



A Discourse Study on the Strategies of Corporate Identity Construction Between China and the United States in the Context of Commercial and Public Welfare

—Based on Discourse-Historical Analysis (DHA) and Python

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Abstract. The organizational identity construction of enterprises in commercial and public welfare scenarios affects their reputation, image, and commercial performance. The identity construction strategy of cross-cultural enterprises in two scenarios has become a key factor affecting the international image of enterprises in social responsibility. Using Discourse-Historical Analysis, this paper takes the recruitment announcements and donation statements of HUAWEI and Apple as the corpus to investigate the different identity construction strategies of Chinese and American enterprises in commercial and public welfare scenarios, and uncovers the cross-cultural differences behind different strategies based on the GLOBE (GLOBE Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) cultural dimension model. The findings are as follows: (1) HUAWEI, a Chinese enterprise, emphasizes more on team building in the commercial recruitment scenario, constructs an enterprise identity that values collective interests, and builds an enterprise identity that values the overall interests of the society and has feelings of family and country in the charitable donation scenario; (2) Apple, an American enterprise, emphasizes the result-orientation of talent evaluation in the commercial recruitment scenario, advocates multiple values, and constructs a more inclusive corporate identity, and constructs a corporate identity that gives priority to individual interests and pays attention to individual values in the charitable donation scenario.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility; Identity Construction; Cross-cultural comparison; GLOBE cultural dimension model; Discourse-Historical Analysis

1 Introduction

Friedman, an economist, believes that enterprises that are rational and aim at maximizing profits should not develop public welfare undertakings [1]. However, in practice, a corporate charitable donation is very common. In recent years, with the outbreak of COVID-19, the charitable donations of enterprises have become increasingly frequent. Against this background, the differential identity construction of enterprises in commercial and public welfare scenarios have an important impact on the brand image, reputation capital, business performance, and long-term interests of enterprises [2].

Existing studies have been conducted on corporate identity construction from the perspectives of corporate governance, brand management, and organizational legitimacy, but more and more scholars think that corporate identity is not fixed and one-way, but dynamically, actively and online constructed through discourse in communication [3]. Although the existing research has made some achievements around the corporate identity construction [4], the related research has been mainly carried out in the commercial scene, lacking the research based on the cross-cultural comparative perspective to examine the differences of corporate identity construction strategies between the commercial scene and the public welfare scene, which can't provide a theoretical basis for Chinese enterprises to formulate corporate identity construction strategies that can balance the dual goals of profit pursuit and social responsibility when they enter the international market.

In terms of research methods, the research on corporate identity construction strategies mostly adopts the methods of case study and empirical study of management, and seldom uses literature discourse research to make a comparative study on corporate identity construction strategies in different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, this paper takes the recruitment announcements and donation statements of Chinese and American enterprises as the corpus and uses Discourse-Historical Analysis to explore the different identity construction strategies of Chinese and American enterprises in commercial and public welfare scenarios. In addition, GLOBE's cultural dimension model emphasizes the importance of "humanistic-oriented" and "performance-oriented" in explaining cross-cultural differences and provides an effective analytical framework for comparing and interpreting the identity construction strategies of enterprises in commercial and public welfare scenarios in different cultural situations. To sum up, this paper intends to use GLOBE cultural dimension model and Discourse-History Analysis to investigate and compare the discourse construction strategies of Chinese and American multinational corporations' identities in commercial and public welfare scenarios, and to enrich the current research ideas and methods of corporate identity construction based on the perspective of social responsibility and Discourse-History Analysis.

2 Theoretical Analysis

2.1 Differentiated Identity Construction of Enterprises in Commercial and Public Welfare Scenarios

Profit maximization theory holds that if an enterprise wants to survive in the market, it must make the maximum profit to expand reproduction, improve its ability to resist risks, and survive in development, in addition to paying off income and paying off debts when they are due. Under the goal of maximizing the interests of enterprises, enterprises are often driven by interests and strive to create wealth value, maximize the interests of their shareholders and their stakeholders, expand market share and enhance brand image [5]. However, the theory of corporate social responsibility assumes that from the perspective of society, society is a unified organic unity, and enterprises are the units that constitute this organic unity. Enterprises are closely related to society, and they cannot operate independently without society. Enterprises should attach importance to social welfare, enhance corporate image, and seek the balance between profit pursuit and social responsibility [6]. Charity is a kind of social responsibility that the leaders of enterprises give money and other help to the vulnerable groups in the society as social people. As a part of the social organization, the enterprise should not only pursue its interests and development but also undertake some charitable responsibilities. It is necessary to adjust and revise the constructed identity in the commercial and public welfare scenarios of enterprises, to adapt to the achievement of enterprise goals in commercial and public welfare scenarios, and have a positive impact on the enterprise itself and the social system, prompting the enterprise to establish a good reputation in the society and achieve long-term development.

2.2 Identity Construction of Chinese and American Enterprises in Different Scenarios Based on GLOBE Cultural Dimension Model

To analyze the influence of cultural differences on an individual or organization's differentiated behavior decisions, Hofstede proposed five dimensions of cultural differences in 1972, which are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism and collectivism, masculinity and feminization, long-term orientation, and short-term orientation [7]. These dimensions of cultural differences have laid a research foundation for the study of cultural differences and made outstanding contributions to cross-cultural management. However, since culture is not static, scholars suggest that the dimensions divided by Hofstede based on the 1972 survey data need to be revised and improved [8]. GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) project established a database containing about 150 countries' cultures, explored the cultural similarities and differences among countries, and how they affected their organizational behaviors, and put forward the latest research achievement on the GLOBE cultural dimension model. GLOBE project has expanded Hofstede's five dimensions to nine, maintaining two dimensions of "power distance" and "uncertainty avoidance", and revised Hofstede's "individualism and collectivism" to "group collectivism and public collectivism", "masculinity and feminization" to "gender equality and determination"

and “long-term and short-term orientation” to “future-orientation”. In addition, two cultural dimensions of “humanistic-oriented” and “performance-oriented” are added, which are the innovation of GLOBE’s cultural dimension model. The nine-dimensional index data of typical national culture collected by the GLOBE project [9] are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Scores of cultural dimensions of China, the United States, Japan, Germany and Australia

Country Cultural dimension	China	The United States	Japan	Germany	Australia
Power distance	5.04	4.88	5.11	5.15	4.74
Group Collectivism	5.80	4.25	4.63	4.08	4.17
Communal Collectivism	4.77	4.20	5.19	4.27	4.29
Uncertainty avoidance	4.94	4.15	4.07	4.65	4.39
Future-orientation	3.75	4.15	2.29	4.28	4.09
gender equality	3.05	3.34	3.19	3.67	3.40
Decisiveness	3.76	4.55	3.59	4.15	4.28
Humanistic-orientation	4.36	4.17	4.30	3.72	4.28
Performance-orientation	4.45	4.49	4.22	4.08	4.36

Although the GLOBE cultural dimension model, as the frontier theory of cross-cultural research, has been widely concerned and applied in the field of cross-cultural management [9], there are few literatures that apply this theory to the cross-cultural comparative study of corporate identity construction. Few scholars focus on the two newly added cultural dimensions (humanistic-orientation and performance-orientation) in GLOBE cultural dimension model to study corporate identity construction. Therefore, based on the GLOBE cultural dimension model, this paper selects the comparable multinational enterprises in China and the United States as cases to analyze and explain the cross-cultural differences in corporate identity construction strategies in different scenarios. Based on the GLOBE cultural dimension model, this paper analyzes the corporate identity construction between China and the United States. Compared with Chinese culture, the performance-orientation index of American culture is higher, but the humanistic-orientation index is lower (in Table 1). Combined with the differences in other cultural dimensions (such as group collectivism and public collectivism), American enterprises will relatively emphasize individual rights and achievements in the process of building their own identities. Chinese enterprises pay attention to creating a harmonious working atmosphere, emphasizing employees' sense of belonging, and highlighting the importance of the collective to corporate interests and honor. In the commercial scene, the performance-orientation and decisive index of American enterprises in the cultural context are higher, and the identity construction of Chinese enterprises puts more emphasis on profit acquisition, result-orientation, and the promotion of enterprise competitiveness. In the public welfare scene, the cultural situation of Chinese enterprises is

characterized by high humanistic-orientation, group collectivism, and public collectivism. Compared with American enterprises, their identity construction emphasizes more the feelings of family and country, humanistic-orientation and dedication.

3 Research Design

3.1 Research Methods

This paper intends to promote the development of related research based on the perspective of social responsibility and Discourse-History Analysis (DHA). It is one of the methods of Critic Discourse Analysis, which was first put forward by Ruth and Wodak, Austrian Critical Discourse Analysts, in the process of analyzing anti-Semitic tendencies in Austria after the war [10]. This method emphasizes the situational and historical nature of discourse. Thus, it could systematically synthesize various historical materials to analyze and explain the features of discourse at different levels [11]. As corporate identity construction can also be regarded as a process of discourse construction [12], DHA is suitable for studying and comparing corporate identity construction strategies in different cultural situations and different occasions.

The research with DHA is mainly based on the specific context, and three levels of analysis are carried out according to the relevant corpus of the research object, the analysis framework is shown in Figure 1.

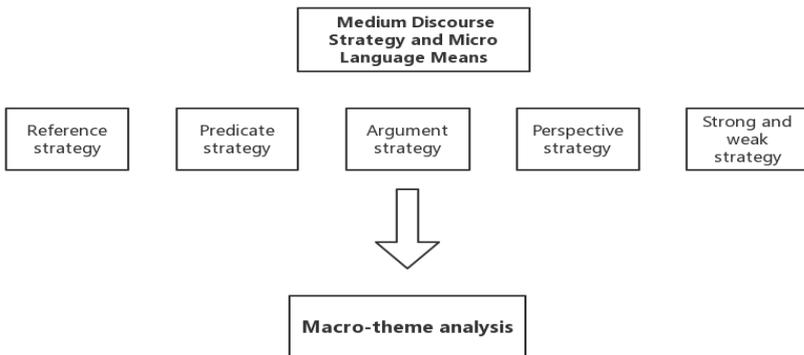


Fig. 1. A three-level analysis model of DHA

3.2 Corpus Selection

Table 2. Comparison of Corporate Identity Construction between HUAWEI and Apple in Commercial Scenarios

		HUAWEI	Apple	Contrastive analysis
Medium Discourse	Reference	We use the “we” to refer to ourselves.	More “Apple” is used to refer	HUAWEI’s expression is more friendly,

Strategy and Micro Language Means	strategy		to ourselves.	while Apple's expression is more objective.
	Predicate strategy	Positive representation is represented by adjectives, verbs and nouns in many ways.	Positive representation is represented by adjectives, verbs and nouns in many ways.	HUAWEI emphasizes the maximization of collective interests; Apple adheres to the result-orientation and pays attention to individual value.
	Argument strategy	Highlight the position of employees' status by using parallelism sentences	Describe your positive strengths.	HUAWEI confirms itself from the side; Apple draws the distance between individuals from the front. HUAWEI uses idioms to construct its corporate identity with traditional cultural heritage; Apple uses indirect speech to build corporate identity.
	Perspective strategy	Direct speech	Indirect speech	HUAWEI conveys strict requirements for outstanding talents at this stage; Apple conveys its bright expectation for the future.
	Strong and weak strategy	Use more "have"	Use "will" more often	
Macro-theme analysis		HUAWEI builds its corporate identity of being close to the people, maximizing collective interests, advocating traditional culture and feelings of family and country.	Build a positive, result-oriented, self-motivated and powerful corporate identity in Apple's commercial scene.	Both of them reflect the desire for outstanding talents and the pursuit of performance from different angles.

This paper collects recruitment announcements (commercial scenarios) and donation statements (public welfare scenarios) of HUAWEI and Apple as research data. Recruitment announcements and donation statements are important documents for external publicity, important means to sort out and maintain a corporate image, and important texts to highlight and shape corporate identity, which is suitable as research materials for this paper. In this paper, the relevant corpora of recruitment announcements and donation statements of HUAWEI and Apple are obtained from the official website and official media.

4 Research Results

4.1 Discourse-Historical Analysis of Corporate Identity Construction between China and the United States Based on Recruitment Announcement

This paper collects the recruitment announcements of HUAWEI and Apple (both obtained from the official website), takes the recruitment requirements of middle-level workers (HR) and bottom-level workers (retail operation manager) as the research corpus, and uses DHA to study the differences of their identity construction in performance-orientation. The analysis results are as follows.

Enterprise identity construction is influenced by many factors, among which culture is the most prominent. Based on the GLOBE cultural dimension model to explain the above DHA analysis results, it can be seen that both Chinese and American enterprises emphasize performance-orientation, but at the same time, they are influenced by other dimensions of culture, resulting in more obvious results-oriented characteristics in the United States: 1) Compared with Chinese culture, the collective collectivism and public collectivism indexes of American culture are very low, so the use of reference and the boundaries and representations inside and outside the group are quite different in the identity construction of Chinese and American case enterprises. 2) China and the United States have different understandings of performance-orientation. In the discourse of corporate identity construction, the pursuit of performance in China focuses on collectivism. While the United States focuses on individualism; 3) Chinese and American cultures hold different views on uncertainty avoidance, which affects the use of strong and weak strategies in the discourse of corporate identity construction in both countries. The discourse of corporate identity construction in China is relatively strong in avoiding uncertainty.

4.2 Discourse-Historical Analysis of Corporate Identity Construction between China and the United States Based on Donation Statement

This study collected donation statements from HUAWEI and Apple (both obtained from the official website), and they made extensive donations in different aspects of public welfare activities. In this paper, the donation statement was obtained from its official media, and the difference in identity construction between them in humanistic-orientation was studied by using DHA. The analysis results are as follows.

Table 3. Comparison of Corporate Identity Construction between HUAWEI and Apple in Public Welfare Scenarios

		HUAWEI	Apple	Contrastive analysis
Medium Discourse Strategy and Micro	Reference strategy	More “we” is used to refer to ourselves.	More “Apple” is used to refer to ourselves.	HUAWEI’s expression is relatively friendly; Apple’s expression is more objective.

Language Means	Predicate strategy	Positive words are used to represent the positive.	Positive words are used to represent the positive.	HUAWEI focuses on collective interests and emphasizes unity; Apple emphasizes multiple values.
	Argument strategy	The topic is from the social point of view; Objective exposition of difficult topics	The topic is from the individual point of view; Objective exposition of difficult topics	Both of them construct the corporate identity of actively fulfilling social responsibilities and facing difficulties from different angles.
	Strong and weak strategy	Use deep words and parallelism sentences to strengthen the mood.	Overall affinity of transmission	HUAWEI constructs the corporate identity of stepping forward in times of crisis; Apple has established a more objective corporate identity of dedication.
Macro-theme analysis		HUAWEI builds a dedicated corporate identity of being close to the people, facing difficulties and advocating the feelings of family and country.	Apple builds a corporate identity that is inclusive, emphasizes diversified values, and pays attention to individual dedication to the whole.	Both of them construct the corporate identity of caring for the people and caring for the society from different angles.

Based on the GLOBE cultural dimension model to explain the above DHA analysis results, it can be seen that both Chinese and American enterprises emphasize humanistic-orientation, but they are influenced by other dimensions of culture at the same time: 1) Compared with Chinese culture, the collective collectivism and public collectivism indexes of American culture are very low, so the use of reference and the boundaries and representations inside and outside the group are quite different in the identity construction of Chinese and American case enterprises. 2) China and the United States have different understandings of humanistic-orientation. In the discourse of corporate identity construction in China, humanistic-oriented care focuses on collectivism, while in the discourse of corporate identity construction in the United States, humanistic-oriented care is more expressed from the perspective of individualism.

5 Conclusion and Discussion

Based on the perspective of social responsibility and DHA, this paper selects Chinese and American case companies to study the discourse strategies of corporate identity construction in their commercial and public welfare scenarios, and compares the similarities and differences between Chinese and American multinational companies' discourse strategies of corporate identity construction in commercial and public welfare scenarios:

Firstly, in the commercial scene, both Chinese and American corporate identity construction discourses pay attention to performance, but in the public welfare scene, they highlight the corporate identity characteristics of caring for others and being willing to give. It can be seen that the results and performance-orientation of the identity construction strategy of enterprises in the public welfare scene are weak compared with the identity construction of enterprises in the commercial scene, while the humanistic-orientation is strong. The above findings inspire the follow-up research to enrich and develop the existing corporate identity construction theory from a new perspective of social responsibility.

Secondly, HUAWEI pays attention to building a populist and positive corporate identity in commercial and public welfare scenes, which is the saturation of the domestic communication market and the intense competition in the international market during HUAWEI's startup. Apple's result-oriented corporate identity constructed in the commercial scene echoes its idea of "shaping the company's" culture and innovation ability by "individualizing employees", while it constructs a caring corporate identity in the public welfare scene, which is consistent with Apple's idea of continuously emphasizing innovation and technology, advocating the culture of elite talents and emphasizing multiple values in the whole development process. The above findings provide meaningful enlightenment for the follow-up research to use DHA, combine the development process and situation of enterprises to reveal the relevant laws of enterprise identity construction.

Finally, due to the relatively high indexes of group collectivism and public collectivism in China, HUAWEI's corporate identity construction discourse in commercial scenarios reflects the traditional cultural heritage, and corporate identity construction discourse in public welfare scenarios highlights the feelings of family and country. However, compared with Chinese culture, the performance-orientation index of American culture is higher, but the humanistic-orientation index is slightly lower. Apple's identity construction discourse in the commercial scene is more personal, while in the public welfare scene, it highlights the construction of a corporate identity that is not afraid of difficulties, is inclusive, and highly negotiated. The above findings promote the development of the cross-cultural comparative theory of corporate identity construction and provide a theoretical analysis framework for the follow-up study and comparison of corporate identity construction strategies in different cultural situations.

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