

On the International Communication of Jingdezhen City Brand by Means of Publicity Films in the All-media Era

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Abstract

The present all-media era provides new opportunities for the international communication of Jingdezhen city brand. As an important measure to introduce the history and development of Jingdezhen, city publicity films play an effective role in enhancing the soft power and international communication capacity of Jingdezhen. This paper makes a case study of the latest publicity film *This Is Jingdezhen, China*, discussing its successful narrative strategies from four aspects, namely, accurate establishment of city brand, ceramic culture as the city brand core, wonderful audio-visual entertainment and proper selection of opinion leaders. What is more, limitations in audience orientation and subtitles standardization are pointed out in terms of the publicity film so as to provide references for producing better city publicity films, thus enhancing ceramic culture international communication capacity and building the city brand of world porcelain capital.

Key words: City publicity film; Jingdezhen; City brand; International communication

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1. INTRODUCTION

In May of 2019, Chinese President Xi Jinping inspected Jiangxi Province and emphasized that we should make great efforts to construct Jingdezhen National Ceramic Culture Inheritance and Innovation Experimental Zone well and build a new platform for international cultural communication. In July of 2019, the State Council of China officially rectified *Implement Plan for Jingdezhen National Ceramic Culture Inheritance and Innovation Experimental Zone*, which symbolizes the establishment of the first national cultural experimental zone in Jingdezhen, bringing huge development opportunities for Jingdezhen and posing high demands for Jingdezhen city brand international communication capacity construction. As an important step for international communication capacity construction, shooting high quality Jingdezhen city publicity films is of great significance. Recently, the latest Jingdezhen city publicity film *This is Jingdezhen, China* was released by Jingdezhen City Integrated Media Center and was spread and broadcast in various platforms very soon. Three days after its release, the click rate has amounted to 35000 and thousands of people gave their likes, which has aroused wide attention to Jingdezhen city brand international communication and construction of Jingdezhen international communication capacity. Based on this, the author of this paper intends to make an analysis of how high quality city publicity films help construct Jingdezhen ceramic culture international communication with a case study of *This is Jingdezhen, China*.

2. AN ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE STRATEGIES IN *THIS IS JINGDEZHEN, CHINA*

City publicity film is an important means to spread the international city brand. Generally speaking, a city

publicity film will try its best to adopt those elements which can best reflect the orientation and features of the city. Therefore, a city publicity film is certainly the comprehensive reflection of the orientation, characteristics and cultural connotation of the city. (Yin Ying, 2019) *This is Jingdezhen, China* has a time span of 6 minutes and 8 seconds, with Chinese commentary and Chinese-English bilingual subtitles. In the introduction to this city publicity film given by various platforms, “International style! The latest Jingdezhen city publicity film is released!” was adopted, which shows that this publicity film is aimed at promoting Jingdezhen with a 1700-odd-year porcelain making history to the world. Although the time span of the city publicity film is not long, it has left an international-style impression, so its narrative strategies deserve in-depth exploration.

2.1 Accurate establishment of city brand

At the beginning of the city publicity film, a specific city brand of Jingdezhen is given, that is, “China national ceramic culture protection, inheritance and innovation base; Worldwide famous ceramic culture tourism destination; International ceramic culture exchange, cooperation and transaction center, this is Jingdezhen, China.”, thus an internationalized city comes into our mind. Then, the city publicity film tells the history of communication between China and Arabian countries: in the Yuan Dynasty, the blue and white pigment Smalt was introduced to Jingdezhen from the Arabian Peninsula and then was integrated with Jingdezhen Kaolin, thus producing the masterpiece of blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty in Chinese ceramic history. Later, blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty was brought back to the Arabian Peninsula, prefacing the immortal chapter of China-Arabian communication. Nowadays, the cultural communication between China and the rest of the world is still going on. On Dec. 19th of 2022, the Fifth Arabian Art Festival was open in Jingdezhen, and Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulation letter for it. As one the first founding members of United Nations Maritime-Continental Silk Road Cities Alliance, Jingdezhen is actively involved in Belt & Road construction. What is more, Jingdezhen has been linked with worldwide innovative cities network and established friendly ties with over 180 cities in 72 countries. International conferences like International Copyright Forum, International Ceramic Art Biennale, and Strategic Communication Forum were held in Jingdezhen. The annual Jingdezhen international ceramic Expo makes Jingdezhen ceramic products sold and bought all around the world. Based on Chinese Ceramic Industry Intelligent Network Platform, China Ceramic Expo City opens a worldwide ceramic trade new era. All these show that Jingdezhen is making a dialogue with the world.

2.2 Ceramic culture as the city brand core

Jingdezhen is an old city with ceramic culture as its soul. The whole city publicity film centers on ceramic culture to tell moving ceramic stories with poetic words. “With ranges of mountains and plenty of water, Jingdezhen is rich in ceramics and kilns” tells that Jingdezhen boasts a unique environment for producing ceramics. The ubiquitous kilns and ceramic products reflect the rich ceramic culture in Jingdezhen. “Every wheel rut on the ground is an unforgettable moving story, every kiln brick is an everlasting memory and every piece of porcelain is an interesting ceramic classic book.” Walking among the porcelain city, we can see many wheel ruts left by the raw material carrying carts, touch the alley built by the leftover kiln bricks and appreciate the evacuated exquisite porcelain pieces, as if in a sea of ceramic culture. This is the unique charm of Jingdezhen. “Ceramics, as the best ware to represent Chinese civilization, have never been forgotten.” Being the outstanding representative of Chinese ceramic culture, Jingdezhen porcelain is a typical proof of Chinese cultural soft power. Blue and white porcelain, blue and white porcelain with rice pattern, famille rose porcelain and colored porcelain, which are mentioned in the city publicity film, are Jingdezhen four types of famous porcelain with exquisite make and high quality and the typical proof of the splendid achievements. What is more, the revolving water wheel, water-powered trip-hammer waving up and down to husk porcelain stone, potters absorbed in throwing and biscuit painting, newly carried out exquisite porcelain..... all showing the everlasting ceramic culture to the world. Just as the ending remark of the publicity films says, china is the porcelain while China is a country, and china is the representative of China.

2.3 Wonderful audio-visual entertainment

The modern world is in a fast speed era and the ways in which people obtain information have undergone great changes. The busy life forces people to obtain information by means of the Internet in segmental time. It is also an entertainment era, so audio-visual films with entertainment factors are surely to attract the attention of audience. *This is Jingdezhen, China* provides wonderful entertainment. At the very beginning of the film, a lively piece of music with a range of moving pictures appears, like some people cooperating to throw a big dragon pot, craftsmen painting blue and white patterns, dragon pearl pavilion of the Imperial Porcelain Factory, Spring and Autumn Fair of Taoxichuan, grand opening ceremony of Jingdezhen International Ceramic Expo, various exhibits at the Ceramic Art Biennale and splendid scenery along the bank of Changjiang River. All these details do work to attract audience’s attention.

What is more, the publicity film mentions that we can experience the lively vitalization in Jingdezhen night life, economy and culture. Therefore, exquisite pictures like light-illuminated Taoxichuan night market, wonderful large-scale original musical play *Toward Jingdezhen*, Space stage play *Mountain Seaing*, live reality show *china* provide the audience a splendid visual experience. Besides, various ceramic wares displayed in Jingdezhen China Ceramic Museum, Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute, Taoxichuan Ceramic Industrial Heritage Museum, Jingdezhen Ancient Kiln & Folk Customs Museum win people's great admiration. Beautiful scenery of campuses including Jingdezhen Ceramic University, Jingdezhen University, Jiangxi Arts & Ceramics Technology Institute, Jingdezhen Ceramic Vocational Technical College, Jingdezhen Vocational University of Art is enchanting. More than 100 thousand college students are studying and pursuing their dreams, which makes us full of expectation about Jingdezhen's bright future. More than 30 thousand Chinese and foreign drifters in Jingdezhen have stationed in Jingdezhen to undertake their ceramic career, which arouses love for this inclusive city. Ancient musical tone sung at Leping Ancient Play Stage and many local specialties like steaming and delicious alkali water cake and dumpling cake can make us experience the dense life atmosphere. All these relaxing splendid music and pictures endow the publicity film with unique charms to capture audience attention.

2.4 Proper selection of opinion leaders

The role of opinion leaders in communication can never be exaggerated. Sometimes a remark from an opinion leader is more effective than broadcasting the publicity film ten times. Therefore, selecting and placing proper opinion leaders in the publicity film to guide audience to understand the city image displayed can have a double impact.(Mo Xinyuan, 2015) In *This is Jingdezhen, China*, three foreigners are chosen as the representatives of foreign drifters, including Susan from Britain, Linda from North Carolina of America and Meddy from Egypt, who has been in Jingdezhen studying porcelain making for several years. The fact that they are meticulously painting on the porcelain with their brushes shows that they have regarded Jingdezhen as the hometown of porcelain and stationed here to pursue their dreams. There are countless scenes where foreign friends from all around the world appear at China Jingdezhen Ceramic Expo, Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute, Ancient Kilns & Folk Customs Museum, Ceramic Expo City, Jingdezhen China Ceramic Museum, which proves that Jingdezhen is city with ceramic culture and has won the worldwide admiration. When these foreign friends go back to their own countries or communicate with their family

or friends, they are likely to become opinion leaders (Zhang Jian, 2013) and stimulate the second round of communication of Jingdezhen ceramic culture abroad. What is more, there is an interview with Weng Yanjun, the Director of Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute in the publicity film. Weng Yanjun tells us that among the decorative patterns in blue and white porcelain, there are a lot of vegetative patterns, especially papyrus originating from ancient Egypt and interlocking branches pattern evolving from the lotus pattern, which is a great proof of Sino-foreign ceramic culture communication. The explanation of ceramic experts can make the information more authoritative and enable the audience to understand, accept and recognize the longtime Jingdezhen ceramic culture.

3. LIMITATIONS OF *THIS IS JINGDEZHEN, CHINA*

Although this city publicity film has won excellent box office achievements, there are still some imperfections. Firstly, as for the target audience, this publicity film has still focused on the domestic people instead of foreign public, so the commentary is mostly Chinese. From the perspective of international communication, although there are English subtitles along with the Chinese commentary, it is still very difficult for foreign audience to grasp the English subtitles under the transient and changing shots. Therefore, if the publicity film is aimed at foreign audience, the commentary and subtitles should both be English so as to enhance the international communication effects. Secondly, the publicity film mentions that we can experience the special life in Fifteen Scenes, Three Banquets and Three Plays, which are not familiar to even Chinese audience, let alone foreign audience. It follows that if "Fifteen Scenes, Three Banquets and Three Plays" appears without any explanation, the foreign audience will be confused about their real contents with no any communication effect. Actually, Fifteen Scenes refer to 15 famous scenic spots, including Ancient Kilns & Folk Customs Museum, the Imperial Kiln Institute, Taoxichuan, Royal Kiln, Mingfang Park and so on. Three Banquets refer to Changnan Porcelain Banquet, Fuliang County Tea Banquet and Sanbao Village Banquet. Three Plays refer to the large-scale live show *china*, original musical play *Toward Jingdezhen* and space stage play *Mountain Seaing*. Fifteen Scenes and Three Banquets are not displayed in the publicity film, so it is advisable to shoot some on-the-spot pictures and provide related English subtitles. Performance videos of Three Plays are recorded in the Publicity film, but only Chinese names of the plays appears, with no English play names, the communication effects being greatly decreased.

4. CONCLUSION

This is Jingdezhen, China is a city publicity film released against the background of construction of Jingdezhen National Ceramic Culture Inheritance and Innovation Experimental Zone. With accurate city brand orientation, dense ceramic cultural atmosphere, enchanting audio-visual entertainment and the explanation of opinion leaders, this city publicity film has done a good job in promoting Jingdezhen, the international porcelain capital with a long porcelain making history and enhancing ceramic culture international communication capacity construction. However, some imperfections of this city publicity film including unclear foreign audience

orientation and insufficient and improper English subtitles will provide references for shooting better city publicity films in the all-media era.

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