

# **A Comparative Study on the Communication Effect of Tourism Promotion from a Cross-cultural Perspective**

## **---Taking Sina Weibo and Twitter as Examples**

Zewei Zhao <sup>a</sup>, Kai Qin

Guilin University of Electronic Technology, Guilin 541004, China

<sup>a</sup>736238132@qq.com

**Abstract.** In the context of globalization, tourism promotion is no longer limited to the domestic market, we should pay more attention to the international market. The cultural differences often lead to cultural misunderstandings and even cultural conflicts during cross-cultural communication. After studying the official accounts of Tourist Administration on Sina Weibo and Twitter, this paper finds that different factors have similar impact on communication effect of cross-cultural tourism promotion on two social platforms (Sina Weibo and Twitter) although there are cultural differences.

**Keywords:** Cross-cultural Communication, Tourism Promotion, Communication Effect, Celebrity Effects.

### **1. Introduction**

As internationalization deepens, cross-cultural tourism promotion becomes more and more important. Although the rapid development of the network has facilitated the acquisition of information, due to the existence of cultural differences, there are still some traditional problems in the process of cross-cultural tourism promotion, and at the same time, some new problems have emerged[1].

In China, Sina Weibo (hereinafter referred to as Weibo) is one of the most commonly used social media in China[2]. Twitter, which is similar to Weibo, is one of the most widely used social media for overseas users. This paper will focus on the different cultural backgrounds in Chinese and English, and study the the official Weibo and Twitter accounts of tourism departments to find the influence of factors (content posted and “celebrity effect”) on cross-cultural communication effect of tourism promotion.

### **2. Collection and Analysis of Data**

#### **2.1 Collection of Data**

This paper focuses on the research of cross-cultural communication effects in the context of Chinese and English, so we collected the official Weibo account of Tourist Administration from English-speaking countries such as the US and the UK. In contrast, what is collected on Twitter is the official account from Chinese Tourist Administration.

#### **2.2 Analysis of Data**

Views of a weibo or a tweet is the data that best reflects the communication effect, but due to platform limitations, we cannot get views from Weibo and Twitter. Therefore, this paper will use other available data which are easy to get for research. Repost, Comment, and Like are three basic functions for users to express oneself in a weibo or a tweet. We will use the number of Reposts, Comments and Likes to measure the communication effect of tourism promotion from a cross-cultural perspective, and the more Reposts, Comments and Likes, the better the communication effect [3].

### 3. Assumptions and Methods of the Research

#### 3.1 Assumptions of the Research.

As the two major social platforms commonly used in the world, Weibo and Twitter have many similar functions, which is convenient for us to conduct comparative research. Before conducting the research, we can make some assumptions in advance.

Assumptions 1: Topics affect the communication effect [4].

The users of Weibo and Twitter can select the topics which they are interested in. Post different topics could attract different users both on Weibo and Twitter. That is, we need to find which topics could get more Reposts, Comments and Likes for a weibo or tweet.

Assumptions 2: The “celebrity effect” affects the communication effect.

The “celebrity effect” in tourism promotion generally refers to the communication effect brought by historical and cultural celebrities. However, this paper studies the “celebrity effect” brought by film celebrities. This paper will prove that “celebrity effect” could improve the cross-cultural communication effect of tourism promotion. That is, we need to prove that “celebrity effect” could increase the number of Reposts, Comments and Likes.

#### 3.2 Methods of the Research.

This paper collects the Reposts, Comments and Likes of the official account of Tourist Administration on Weibo and Twitter, and using the quantitative and qualitative analysis methods to analyze the communication effect. We will directly compare the values of Reposts, Comments and Likes to analyze whether the topics and “celebrity effect” can affect the communication effect of tourism promotion.

### 4. Analysis of the Results

#### 4.1 The Influence of Topics on the Communication Effect

##### (1) The influence on Weibo

We found some features during the research. For a Weibo account, the weibo topics which related to one of the following three, obviously can get more Reposts, Comments and Likes: ① Chinese culture; ② popular elements in China; ③ Discount information.

Take the New York Tourism Bureau official Weibo account @纽约旅游局 as an example, Tab.1 shows the data of original weibo in December 2018, in which Repost, Comment and Like respectively indicate the number of Reposts, Comments and Likes. Lines 2-3 are 2 weibo data related to Chinese traditional art (The weibo topics involves Chinese traditional art such as Dragon dance and Lion dance, Waist drum, Face changing and Chinese Lantern Art.); Lines 4-9 are 6 related to Christmas; Lines 10-11 are 2 related to New Year; Lines 12-13 are 2 related to discount information (ticket and restaurant); Line 15 is the average value of 63 weibo data in addition to the above in December 2018. By comparing the data in lines 2-14 with the average value in the last Line, it can be found that almost all values are greater than the average, moreover many values are far greater than the average (the values smaller than the average have been marked red in the table).

As can be seen in Tab.1, the weibo topics related to one of the following three get more Reposts, Comments and Likes: ① Chinese culture (Chinese traditional art); ② Popular element in China (Christmas and New Year); ③ Discount information (ticket or restaurant discount).

##### (2) The influence on Twitter

At the same time, we also found some similar features on Twitter. For a Twitter account, the tweet topics which related to one of the following three, obviously can get more Reposts, Comments and Likes: ① Chinese culture; ② Popular elements overseas; ③ Gift giving.

Table.1 New York Tourism Bureau in December 2018

1	New York Tourism Bureau	Repost	Comment	Like
2	Chinese Traditional Art	95	44	282
3		86	35	425
4	Christmas	13	9	100
5		128	40	547
6		30	9	113
7		21	5	110
8		127	53	688
9		161	70	759
10	New Year	62	31	390
11		120	61	486
12	Discount	38	24	298
13		55	25	530
14		155	61	798
15	The Rest(AVG)	17.25	9.94	79.75

Take the official tourism Twitter account of Shaanxi @Visit Shaanxi as an example, Tab.2 shows the data of original tweet in December 2018.Lines 2-3 are 2 tweet data related to Taibai Mountain; Lines 4-7 are 4 related to Terracotta Warrior; Lines 8-9 are 2 related to Christmas; Lines 10-11 are 2 related to participate in activities and give gifts; Line 12 is the average value of 36 in addition to the above 10 in December 2018.By comparing the data in lines 2-11 with the average value in the last Line, it can be found that almost all values are greater than the average except the Comments(the values smaller than the average have been marked red in the table).

Table.2 Visit Shaanxi in December 2018

1	Visit Shaanxi	Repost	Comment	Like
2	Taibai Mountain	14	1	195
3		6	0	92
4	Terracotta Warrior	12	1	103
5		6	1	88
6		7	0	73
7		7	0	87
8	Christmas	10	1	81
9		10	0	61
10	Win gift	8	0	103
11		4	0	59
12	The Rest(AVG)	5.17	0.17	52.86

As can be seen in Tab.2, the tweet topics related to one of the following three get more Reposts, Comments and Likes:①Chinese culture (Taibai Mountain and Terracotta Warrior); ②Popular element overseas (Christmas);③Gift giving (participate in activities and give gifts).

#### 4.2 The Influence of the Celebrity Effect

(1) The influence on Weibo

In order to verify whether the “celebrity effect” can affect the Reposts,Comments and Likes of a weibo, this paper take the official Weibo account of California Tourism Bureau @加州旅游局as an example.

@加州旅游局invited Chinese singer Li Zhiting(played the role of Li Zhi in the historical drama “The Empress of China”) to promote the tourism of California, and Li Zhiting has a certain popularity and fans in China.Tab.3 shows the data of original weibo in December 2018.Lines 2-5 are 4 weibo data related to Li Zhiting;Line 6 is the average value of 55 weibo data in addition to the above 4 in December 2018.By comparing the data in lines 2-5 with the average value in the last Line, it can be found that all values are far greater than the average,and all values are dozens times the average,some even hundreds times the average.

Table.3 California Tourism Bureau in December 2018

1	California Tourism Bureau	Repost	Comment	Like
2	Celebrity Effect (Li)	205	155	445
3		57	49	60
4		61	69	60
5		2504	364	1134
6	The Rest(AVG)	2.8	2.95	8.82

(2) The influence On Twitter

Similar to Weibo,we take the official Beijing tourism Twitter account @Visit Beijing as an example.

Ryan Reynolds(best known for playing the Marvel Comics character Deadpool) went to Beijing in January 2019 to promote the film Deadpool 2.Tab.4 shows the data of Original tweet in January 2019.Lines 2 are one tweet data related to Ryan Reynolds;Line 3 is the average value of 40 tweet data in addition to the above one tweet data in January 2019.By comparing the data in lines 2 with the average value in the last Line, it can be found that all values in Line 2 are far greater than the average.

Table.4 Visit Beijing in January 2019

1	Visit Beijing	Repost	Comment	Like
2	Celebrity Effect(Ryan)	41	49	1000
3	The Rest(AVG)	7.89	0.49	27.67

Through the comparison of the above data, we can find that "celebrity effect" has a significant impact on the communication effect of tourism promotion from a cross-cultural perspective on Weibo and Twitter.

5. Summary

Through compare the values of the Reposts,Comments and Likes about Weibo account(@纽约旅游局 and @加州旅游局) and Twitter account (@Visit Shaanxi and @Visit Beijing),we found that whether it is on Weibo or Twitter, on one hand,the topics related to Chinese culture,popular elements or benefits gain can improve the communication effect of tourism promotion significantly from a cross-cultural perspective.On the other hand,"celebrity effect" could improve the communication effect of tourism promotion significantly from a cross-cultural perspective.

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