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Mediated Cultural Tourism: A Study on the Effectiveness of Digital Intelligence Technologies in Cultural Tourism Promotion

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Abstract:
This study adopts a deep mediatization framework to investigate the differential impact mechanisms of three digital-intelligent modalities—short videos, live streaming, and AR/VR—on cultural tourism promotion effectiveness. Combining questionnaire surveys with in-depth interviews, the study analyzes the characteristics of different digital media in response to current industry challenges. Findings reveal that short videos achieve the highest emotional resonance and consumption-driving efficacy, live streaming offers real-time interactive authenticity, while AR/VR technologies, despite delivering highly embodied emotional experiences, fail to effectively translate into on-site consumption behavior. The study reveals that cultural tourism communication paradigms in the digital era have shifted from "cognitive persuasion" to "emotional empathy," with emotional energy becoming the core element of such communication. Finally, based on the principle of media appropriateness, corresponding optimization strategies are proposed, providing theoretical references and practical pathways for the research and refinement of digital media technologies.

Keywords:
Deep Mediatization, Communication Effectiveness, Emotional Communication, Embodied Communication, Media Ecology

1 Introduction

In the post-pandemic era where traffic reigns supreme, visualised cultural tourism dissemination—epitomised by short videos—has catalysed the meteoric rise of countless viral cities. Yet beneath this prosperity lurks a profound crisis of trust: the shattering of filters has exposed"photo fraud" controversies, while the ebb of traffic has precipitated economic stagnation, trapping the industry in a "high exposure, low retention" predicament.

Concurrently, emerging digital technologies such as live streaming and VR/AR are attempting to reshape the communication landscape through "real-time presence" and "embodied immersion." Digital cultural tourism, characterised by "authenticity" and "immersive experiences," has pioneered a new promotional pathway, ushering the sector into a "digital intelligence era." The pastoral villages captured through Li Ziqi's lens, immersive museum tours via livestreaming, and virtual digital tour guides represent emerging formats that enhance visitor engagement and experiential logic while providing crucial technological support for boosting consumer confidence in the cultural tourism sector.

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2 Literature Review

2.1 Relevant research on media ecology

Media Ecology, a significant school of thought within communication studies, emphasises that media are not merely tools for information transmission but constitute an "environment" that shapes human perception, modes of thought, and social structures. The term "media environment" was first publicly proposed by Neil Postman in a lecture. Building upon McLuhan's "the medium is the message," this theoretical framework aims to actively explore the relationship between media and human society and culture by studying the role of media within society.

Theories related to media ecology were introduced to China in the 1990s, with scholars such as He Daokuan promoting the dissemination and localised adaptation of this theory within the country.In his study *Technological Monopoly: Culture Surrenders to Technology*, He Daokuan focused on interpreting and validating the core theoretical propositions. His localised elaboration of assertions such as "the medium is the environment" and "technology reshapes perception" laid the groundwork for subsequent applications within the cultural tourism sector.

2.1.1 Research on the classic theories of the media ecology school

Marshall McLuhan, in his seminal work *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, famously posited that "the medium is the message." He argued that the form of the medium itself exerts a greater influence on societal transformation and the reshaping of perception than the content it conveys.

Neil Postman, in *Amusing Ourselves to Death and Technopoly*, adopted a critical perspective on media ecology theory. He argued that the media environment constructed by technology forms "invisible regulation,"shaping the audience's cognitive logic and behavioural habits.

2.1.2 Research on the digital-intelligent characteristics of the new media environment

Peng Lan, in her essay *How Cyborg Bodies Affect Our Existence*, observes that with the advancement of technologies like VR/AR, the body ceases to be a passive recipient and instead becomes a medium for communication and an interface for interaction. She emphasises that digital-intelligent technologies achieve "bodily presence" through sensory simulation, and this embodied quality elicits stronger emotional engagement than text or video.However, Jean Baudrillard's theory of "hyper-reality" in *Simulacra and Simulation* offers a cautionary perspective. He contends that when digital simulations surpass the authenticity of reality, virtual experiences may become perfect substitutes for the real world.

In her study *Observation on the Development Status and Trends of Mobile Short Videos,* Wang Xiaohong contends that short videos transcend mere information carriers, functioning as visual evidence that creates novel forms of opinion expression and public discourse guidance. She observes that short videos draw content directly from everyday life, fostering an innate affinity with audiences; technologically, they liberate personalised video production from professional constraints. Concurrently, Yu Guoming further observes in Deep Mediatisation: The Ecological Structure, Value Focus, and Core Resources of the Media Industry that within this new communication architecture, new media technology platforms are emerging as pivotal actors

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within the media sector. This shift not only alters industry boundaries and power dynamics but, more significantly, emphasises a networked logic centred on relational connections. This represents an iterative upgrade from the unidirectional logic of information production traditionally followed by mass media.

2.2 Relevant research on the cultural and tourism industry

Adorno and Horkheimer coined the term "culture industry"in their 1940s work *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception*. John Urry, in his seminal work *The Tourist Gaze*, posited that the tourism experience is fundamentally a "gaze" upon and consumption of differentiated symbols. The tourism experience is symbolically constructed, with tourists effectively consuming a "symbolic set" associated with the destination.From a communication studies perspective, cultural tourism promotion fundamentally constitutes a process of "encoding and decoding of meaning".

Stuart Hall's constructivist perspective in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* demonstrates that cultural tourism destinations are not naturally occurring entities, but rather "representations" constructed by media discourse.

Dean MacCannell's theory of "stage reality" and "backstage reality" in *Tourists: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* reveals the limitations of live streaming. He contends that tourists perpetually seek to penetrate the stage to uncover backstage authenticity, yet invariably encounter only a staged "pseudo-backstage".

With the advancement of digital technology, domestic research has gradually shifted from "theoretical interpretation" to "scenario application". Yu Guoming, in his work Media Convergence Towards the Future, points out that the new digital information technology paradigm signifies an entirely new media ecosystem, communication structure, and social form.Consequently, media convergence is not merely about technological adoption or innovation, but rather a complex paradigm shift. Drawing upon domestic cultural tourism development practices, scholars focus on analysing how digital-intelligent AI technologies—such as short-video platforms, intelligent recommendation systems, and VR cultural tourism—reconfigure the production, dissemination, and reception of cultural tourism information. This forms a research pathway characterised by "theoretical localisation—scenario concretisation—empirical validation of outcomes".

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Questionnaire survey method

3.1.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire comprised three sections: Part One covered basic background and media exposure, gathering essential demographic information and understanding corresponding media engagement patterns; Part Two addressed perceptions of media characteristics; Part Three explored psychological responses and consumption decisions.

Short videos, live streaming, and AR/VR media were categorised as independent variable X, while immersion, sense of authentic experience, resonance, and cultural tourism consumption desire were defined as de-

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pendent variable Y. The dependent variables were reduced to a lower-dimensional Y-measurement comprising emotional resonance investment, cognitive authenticity trust, and consumption desire.

3.1.2 Formulating hypotheses

H1: Short videos, live streaming, and AR/VR media exert a significant influence on audience emotional resonance investment.

H1.1 Short videos exert a significant influence on audience emotional resonance investment.

H1.2: Live streaming significantly influences audience emotional resonance investment.

H1.3: AR/VR media impressions exert a significant influence on audience emotional resonance investment.

H2: Short videos, live streaming, and AR/VR media exert a significant influence on audiences' cognitive trust in authenticity.

H2.1 Short videos exert a significant influence on audiences' perceived authenticity and trust.

H2.2 Live streaming significantly influences audiences' perceived authenticity trust.

H2.3 AR/VR media significantly influence audiences' perceived authenticity trust.

H3: Short videos, live streaming, and AR/VR media exert a significant influence on audience consumption desire measurement.

H3.1 Short videos exert a significant influence on the measurement of audience consumption desire.

H3.2 Live streaming significantly influences audience consumption desire measurement.

H3.3 AR/VR media significantly influence the measurement of audience consumption desire.

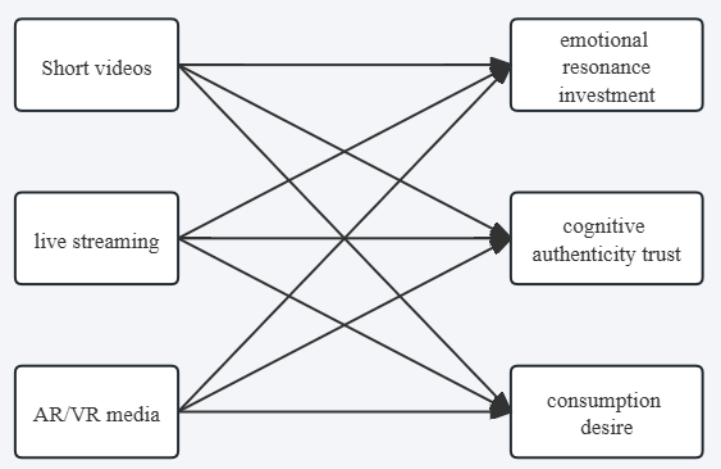


Figure 1 Hypotheses relationship

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3.2 In-depth interview methodology

3.2.1 Preparation of interview outline

The interview outline comprised three principal sections. The first section primarily gathered basic demographic information about the interviewee, including gender, age, occupation, and other relevant factors. The second section translated research questions into interview queries, focusing on the interviewee's perspectives regarding the role of digital and intelligent media such as short videos, live streaming, and AR/VR in cultural and tourism promotion. The third section were reserved for potential follow-up questions requiring deeper exploration.

Throughout the interview and research process, care was taken to avoid the fourfold ethical issues and transgressive behaviour highlighted by scholar Alan Blumenthal. Should interviewees encounter any questions they were unwilling to answer or express dissatisfaction during the interview, they could remain silent or withdraw at any point. Any interview content explicitly declared by the interviewee as not for public disclosure was not be recorded or cited.

3.2.2 Selection of interview participants

Building upon the questionnaire survey, this study randomly selected 14 avid travellers spanning different age groups for semi-structured interviews, designated as S1-S14. Discussions centred on participants' perceptions of "authenticity" "emotional resonance" and "consumer decision conversion" across various media platforms.

Table 1 Interview Participants

Number	Gender	Age	Occupation	Number	Gender	Age	Occupation
S1	Female	35	Copywriter	S8	Male	35	Teacher
S2	Female	26	Designer	S9	Male	22	Student
S3	Male	27	Fitness Instructor	S10	Female	42	Corporate Executive
S4	Female	24	Student	S11	Male	45	Driver
S5	Male	29	Freelancer	S12	Female	36	Sales
S6	Female	25	Nurse	S13	Female	50	Solicitor
S7	Male	31	Programmer	S14	Male	52	Employee

4 Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

4.1 Sample characteristics

This study employed SPSS 26.0 for data analysis, examining results from 207 collected questionnaires. Sixty per cent of respondents were aged between 18 and 35. When selecting reference media, short videos were most frequently chosen, followed by live streaming, while AR or VR were relatively less preferred.

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Table 2 Distribution of Demographic Characteristics in the Sample Population (N=207)

Variable	Option	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender	Male	88	43%	1.57	0.50
	Female	119	58%		
Age	Under 18	29	14%	2.75	1.08
	18–25 years old	57	28%		
	25–35 years old	66	32%		
	35–60 years old	47	23%		
	Over 60	8	4%		
Educational attainment	Junior secondary education or below	10	5%	2.85	0.68
	Secondary school (vocational school)	35	17%		
	Undergraduate (associate degree)	138	67%		
	Postgraduate	24	12%		
Occupation	Public institutions/civil servants/government employees	35	17%	4.57	2.32
	Professionals (e.g. teachers, doctors, solicitors, etc.)	26	13%		
	Service sector workers (e.g. catering staff/drivers/ shop assistants, etc.)	1	1%		
	Manual labourers (e.g. factory workers/ construction workers/ municipal sanitation workers, etc.)	3	1%		
	Company staff	86	42%		
	Businessperson	8	4%		
	Freelancer	18	9%		
	Student	30	15%		
Duration of exposure	Under 30 minutes	57	28%	1.87	0.64
	30–60 minutes	119	58%		
	Over 60 minutes	31	15%		
Reference media	Short videos	94	45%	1.71	0.73
	Live streaming	79	38%		
	AR/VR	34	16%		

4.2 Reliability and validity test results

4.2.1 Reliability assessment

This study employed Cronbach's α coefficient as the measurement metric to conduct reliability testing on six latent variables: "Perception of Short Video Features," "Perception of Live Streaming Features," "Perception of AR/VR Features," "Emotional Engagement," "Cognitive Authenticity Trust," and "Consumption Desire." The results indicate that the Cronbach's α coefficients for each subscale ranged between 0.823 and 0.896, with the overall α coefficient for the questionnaire being 0.908. All values significantly exceeded the standard

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threshold of 0.7, demonstrating excellent reliability and high data stability for this questionnaire.

Table 3 Reliability Test

Variable Dimensions	Number of Items	Cronbach's α coefficient
Short Video Feature Perception	3	0.859
Live Streaming Feature Perception	3	0.823
AR/VR Feature Perception	3	0.836
Emotional Resonance Engagement	3	0.835
Cognitive Authentic Trust	5	0.896
Desire to Consume	4	0.875
Total Index	21	0.908

4.2.2 Validity test

The results of the exploratory factors indicate that the KMO coefficient is 0.878. The closer the KMO coefficient is to 1, the better the validity of the questionnaire.

The sphericity test also indicates that the significance level approaches zero, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Collectively, this demonstrates the questionnaire possesses sound validity.

Table 4 KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO Sample Adequacy Measure		0.878
Bartlett's Sphericity Test	Approximate Chi-Square	2353.309
	Degrees of Freedom (df)	210
	Significance (Sig.)	0.000

4.3 Correlation analysis

4.3.1 Correlation analysis among dimensions

The correlation analysis results above indicate that all variables exhibit significant correlations at the 99% significance level, all being positive correlations. For instance, the correlation coefficient between perceived authentic trust and emotional resonance commitment is 0.352.

Table 5 Correlation Analysis Among Dimensions

Variable	Correlation	Emotional resonance engagement	Cognitive Authenticity Trust	Desire to purchase	Short Video	Live Streaming	AR/VR
Emotional Resonance Engagement	Pearson correlation	1					
Cognitive Authenticity Trust	Pearson Correlation	.352**	1				
Desire to Consume	Pearson Correlation	.382**	.371**	1			
Short videos	Pearson Correlation	.349**	.429**	.486**	1		

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Live streaming	Pearson Correlation	.328**	.327**	.316**	.292**	1	
AR/VR	Pearson Correlation	.378**	.310**	.358**	.392**	.409**	1
** Significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).							

4.3.2 Regression analysis of perceived media characteristics on emotional resonance investment

Short videos (β=0.210, p=0.002<0.01), live streaming (β=0.175, p=0.012<0.05),AR/VR (β=0.224, p=0.002<0.01) all exerted significant effects on affective resonance commitment, confirming hypotheses H1.1, H1.2, and H1.3.

Table 6 Regression Analysis of Perceived Media Characteristics on Emotional Resonance Engagement

Variable	Standard Error	Standardised Coefficient	t	sig
Short video	0.066	0.210	3.069	0.002**
Live streaming	0.069	0.175	2.541	0.012*
AR/VR	0.071	0.224	3.129	0.002**
Adjusted R-squared		0.204		
R-squared change		0.216		
F		18.591		

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001. Coefficients in the table are standardised regression coefficients

4.3.3 Regression analysis of perceived media characteristics on cognitive authenticity trust

Table 7 Regression Analysis of Perceived Media Characteristics on Cognitive Genuine Trust

Variable	Standard Error	Standardised Coefficient	t	sig
Short video	0.104	0.334	4.946	0.000***
Live streaming	0.109	0.188	2.758	0.006**
AR/VR	0.113	0.102	1.445	0.150
Adjusted R-squared		0.225		
R-squared change		0.236		
F		20.917		

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001. Coefficients in the table are standardised regression coefficients

AR/VR (β=0.102, p=0.150 > 0.05) had no significant effect on perceived authentic trust, thus rejecting hypothesis H2.3.

Short videos (β=0.334, p=0.000<0.001) and live streaming (β=0.188, p=0.006<0.01) both significantly influence perceived authentic trust, confirming hypotheses H2.1 and H2.2.

4.3.4 Regression analysis of perceived media characteristics on consumption desire

Short videos (β=0.386, p=0.000<0.001), live streaming (β=0.143, p=0.031<0.05), and AR/VR (β=0.149, p=0.031<0.05) all exerted significant effects on consumption desire, confirming hypotheses H3.1, H3.2, and

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H3.3.

Table 8 Regression Analysis of Perceived Media Characteristics on Consumption Desire

Variable	Standard Error	Standardised Coefficient	t	sig
Short video	0.083	0.386	5.906	0.000***
Live streaming	0.086	0.143	2.174	0.031*
AR/VR	0.090	0.149	2.176	0.031*
Adjusted R-squared		0.275		
R-squared change		0.286		
F		27.077		

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001. Coefficients in the table are standardised regression coefficients

4.4 Hypothesis verification results

Based on the above findings, the hypothesis verification results are summarised in the table below:

Table 9 Hypothesis testing results

H1	Short videos, live streaming, VR, and AR media significantly influence audience emotional resonance engagement	Confirmed
H1.1	Short videos exert a significant influence on audience emotional resonance engagement	Established
H1.2	Live streaming has a significant impact on audience emotional engagement	Established
H1.3	VR and AR media impressions exert a significant influence on audience emotional resonance engagement	Established
H2	Short videos, live streaming, VR, and AR media exert a significant influence on audiences' cognitive trust in authenticity	Partially established
H2.1	Short videos exert a significant influence on audiences' perception of authenticity and trustworthiness	Established
H2.2	Live streaming has a significant impact on audiences' perception of authenticity and trust	Established
H2.3	VR and AR media exert a significant influence on audiences' cognitive authenticity and trust	Not established
H3	Short videos, live streaming, VR, and AR media exert a significant influence on audiences' consumption desires	Establishment
H3.1	Short videos exert a significant influence on audience consumption desires	Established
H3.2	Live streaming has a significant impact on audience consumption desires	Established
H3.3	VR and AR media exert a significant influence on audience consumption desires	Established

5 Analysis of Interview Findings

5.1 The visual allure and trust deficit of short videos

When discussing the impact of short videos on cultural and tourism experiences, the vast majority of interviewees exhibited pronounced ambivalence. On the one hand, respondents acknowledged that the precisely timed music and narrative-driven editing of short videos on platforms like TikTok and Red Note readily stimulate impulsive desires within a short timeframe. On the other hand, excessive embellishment and filters create a psychological gap between audience expectations and reality, leading to lower evaluations of authentic experiences.

Respondents generally concur that short videos represent more of an emotional indulgence than a reliable

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basis for decision-making.

"When you come across those videos of the vast northwest, set to that desolate, tragic BGM, it genuinely hooks you instantly - you'd almost quit your job on the spot to travel there. The atmosphere is crafted so masterfully that even knowing it's staged, the emotion felt in that moment is real." (S3, 24, Student)

"I'm wary of trusting short video landscapes now. Visiting a viral spot that looked like 'fairyland' in footage, I found crowds everywhere and water far less azure. Those videos overuse filters for aesthetic appeal—it feels like viewing paintings. Though visually pleasing, it makes you question whether reality matches." (S7, 31, programmer)

5.2 The real-time presence and rational trust of live streaming

Unlike short videos' "meticulous editing," interview data indicates livestreaming's core advantage lies in fostering "trust grounded in authenticity." Respondents noted that livestreams' irreversible flow of time and inability to be post-processed instil a sense of reassurance. While lacking short videos' intense artistic appeal and emotional manipulation, livestreams offer irreplaceable value in verifying reality and mitigating risks.

"Before booking hotels or visiting attractions, I deliberately seek out live streams from those locations. Seeing the host walking around with their phone, no filters applied, with background chatter from passers-by—it may not be aesthetically polished, but it feels profoundly authentic. I simply want to see what it genuinely looks like right now. That sense of immediacy makes it feel reliable." (S5, 29, Freelancer)

"Watching live streams for extended periods can feel a bit tedious, lacking the eye-catching appeal of short videos. The emotional peaks aren't as high. But if I'm planning a trip, I'd definitely trust a live stream. The host answers my questions on the spot, making me feel like I'm right there queuing in that line. That sense of trust is something short videos just can't deliver."(S8, 35, Teacher)

5.3 AR/VR's embodied immersion and decision catalysis

Regarding AR and VR media, interview findings strongly corroborate their dual advantages in "immersive experience"and "decision conversion". Respondents consistently noted that VR panoramic experiences alleviate apprehension towards unfamiliar environments, fostering a psychological sense of "pre-ownership". This sensory immersion delivers exceptionally authentic experiences while evoking profound emotional resonance through deeply embedded cultural narratives.

The majority of respondents indicated that high-quality virtual previews significantly reduce decision-making risks, directly catalysing consumer behaviour.

"That museum's VR exhibition truly blew me away. Putting on the headset felt like artefacts were floating right before my eyes—even the intricate patterns were crystal clear. The impact far surpassed viewing photographs. I was struck by the sheer grandeur of this culture, experiencing a sense of time travel. I booked my ticket to visit the actual site immediately after."(S2, 26, Designer)

"Places you've never visited can feel uncertain. But after touring the hotel rooms and surroundings via VR, it felt like I'd already stayed there—that sense of unfamiliarity vanished. This 'trial experience' approach sig-

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nificantly eased my reservations when making decisions."(S10, 42, Corporate Executive)

6 Research Findings and Discussion

This study, grounded in a deep mediatisation framework, employed audience surveys and in-depth interviews to examine the impact of digital media technologies on cultural tourism promotion. By analysing variations in technological accessibility, it focused on the experiential qualities delivered by short videos, live streaming, and AR/VR media, and their subsequent influence on promotional effectiveness.The findings reveal that short videos, live streaming, and AR/VR media exert significant influence across three dimensions: emotional resonance, perceived authenticity and trust, and consumption desire. However, the hypothesis that VR and AR media significantly impact perceived authenticity and trust among audiences is not substantiated.

6.1 The "cultural translation" efficacy of short videos

From a communication studies perspective, short videos are not mere documentation but an efficient mechanism for "cultural translation." Cultural and tourism resources often exhibit high-context characteristics and high cognitive barriers. Through "visual rhetoric" techniques—such as montage editing, musical accompaniment, and narrative scripts—short videos decode obscure "cultural symbols" into "emotional symbols" readily decipherable by the general public. Cultural tourism series videos that garner substantial traffic on short video platforms, such as trending topics like "Sunlit Golden Mountain, Good Fortune for All Who Behold It" and "Youth Has No Price Tag, Hard Seat Direct to Lhasa," see creators applying tailored filters and soundtracks to fully engage audience emotions. This imbues scenic symbols with spiritual meanings of luck and freedom.Viral comments like "Free me" demonstrate the emotional connection and resonance achieved between audiences and creators.

In this platform-driven society, users maintain trust in short video content despite knowing it undergoes extensive post-production enhancement. This stems from audiences subconsciously seeking not crude "objective reality," but rather a refined "idealised truth" that aligns with their psychological expectations.Short videos strike precisely this equilibrium between audience expectations and reality. The mimetic environments they construct possess both high credibility and potent emotional resonance, making them the optimal medium currently bridging "cultural resources" and "mass consumption".

6.2 The "embodied communication" dilemma of AR/VR

The predicament of AR/VR media—highly immersive yet low in action—validates Baudrillard's theory of "hyperreality." Through embodied communication, AR/VR technologies craft experiences more perfect and pure than reality itself. Yet they exert little influence on audiences' trust in cognitive authenticity, owing to the aesthetic fulfilment coupled with action constraints inherent in embodied communication.

Embodied communication delivers an intense sense of presence. Yet while stimulating aesthetic pleasure, it may foster a form of "substitutive satisfaction." One respondent's astonishment at virtual scenes being "clearer than what the naked eye perceives" precisely exposes the crux of the issue: technologically constructed simulacra eliminate the potential crowding, fatigue, and uncertainty inherent in real-world travel, presenting a "disembodied" perfection.

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This flawless virtual presence paradoxically obstructs real-world action. When virtual experiences surpass reality in verisimilitude and pleasure, audiences psychologically complete their "visit",diminishing the necessity for physical travel. Thus, the excessive presence of media technology leads to bodily absence.

6.3 The "De-Aura" crisis of live streaming

Despite live streaming's technical hallmarks of "real-time interaction"and "unedited authenticity," quantitative data reveals its standardisation coefficients across emotional engagement, trust, and consumption are the lowest across all formats. This counterintuitive finding exposes the tangible gap between "immediacy" and "post-production".

Drawing upon Benjamin's theory of "aura", the appeal of cultural and tourism landscapes often stems from their "aesthetic distance" from everyday life. The "backstage exposure" of live streaming cameras disrupts this distance. As one interviewee lamented, "distracting background noise" and "unintended passers-by" in unplanned broadcasts risk reducing anticipated cultural landscapes to mundane trivialities. This unfiltered raw authenticity, while eliminating information asymmetry, collapses aesthetic distance. Audiences gain functional information yet lose imaginative space, triggering a "disenchantment of the medium" effect.

In cultural tourism communication, authenticity devoid of meaning-making fails to forge deep emotional connections. Instead, it dampens consumption driven by aesthetic impulse, thereby weakening promotional impact.The "Phoenix Crown" series of cultural and creative products launched by the National Museum of China exemplifies successful meaning construction, achieving total sales exceeding two hundred million yuan. Modelled on the phoenix crown of Empress Xiaozhuang of the Ming Dynasty, the products foster a diverse ecosystem that bolsters audiences' cultural confidence and identification with China's outstanding traditional culture, successfully transforming an exhibit into a cultural symbol.

6.4 The cultural tourism communication paradigm revolution: from output to resonance in the digital age

Comprehensive analysis indicates that cultural tourism communication paradigms are shifting from a "persuasion paradigm" rooted in cognitive psychology towards an "empathy paradigm" grounded in affective sociology. In the digital-intelligence era, "emotional energy" has supplanted information density as the decisive currency of communication, surpassing cognitive trust in its impact.

This study's data demonstrates that formats like short videos, which evoke high emotional resonance, often yield significant consumption conversion, thereby visualising the effectiveness of cultural tourism promotion. Conversely, formats such as live streaming, even with transparent information, still struggle to achieve strong conversion. Digital intelligence technologies are no longer mere conveyors of information but connectors for building an "emotional community" between parties. When media technology successfully mobilises audience emotional resonance, effective cultural and tourism consumption occurs, achieving the intended promotional impact.

In recent years, Harbin's cultural tourism has dominated major social media platforms each winter. Its "cloud supervision" livestreams of giant snowman construction attracted over a million views across platforms,

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while short videos generated countless viral moments. Furthermore, the Ice and Snow World features offline VR installations transporting visitors to an "Ice Age" experience alongside AR interactive systems. This integration of diverse digital and intelligent technologies has cemented Harbin's status as one of winter's most sought-after tourist destinations.

7 Optimising Communication Strategies Based on Media Availability

Research indicates that different media formats exhibit heterogeneous communication efficacy. Consequently, cultural and tourism communication practices should avoid blind adherence to technological determinism, instead adhering to the principle of "media availability adaptation" to circumvent communication pitfalls arising from technological alienation.

7.1 Optimising short video strategies

Given short videos' pivotal role in meaning construction, communicators should fully leverage their characteristics. Cultural and tourism promotion should transcend mechanical documentation of physical landscapes, instead embracing "deep encoding"of cultural symbols. Through authentic filming, narrative scripts, and judicious post-production, create "mimetic landscapes" that align with audience expectations. This bridges "objective reality" and "aesthetic imagination," evoking audience aspiration and elevating cultural tourism promotion.The Guangzhou Municipal Government's cultural tourism promotion platform launched the "Real-Life Zootopia" series of short videos. Utilising authentic urban spaces such as the Pearl River New Town skyline and Xiguan arcades, these videos employ cinematographic techniques, filters, and soundtracks to recreate a "dimensionalised urban mimetic landscape" that resonates with young audiences' psychological expectations, thereby triggering their desire for exploration.

7.2 Optimising VR/AR strategies

Addressing the potential "hyper-realism" dilemma in VR/AR, communication strategies must navigate the dialectic between "virtual presence" and "physical absence". VR content should be redefined as an immersive experience of reality, not a substitute. Content production must consciously incorporate "information gaps"—revealing core awe-inspiring scenes while preserving pivotal suspense. This "sense of absence" counteracts the inertia born of "over-satisfaction," establishing virtual experiences as complementary to physical communication. The Shanghai Museum's "Pyramids: The Summit" exhibition, running from July 2024 to August 2025, featured not only the "Vanished Pharaohs" VR immersive exploration and a 1:1 replica of the interior of the Great Pyramid of Khufu for virtual tours, but also developed multi-touchpoint experiences centred on "views of life and death". These included scented experiences and scripted decryption games, guiding audiences to establish deep emotional connections.This grand exhibition on ancient Egyptian civilisation, building upon traditional exhibition practices while integrating cutting-edge VR experiences and offering diverse activities for all age groups, achieved remarkable success. It set global records for a single paid special exhibition in terms of visitor numbers, total revenue, and overall outreach.

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7.3 Optimising live streaming strategy

To enhance live streaming promotional effectiveness, a shift from superficial displays to in-depth storytelling is imperative. Presenters should abandon fast-paced, high-density repetitive scripts in favour of content-driven narratives. Introducing expert presenters or cultural storytellers can enrich mundane visuals with high-quality cultural content, re-establishing necessary aesthetic distance and anticipation through real-time interaction, thereby re-imbuing secular landscapes with a "cultural aura". During the 2025 "Su Super"League, Changzhou's cultural tourism live streams not only embraced netizens' playful banter about the local team's consistent defeats but also leveraged AI-generated short videos from the "Guardian of Strokes" series. Combined with the "Changbao" IP, these garnered over 10 billion views across platforms, sparking trends like "You really ought to visit Changzhou sometime." This successfully converted stadium traffic into tangible cultural tourism consumption.

8 Research Limitations and Future Directions

The present study's sample predominantly comprised 18-35 year-old "digital natives". Future research may extend to silver-haired demographics to explore dissemination mechanisms for age-friendly digital cultural tourism. Furthermore, as this study primarily relied on self-reported data, incorporating physiological indicators such as eye-tracking and electrodermal response could objectively measure audience emotional arousal levels during different media experiences, thereby deepening understanding of "embodied communication"-mechanisms.

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