

# International Communication Strategies and Effects of Chinese Brands' Public Service Advertisements on Overseas Social Media: A Case Study of Huawei's "Seeds for the Future" Program

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## Abstract

This study takes the overseas dissemination of Huawei's "Seeds for the Future" program on YouTube as a case to explore the communication strategies and effects of Chinese brands' public service advertisements abroad. Through content analysis, it finds that the advertisements deeply integrate the brand into the universal values of educational empowerment and technological inclusiveness by employing a complete "Hero's Journey" narrative, emotionally charged visual presentation, and subtle brand integration. A questionnaire survey (N=130) shows that the advertisements significantly enhanced overseas audiences' brand favorability and trust, while effectively stimulating emotional resonance and value identification. This research reveals an effective path for Chinese brands to build brand identification in overseas markets through value resonance.

## Keywords

public service advertising, international communication, brand identification, narrative strategy, emotional resonance, social media

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## 1. Introduction

With the acceleration of globalization, the international communication of Chinese brands has increasingly become an important issue [1]. As a significant vehicle for enterprises to convey social responsibility and shape brand image [2], the strategies and effects of public service advertising in cross-cultural communication urgently require in-depth exploration. This paper takes Huawei's "Seeds for the Future" program public service advertisements on YouTube as the research object, and systematically analyzes its communication strategies and the influence mechanism on overseas audiences' brand identification by combining content analysis and questionnaire survey.

## 2. The Epic of Growth under the "Hero's Journey" Model

The induction of narrative structure shows that the advertisements do not adopt a linear, product-introduction style of explanation. Instead, they strictly follow the classic "Hero's Journey" narrative model

(Campbell, 1949). Through the complete arc of “Call to Adventure – Departure – Trials – Return” [3], this model transforms the brand empowerment process into a growth story with universal appeal.

Table 1 presents the coding and content analysis of the public service advertisement videos for the “Seeds for the Future” program. The data show that the narrative begins with a macro-level global issue as the call, proceeds through specific learning and project challenges as trials, reaches a breakthrough at the climax of the competition, and concludes with harvest and a vision for the future. The deep strategy of this narrative mode lies in its clever positioning of the Huawei brand in the role of “mentor” and “facilitator.” The students are the “heroes” who complete the journey, while the brand serves as the key force providing “magical tools” and “wise guidance”—namely, technology and training. This narrative framework not only effectively sustains viewers’ interest but also internalizes brand values as emotional elements of the story itself, thereby avoiding rigid preaching and achieving a soft transmission of values [4].

*Table 1: Coding and Content Analysis of Public Service Advertisement Videos for Huawei’s “Seeds for the Future” Program*

Macro Narrative Structure			
Narrative Stage	Coding	Timestamp	Remarks / Key Content
Beginning – Introduction and Setup	√	00:00 - 01:10	Opens with a macro perspective of a global map and flowing signals, accompanied by majestic music. It introduces the grand background of “120 students from 16 countries,” directly addressing the “digital divide” issue and positioning the program as a mission of global significance.
Development – Learning and Challenges	√	01:10 - 06:39	The main section meticulously documents the students’ ICT and leadership courses in Thailand, cultural immersion, and the core “Tech4Good” project challenges. It presents the complete growth process from knowledge acquisition and cultural adaptation to team collaboration and problem-solving.
Climax – Achievements and Presentation	√	06:39 - 08:42	The narrative focus centers on the roadshow and judging phase of the “Tech4Good” project competition. Each student team presents technology solutions designed to solve social problems, and the announcement of the winning team pushes the story to an emotional peak.
Ending – Harvest and Future Outlook	√	08:42 - 10:54	Focuses on the students’ award acceptance speeches, tears of joy, sincere expressions of gratitude, and their aspirations to bring what they have learned back to their home countries to change the future. The music and visuals are full of hope, reinforcing the theme of “sowing the seeds for the future.”

### 3. Constructing Authentic Emotions through Visuals and Characters

The coding table (Table 2) records the frequent use of close-up shots focusing on facial expressions, as well as medium and medium-close shots depicting interpersonal interactions.

*Table 2: Character and Emotional Analysis of Public Service Advertisement Videos for Huawei’s “Seeds for the Future” Program*

Character and Emotional Analysis				
Analysis Dimension	Coding Item	Coding	Timestamp	Remarks / Key Content
Character Composition	Diverse ethnic students	√	Throughout	Clearly showcases students from various ethnic groups including Asian, European, and African.
	Huawei engineers/mentors	√	05:57-06:02	Huawei employees appear as mentors, engaging in equal communication with students.
	Educators	√	02:01-02:22	Course instructors
Emotional Expression	Curiosity and anticipation	√	01:50-02:00	Students’ expressions upon first arriving in Thailand.
	Focus and seriousness	√	04:00-04:10	State of students during group project discussions.
	Joy and sense of achievement	√	08:35-08:45	Cheers and embraces of the entire team after the winning announcement.
	Gratitude and being moved	√	09:13-09:30	Students deliver speeches with tears, thanking for the opportunity.
	Confidence and future outlook	√	Interspersed throughout	Students discussing their future plans and contributions to society.

It also reveals a character system composed of students from diverse ethnic backgrounds and approachable mentors. The emotional coding demonstrates a clear evolutionary path from “curiosity” to “achievement” and then to “gratitude.” This strategic pattern serves the construction of emotional authenticity. Close-up shots function to amplify and share individuals’ emotional experiences, compelling viewers to empathize. The design of the character system, particularly the appearance of Huawei employees as equal mentors rather than authoritative experts, represents a sophisticated strategy of brand personification. It dissolves the cold image of a large technology corporation and replaces it with an approachable and trustworthy partner. The diverse student portraits not only visually demonstrate the global nature of the program but also serve as a shortcut in cross-cultural communication, ensuring that audiences from different regions can find points of identity and resonance.

#### 4. Value-Driven Implicit Integration

Through cross-analysis of core messages and brand presentation, a strategy of implicit brand integration under continuous visual anchoring was identified. The subtlety of this strategy lies in the fact that it does not completely eliminate brand traces; rather, it maintains the brand’s presence in a way that does not interfere with the narrative. The data indicate that although the Huawei logo is positioned in the lower-right corner throughout the video, its visual proportion is small and its color is subdued, always serving rather than disrupting the main narrative. At the same time, the brand’s core business—ICT technology—is integrated into the plot in the form of background infrastructure or enabling tools. In stark contrast, abstract value propositions such as educational empowerment and technological inclusiveness, rather than specific product functions, are placed at the absolute core of information delivery. This model embodies an advancement from hard selling to value resonance. The continuous yet restrained logo acts as a visual bookmark, maintaining the brand’s baseline presence; meanwhile, deeply embedding the brand’s core capabilities into a positive story about growth and hope guides the audience to complete a profound “value attribution”—that is, viewers unconsciously associate the positive emotions generated by the narrative content with the continuously present brand symbol and its role as a technological enabler. This is a more advanced strategy of emotional grafting, which constructs a psychological pathway whereby audiences come to trust and identify with the brand because they appreciate the values it represents. Ultimately, the brand is no longer an object being promoted but is transformed into a trustworthy and admirable story environment itself. The brand identification established in this way is therefore more solid and profound.

#### 5. Structured Emotional Guidance through Auditory Strategies

The induction of auditory elements (Table 3) reveals a strategy that functions as an emotional guidance system closely aligned with the narrative arc.

Table 3: Auditory Elements Analysis of Public Service Advertisement Videos for Huawei’s “Seeds for the Future” Program

Auditory Elements Analysis				
Analysis Dimension	Coding Item	Coding	Timestamp	Remarks / Key Content (Description of Function or Corresponding Scene)
Musical Emotional Tone	Warm / Motivational	√	01:35-02:56	Creates a friendly atmosphere during students’ learning and exchanges.
	Energetic / Dynamic	√	04:34-07:43	Drives the narrative rhythm during group discussions and project tackling.
	Grand / Hopeful	√	09:20-10:54	At the ending, the emotional resonance is elevated by integrating student testimonials and future outlooks.
Function of Human Voice	Voice-over Narration	√	00:01-00:32	Authoritative male voice introducing the project background.
	Authentic Testimonials	√	Interspersed throughout	Direct statements from multiple students facing the camera.

The musical tone shifts over time from warm and motivational to energetic and dynamic, finally settling into a grand sense of hope. The function of human voice also transitions from objective voice-over narration to subjective, authentic testimonials from the characters. The function of this model lies in the structured

orchestration of audience emotions. Through external auditory stimuli, it reinforces the emotional rhythm of the internal narrative, ensuring that viewers' emotional experience synchronizes with the story's development and reaches its peak at the conclusion. The characters' authentic testimonials, especially the direct statements from students of diverse cultural backgrounds, become the most powerful credentials of trust. Their effect far surpasses any self-praise from the brand and is highly contagious.

## 6. Verification of Communication Effects Based on Questionnaire Survey

This study analyzed 130 valid questionnaires collected. The sample primarily consisted of young, highly educated individuals from Europe and North America (Europe 52%, North America 27.33%), with 75.33% aged 18–34 and 91.34% holding a university degree or above, precisely covering the target audience for the brand's international communication.

The data show that Huawei's "Seeds for the Future" public service advertisements achieved significant communication effects among overseas audiences. At the level of brand awareness, the advertisements successfully shaped Huawei's image as a responsible global citizen: 88.67% of respondents reported an increase in favorability toward the Huawei brand, and 79.33% explicitly indicated greater trust in Huawei as a result. In terms of specific brand image dimensions, 70.67% of respondents identified with its "educational empowerment" image, and 68% recognized its commitment to "social responsibility."

At the level of emotion and deep identification, the advertisements also delivered outstanding results. 80.67% of respondents reported experiencing emotional resonance, and 73.34% felt that Huawei's brand values aligned or highly aligned with their own values. This indicates that the advertisements' impact went beyond the surface, triggering deep value identification.

At the level of behavioral intention, the advertisements demonstrated strong influence: 90% of respondents expressed willingness to learn more about Huawei's products and services. However, compared with the extremely high favorability and willingness to learn more, only 63.33% of respondents reported an enhancement in "overall goodwill." This difference precisely confirms the core value of strategic public service advertising—its primary goal is to build long-term brand assets and relationships rather than directly drive short-term commercial conversion. This perfectly echoes the "de-commercialized" narrative strategy observed in the content analysis.

## 7. Conclusion

The "Hero's Journey" model and structured auditory guidance work together to shape a complete emotional experience arc. This intrinsic connection directly explains why respondents not only stayed at the level of "favorability" (88.67%) but also generated deep "emotional resonance" (80.67%) and "value identification" (73.34%). The classic narrative provides a framework of meaning, while the auditory elements amplify emotional tension; their combination reaches directly into the audience's value system. The emotional authenticity constructed through visual and character strategies, together with the brand role reshaping achieved through value implantation strategies, jointly dismantle audiences' psychological defenses and establish brand credibility [5]. By restraining commercial appeals and focusing on universal values, the brand builds a partnership with audiences based on shared beliefs. Although this does not directly drive short-term purchases, it lays the foundation for long-term brand loyalty.

In summary, this study finds that the relationship between the communication strategies and effects of public service advertising is not a simple causal link, but a closely interconnected synergistic system. With value resonance as the strategic core, and through multi-dimensional tactical coordination across narrative, emotion, and sensory elements, it jointly leads to a coherent chain of communication effects—from cognitive change and emotional resonance to value identification, ultimately building long-term brand trust and relationships. At the same time, as this is a single-case study, the generalizability of the conclusions needs further verification through multi-case comparisons. In the future, objective measurement methods such as neuroscience can be combined to deepen the understanding of the causal mechanisms between strategies and effects.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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