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ОБЗОР ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ ИМИДЖА КИТАЯ В НОВЫХ СМИ
Обзор

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Аннотация

Исследование образа Китая в новых СМИ обозначено резким контрастом как внутри страны, так и за рубежом. Большинство исследования проводятся в Китае, и только некоторые исследования проводятся иностранными учеными. По сравнению с международными исследованиями имиджа Китая в новых СМИ, исследования внутри страны превосходят их как на макро-уровне, так и с точки зрения анализа отдельных случаев. В качестве метода исследования китайские ученые в основном прибегают к использованию контент-анализа, концентрируясь на областях журналистики и теории коммуникации. Что касается исследовательских вопросов, то они сосредоточены на изучении комплексных тем, а также на дискуссиях по отдельным вопросам. Касательно множества интерпретаций образа Китая в новых СМИ, больше всего исследований приходится на многомерную интерпретацию образа Китая, однако анализ образа Китая в одном конкретном измерении также имеет место. Говоря о размещении исследуемой информации, отечественные и зарубежные социальные сети являются основными платформами для изучения имиджа Китая. В статье указывается наличие большего объёма литературы, формирующей образ страны извне, нежели признаков его "самоформирования", где источниками "формирования извне" являются средства массовой информации в европейских и американских странах, а "самоформирование" достигается официальными китайскими СМИ. В настоящее время в исследовании имиджа Китая в новых СМИ все еще существуют проблемы с методами и объёмами исследования, а также моделированием имиджа.

Ключевые слова: новые СМИ, исследование имиджа Китая, статус-кво, проблемы.

A REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON CHINA'S IMAGE ON NEW MEDIA
Review article

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Abstract

The research on China's image on new media is facing a sharp contrast both at home and abroad. A few studies are from foreign scholars, but the majority is done by Chinese scholars. Compared with international studies on China's image on new media, the domestic studies outperform them in both a macroscopic way and in case analysis. Chinese scholars mainly adopt content analysis as the research method, concentrating on the fields of journalism and communication science. As for the research issues, they focus on investigations of comprehensive topics, as well as some special discussions on single issues. In terms of image dimensions, the multi-dimensional interpretation of China's image on new media accounts for the most, while specific analysis of China's image in a single dimension has also begun to appear. Concerning platform distribution, domestic and foreign social networking sites are the main platforms for the study of China's image. In terms of the shaping agents, there is more literature on "other-shaping" than "self-shaping". The agents of "other-shaping" are mainstream media in European and American countries. "Self-shaping" is achieved by the official domestic media for publicity. At present, there are still problems in the research of China's image on new media with research methods, research dimensions, and image modeling.

Keywords: new media, China's image research, the status quo, problems.

National image is the perception and evaluation of a country's political, economic, social, cultural, and geographical conditions from the perspective of domestic and overseas populations. The shaping and promoting of the national image serves as an integral part of the nation's development strategy and is a critical factor for it to attract global attention and investment. With the strengthening of China's national power, the academic community has been quite enthusiastic in studying China's national image. Previous studies on international public opinions related to China were mainly based on traditional media, such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. With the emergence and rapid development of new media with digital, multimedia, real-time, and interactive features, traditional mainstream media have scrambled to seize a place in the new media world, while other non-mainstream media, such as enterprises, associations, and individual users, have also become active participants in the new media platforms, promoting the vigorous development of China-related reporting and research on the building of China's image in the context of new media. Therefore, figuring out the status quo of new media study on China's image and revealing problems in this regard can expand the breadth and depth of new media study on China's image and realize the shift from extensible development to connotative development.

1. Status Quo of New Media Study on China's Image
1.1 Status Quo of Overseas Study

Foreign literature mainly relies on the theoretical framework of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis, and it uses a qualitative-quantitative content analysis method to analyze the themes, tendencies, and causes of the coverage related to

China's image on international mainstream media websites or English-language social media. It is chiefly written by Chinese scholars and has yielded limited results. Xiang (2013) finds that English-language social media present more neutral and diverse images of China in economic, cultural, and technological coverage than the international mainstream media. However, this English-language social media still uncritically follows the stereotypical images created by the international mainstream media when portraying China's social, political, religious, and ethnic images. Ван Синьцин и др. (2015) concludes that Tajikistan's online media has far more positive than negative reports related to China's image by arguing the tendency in China's image coverage in mainstream Tajik online media. We also note that the latest foreign literature has achieved breakthroughs in research methods and dimensions, which is pushing the new media coverage involving China's image in a deeper direction. Wang & Feng (2021) conducted a multimodal critical discourse analysis of the Xi'an promotion videos on TikTok, a short-form video social platform, in order to explore the characteristics and strategies of Chinese cities' image building in new media.

1.2 Status Quo of Domestic Study

Compared with foreign countries, Chinese scholars have yielded more research that engages diverse types of new media and coverage themes on the image of China in new media. Domestic research primarily adopts the journalism and communication perspectives, occasionally the linguistic, and the journalism-linguistic blended perspective in certain cases. This research focuses predominantly on the analysis of specific cases and less on macro themes.

Through retrieval, we obtained 61 specific case study papers on the image of China in new media. Chinese academia has paid greater attention to the image of China in new media since 2016 and reached a peak in 2018. We will do an in-depth exploration of four aspects: issue distribution, image dimension, platform distribution, and image builder.

1.2.1 Issue Distribution

Among the 61 papers, 42 deal with comprehensive topics concerning China's image in domestic and foreign new media, accounting for nearly 70% of the total. For example, Wang Qikai et al. (2018) divides the coverage of China on mainstream online media in Kyrgyzstan into four categories: political and economic, social and cultural, sports and humanities, and military. This is done to compare the number, topics, and distribution of attitudinal resources of different categories. According to Liang et al. (2017), the topics that were related to China covered by the social network site VKONTAKTE were divided into political, economic, cultural, social, diplomatic, military, science and technology, national, education, sports, health and natural environment, tourism, and insight. Based on the categories, they also analyzed the number, frequency, and length tendency of coverage in different categories.

Another 19 articles focus on individual topics concerning China's image in new media coverage. They are relatively scattered and cover the "Belt and Road" Initiative, the Rio Olympics, the COVID-19 epidemic, the Chinese dream, the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, "Made in China", the Shanghai Expo, China's post-Olympic era, the Tibet issue, etc. For example, Mao Wei et al. (2018) conducted a content analysis of Twitter reports on the "Belt and Road" and investigated the actual participation of Chinese mainstream media accounts in the "Belt and Road" reports.

1.2.2 Image Dimensions

National image contains multiple dimensions of connotation, with the eight major components including the national image logo, national profile, government image, corporate image, city image, historical image, cultural image, and people's quality. Among the 61 papers, 44 provide multidimensional analyses on China's image in new media at home and abroad. For example, Fan Xiaoling (2016) reviews the political, economic, and cultural images of China in the online media *Kazakhstan Express* and *Kazakhstan Pravda*. Another 17 papers are dedicated to studying China's image in a particular dimension as portrayed by domestic and foreign new media reports related to China. They cover government image, corporate image, regional image, cultural image, public figures' image, and people's image. Pan Lulin et al. (2018) selected 50 representative blogs from Naver, the largest search engine in the Republic of Korea, that deal with Chinese culture in Korean netizens' discourse as the research corpus.

1.2.3 Platform Distribution

There are significantly more studies of China's image on foreign new media platforms than on Chinese new media. 50 of the 61 papers, more than 80% of the total, elaborate on China's image on foreign new media platforms, including official websites of mainstream media, blog and news websites, social networking websites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, VK, etc.), blogs, etc. Among foreign new media platforms, social networking websites have the most studies on China's image, accounting for 60%. This is followed by official websites of mainstream media and comprehensive new media platforms, which account for 20% and 14%, respectively, while other platforms have merely a handful of relevant researches.

Table 1 – Distribution of foreign new media platforms involved in China Image Research

New media platform	The integrated platform	Mainstream media	News blog	Social media	Blog	Other
Number of literature	7	10	1	30	1	1
Percentage	14%	20%	2%	60%	2%	2%

Most of the scholars select two or more social networking websites at the same time for comprehensive analysis. However, some specifically concentrate on Chinese coverage on a specific website as the object of study, with the most selected being Twitter, followed by Facebook, VK, and YouTube.

China's new media platforms mainly include government websites, official websites of mainstream media, and social networking websites (Weibo and WeChat). Weibo and WeChat, as the current mainstream social media in China, occupy a pivotal position in mass communication by virtue of their timeliness, interactivity, and convenience. However, we have not yet

found any studies involving the external communication of specialized social media platforms such as Zhihu and Douban. Thus, it is necessary to further broaden the new media platforms for China's image research.

1.2.4 Image Builder

National image is dynamic, shaped jointly by others and the nation itself. So-called "other-shaping" refers to the act of foreign media shaping the image of the country, which is a kind of external evaluation and recognition based on others' feelings and will. "Self-shaping" is the shaping of the country's image by its own media, which contains self-feeling and centers on self-will. In the literature related to the new media coverage of China, there are 35 articles on "other-shaping", 24 on "self-shaping", and two comparing the results of "other-shaping" and "self-shaping". Those involved in "other-shaping" are relatively scattered, including more than a dozen countries and regions. Scholars pay much more attention to European and American countries than other countries and regions. Among them, the image of China shaped by American media is the most popular topic, which also confirms the view that "the dominant power of other-shaping is basically in the hands of the power of media" (Liu Xiaoyan 2002: 66).

Now that any user can publish information on the platform in the age of new media, there are "other-shaping" actors everywhere. Foreign mainstream media is the most important object of China's image research, accounting for more than 50%, followed by comprehensive studies of different shaping actors accounting for nearly 30%. In contrast, there is less literature with government, associations, and individuals as research subjects.

In terms of the content tendency of "other-shaping", scholars generally conclude that the image of China in foreign new media is a combination of positive and negative. In general, the number of positive and neutral reports outweighs that of negative ones. In addition, the research results show that, compared with Western media reports, the new media in countries along the "Belt and Road", such as Russia and Central Asian countries, have a more positive and neutral tendency to report on China's image.

The image of a country is the result of the interaction of two factors: "self-shaping" and "other-shaping". China is also making full use of online media to proactively introduce China's image to the world, tell China's story, and expand its international influence. The "self-shaping" actors are also widely distributed, including comprehensive publishers, the government, official and unofficial mainstream media, and enterprises. However, compared with "other-shaping", the literature on "self-shaping" has focused on the coverage of mainstream official media and the construction of the national image, with little research done on other actors.

2. Issues in New Media Research on China's Image

The study of the status quo of new media research on China's image has contributed to the improvement of China's image at home and abroad, but there are still shortcomings. Specifically, problems exist in the new media research on China's image.

2.1 Not Enough Research Methods

At present, studies on the image of China in new media are mainly seen in the fields of journalism and communication, and few studies involve linguistics and international politics. The research basically adopts the content analysis method, one of the methods commonly used in mass communication, which is to explore the quantity, tendency, position, and varying pattern of the coverage by quantitative analysis of the content of China-related coverage of a certain subject or a certain type of subjects in a certain period of time. Among relevant studies using the content analysis method, the number of text data used for quantitative analysis is generally small, and the time span of the text is short. The analysis of attitude tendency and emotion mainly relies on the subjective interpretation of the researcher, resulting in a certain one-sidedness and limitation in the presentation of China's image in the new media. In recent years, a few scholars have started to use computer programs to capture data from larger-scale online reports in an effort to improve the objectivity and authenticity of research results. For example, Xu (2016) used "Octopus" software to automatically capture, collect, and conduct the structured extraction and storage of post page information to explore the effect of Chinese culture on YouTube.

2.2 Lack of Stereoscopic Research Dimensions

Generally speaking, the image of China in new media has two macro dimensions. One is the image of the country presented by the media in the form of text, picture, audio, and video, and the other is the national image reflected by users mainly through user data and texts, including the number of readers/likes/comments and content of comments. In contrast to the research on China's image in traditional media, which focuses on individual text, the multimodal study of China's image in new media should concentrate more on analyzing the articulation between various models and how the media "arrange and combine" the various models to construct meaning. Unfortunately, existing studies mainly involve a single modality of textual content or videos published by media, and they seldom integrate symbolic resources, such as texts, pictures, colors, and images that jointly participate in meaningful construction for multimodal interaction studies. Meanwhile, existing studies are mainly based on the national image that is shaped by the media, and they pay less attention to the national image reflected by users, such as user activity, user dissemination, post influence, and comment tendency.

2.3 Image Builders from Partial Walks of Life

New media research on China's image mainly focuses on the "other-shaping" content of mainstream Western countries, among which the US and the UK are the main subjects, with less attention paid to non-Western countries and regions. Studies on both "self-shaping" and "other-shaping" are conducted on mainstream official media reports, with less attention paid to non-mainstream media, such as enterprises, NGOs, online associations, and individual netizens. In the study of "self-shaping", the research literature on non-mainstream media is only one-fifth of that on mainstream media. The singularity of image builders makes it difficult to objectively present the whole picture of China's image in the new media and to provide an effective practical reference for enhancing the "self-shaping ability" of foreign communication. With the accelerated flow of global information and frequent media exchanges in the new media era, the voices of ordinary people are increasingly valued, and we should pay more attention to non-Western media and strengthen the research on different image builders.

3. Conclusion

New media marks the blending of multiple forms of communication. The well-defined distinction of media types will no longer make any sense in the new media stage, and "composite information" will be of great concern in the field of new media research. Therefore, we urgently need to collect a large number of multimodal corpus of national images to build a large-scale multimodal corpus. Based on systematic description of a large amount of real corpus, we seek to draw more reliable conclusions and propose countermeasures that better comply with the new media's external communication features with the help of sentiment analysis software. In addition, we also need to introduce more diverse research methods, such as questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, eye-movement tests, brain imaging, and other empirical research methods. We should also find more integrated perspectives and draw from more disciplines, such as cultural studies, anthropological studies, ethnographic studies, and interactive linguistic studies in order to actively conduct three-dimensional research on national image communication in new media.

Конфликт интересов	**Conflict of Interest**
Не указан.	None declared.

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