under the epidemic through sincere expression and factual representation, such as in the promotional video "Unite to Fight the Epidemic, Tangshan Has You." Throughout the city's concerted efforts to actively combat the epidemic, numerous touching stories of ordinary people emerged. The public's enthusiasm for creating short videos on Tangshan's anti-epidemic theme increased significantly, with active participation in the positive energy short video creation wave. Some short videos were even shot using advanced photography equipment and cutting-edge drone aerial technology, innovating boldly while staying on theme, making the content authentic and vivid, and enhancing the promotion of positive anti-epidemic energy.

2.2 Communication Content: Macro Themes with Micro-Narratives

Advanced 5G technology provides the technical foundation, but the ultimate determinant of communication process effectiveness and influence lies in the content itself. In the current "content is king" era, how to provide attractive short videos is the primary consideration for creators. To achieve broader dissemination, it is essential to align mainstream public opinion guidance with video content, effectively enhancing the communication effect of the anti-epidemic spirit. During this period, short videos continuously introduced content with strong journalistic and literary qualities, with mainstream anti-epidemic short video works emerging continuously.

Both promotional short films adopted a direct "theme-first" creative approach, straightforwardly identifying "fighting the epidemic" as the promotional theme and documenting Tangshan's various positive actions to resist the epidemic. These short films used plain descriptive techniques to depict events during Tangshan's anti-epidemic efforts, using timelines to thread content together and tell

touching stories during the epidemic. They conducted in-depth excavation of the people and stories that emerged during this anti-epidemic process, seeking the kindness and beauty within human nature. They used images of ordinary heroes—such as traffic police standing guard, medical staff optimistically rushing to the front lines, and volunteers cooperating with epidemic control guidance for nucleic acid testing—to render Tangshan during this epidemic, highlighting how ordinary people are also striving to shine.

In the 5G era, VR, AR, and related technologies can be integrated to differentiate the documentary narrative characteristics of various anti-epidemic short videos. Currently, with the normalization of epidemic development, short video propaganda reflecting the anti-epidemic spirit has shown homogenization issues. The introduction of VR, AR, XR and other technologies allows audiences to browse comprehensively and multi-dimensionally without following fixed narrative logic, choosing different perspectives based on their own points of interest, which is more conducive to the conduct and development of anti-epidemic knowledge popularization. In addition to ensuring short video content aligns with current popular cultural contexts, works like “Flowers Along the Way” and “Unite to Fight the Epidemic, Tangshan Has You” also emphasize elevating the interpretation of the major anti-epidemic theme from micro perspectives. Based on the perfect combination of song lyrics and current event footage, they mobilize audiences through diverse presentation methods, vivid and authentic cases, and rich thematic connotations.

2.3 Communication Medium: Diversified Online Promotion

In traditional communication theory, communication medium refers to the method or way of delivering information to the target audience. In the new media environment, short videos combine the advantages of traditional and new media, transmitting relevant information through both traditional media and mobile internet channels. In the previous 4G era, the model combining short videos and news had already developed to a certain extent. With the arrival of the 5G era, society will transition to a new network data era called “unlimited capacity.” According to data released in the “2020-2021 China Online Audio-Visual Development Research Report,” China’s current audio-visual user scale has reached 944 million, with 873 million short video industry users. Short video usage among internet users continues to rise, currently approaching 90%, reaching 205.13 billion yuan. With the current development and progress of 5G technology, short video user data and market scale will inevitably further increase [?]. During this period, mainstream media such as CCTV, People’s Daily, and Xinhua News Agency have launched accounts on major short video platforms, actively laying out their vast market in the short video communication field based on platforms like Douyin, Kuaishou, and Bilibili.

In the communication field, how to promote the deeper cultural connotation value and practical value of the anti-epidemic spirit in an attractive manner, develop more distinctive communication strategies, break through various spatial

limitations of short video communication content, make short video communication more convenient, and meet the needs of large numbers of audiences at different levels—these issues have very important practical significance for research. In the new media era, traditional media played a significant role in the communication of Tangshan’s anti-epidemic spirit through short videos, greatly assisting in promoting Tangshan’s image and spirit. The anti-epidemic promotional videos produced by Tangshan TV Station achieved good communication effects among relatively older Tangshan citizens. Combined with relevant follow-up reports on Tangshan Radio and Television’s official website, the authenticity and reliability of short video propaganda content were further enhanced, strengthening the communication effect of short video propaganda.

In addition to short video communication, we should actively and deeply explore new communication channels and strategies. For example, digital science and technology museums have played a good exemplary role in anti-epidemic work propaganda activities. This approach not only ensures the retention and output of high-quality knowledge content but also actively interacts with communication audiences to a certain extent, representing a new method and strategy for publicizing and popularizing anti-epidemic knowledge. The emergence of digital technology museums provides a development opportunity for positive spiritual and cultural reference.

2.4 Communication Audience: Adhering to Segmented Communication to Meet Diverse Group Needs

Communication audiences are passive recipients of information in the communication process, but their role is not static and may transform into new communication subjects for information reprocessing or feedback on previous communication activities. Therefore, audiences occupy an important position in communication activities. Currently, in the new media era information dissemination process, audiences’ subjective initiative has greatly improved compared to before. They are no longer passively receiving information brought by communicators, and the so-called “communicator-centered model” has gradually transformed into an “audience-centered model” [?].

With the arrival of the Internet+ era, traditional media and mobile internet are widely used in information push and dissemination across various industries. Relying on the characteristic that even different users share common interests, they can quickly capture the attention of such audience users to enhance effective information dissemination. Moreover, short video communication methods are relatively concise, utilizing fragmented time characteristics for dissemination to alleviate reading pressure from extensive text, meeting the current public demand for obtaining information in fragmented time, thereby gaining support and approval from the vast majority of people and satisfying the needs of different groups. The mass communication scope is broad [?]. Currently, the number of internet users is huge and growing annually, with online video platforms widely popular, conforming to youth trends and meeting the needs of younger audience

groups.

In today' s rapidly developing era, audience users' focus will continuously shift with changing social events. Therefore, communicators should also promptly update relevant data models of audiences when creating content for dissemination, continuously using technology to improve user information. Only in this way can they more accurately grasp the information content needed by users. Currently, most short video platforms are algorithmically refined platforms. Taking Douyin as an example, the key reason it can develop foreign business and gain a large number of user attention abroad is that it understands how to capture the psychological needs and behaviors of audience groups and satisfy their series of needs in the short video field [?]. At the same time, more attention should be paid to the habits and focus points of different audience groups. Short video platforms are currently the main owners of attention and value exchangers [?], and should use thinking and methods that audiences are willing to accept to tell various stories about this epidemic, while always maintaining an overall positive content tone. Precisely guiding them to form a fixed objective understanding of epidemic events can enable anti-epidemic short video content to produce better communication effects.

Although the aging problem in society is gradually becoming serious, the elderly group shows strong curiosity and thirst for knowledge about continuously developing new things. Retired elderly people have relatively more free time compared to young and middle-aged groups and need to obtain large amounts of news and health-related information to enrich themselves, thus paying special attention to medical short videos, popular science short videos, health care short videos, and health news information short videos. With their popularized and highly visual characteristics, short videos enable elderly people to quickly grasp the theme and key information of the content being communicated. Therefore, relevant anti-epidemic short videos popularize epidemic knowledge for the elderly, meeting the information acquisition needs of the elderly group [?].

2.5 Communication Effect: Enhanced Information Acquisition and Enriched Tangshan City Image

Taking “Flowers Along the Way” and “Unite to Fight the Epidemic, Tangshan Has You” as examples, many audio-visual stories emerged in these anti-epidemic promotional short videos. Images of frontline medical workers, public security police, delivery personnel, traffic police, community service personnel, and silent urban landscapes captured the communication characteristics of new media. Using absolutely authentic footage, they vividly portrayed characters, adding atmosphere-appropriate music based on absolutely objective and real video materials to deeply mobilize viewers' inner emotions and trigger resonance.

AI technology, commonly known as artificial intelligence technology, combined with the arrival of the 5G era, can achieve a new transformation in the communication field through the 5G+AI communication analysis model. Communicators

can improve communication efficiency by leveraging AI algorithms during the communication process. Meanwhile, the development of 5G technology will inevitably bring a huge user group data to the short video field, enabling comprehensive tracking and analysis positioning of individual data. By utilizing unsupervised learning machine learning models, users' personal preference data can be deeply processed to obtain preference reports, creating new opportunities for personalized communication push methods and increasing communication efficiency [?].

Of course, the benefits of 5G technology are not only reflected on the communication side. Audiences can also use 5G technology to quickly access information they want to know without time and space limitations. However, language is not universally unified, and currently, there are still many high-quality achievements that users cannot obtain due to language barriers during information dissemination, greatly limiting the scope of information dissemination. But with the continuous development of language digital processing technology, internet users can quickly translate foreign literature and materials they want to understand into language systems they can comprehend. This technological progress greatly enhances audiences' ability to collect relevant epidemic prevention scientific knowledge, master certain prevention skills, and understand correct epidemic safety knowledge. At the same time, AI technology's automatic scientific language generation technology can help media quickly and automatically generate communication manuscripts and release them rapidly. Combined with 5G technology, it enables audience groups to obtain the latest news trends in the shortest time range, shortening information processing speed and steps, and further enhancing the timeliness of the short video communication industry [?].

During this COVID-19 epidemic in Tangshan, due to the development and changes of different media, changes in the degree of information popularization, and further improvement in people's thinking and concepts, many topics worthy of in-depth consideration have been provided for literary creation and development. In this fight against COVID-19 in Tangshan, too many real images and stories of ordinary people emerged—doctors, journalists, community workers, volunteers, party members, students, teachers, and other different social groups. Their efforts during the anti-epidemic process were recorded through short videos, text, and video images, providing new ideas for Tangshan to appear before China with a brand-new look. “Recording Tangshan's brief pause button at this moment through song,” still taking these two anti-epidemic promotional short films as examples for analysis, both short films use the form of integrating stories with relevant songs, conducting multi-dimensional storytelling of real events through documentary images of relevant personnel recorded during the anti-epidemic process. These authentic stories enrich Tangshan's city image, evoke audiences' memory that “Tangshan is a heroic city,” stimulate good social effects, and transmit mainstream values such as selfless dedication. The anti-epidemic promotional videos effectively promoted the combination of this anti-epidemic effort in Tangshan with the image of Tangshan as a heroic

city, promoting the integrated development of emerging communication media methods [?].

3. Implications and Reflections on Tangshan' s Anti-Epidemic Short Video Communication

Although the communication of anti-epidemic spirit through short videos achieved good propaganda effects, the current anti-epidemic spirit short video communication method also has certain defects. Similar to the communication of Tangshan' s earthquake relief spirit, due to the lack of systematic overall planning, there are phenomena such as communication subjects operating independently, repetitive communication, frequent dissemination, and high content similarity. No truly positive maximum joint force of communication collection has been formed to promote the content to be promoted on a larger scale with maximum effect.

With the current development trend of increasingly enhanced interactive attributes between social media, the boundaries between traditional media and emerging media have gradually blurred, and continuous integration between media has become mainstream. The communication method combining traditional media and mobile emerging media ensures diversified and comprehensive promotional effects of short films. Meanwhile, the continuous integration and development of multimedia provide strong multi-platform support for anti-epidemic promotional short video effects, which is very conducive to the formation of cluster effects and thus expands the communication scope of anti-epidemic promotional short videos.

Through the above analysis of Tangshan' s epidemic prevention and control short video propaganda model, it can be seen that new media has changed and improved to a great extent compared with before in terms of how people obtain information, understand information, and apply information. It is certain that new media not only plays an important carrier role in the popularization and propaganda of anti-epidemic spirit and related knowledge news but also provides a real record of Tangshan' s anti-epidemic efforts. In the future, we should continuously explore new internet media communication methods, accurately grasp the psychological demands and value concepts of the mass audience, and do a good job in ideological propaganda work for the general public, thereby playing a more thorough role in emotional values and ideological education [?].

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