

# **The Impact of Audiovisual Communication on Text-Based Communication in the Media Ecology under the Context of the Visual Turn and Governance Considerations**

Yueying Jiang

The visual art design speciality, Dankook University, Yongin City 16890, Republic of Korea

18149557750@163.com

**Abstract:** In recent years, under the context of the visual turn, audiovisual images have not only served as a means of information dissemination but have also become embedded in social systems as a cultural phenomenon. There is a growing trend of audiovisual communication surpassing text-based communication as a dominant medium, exerting an unprecedented impact on the media ecology and social environment. By reviewing and summarizing the historical development and current state of audiovisual communication, and critically reflecting on its transcendence over text-based communication, it becomes evident that audiovisual communication has positive effects in terms of meeting spiritual and cultural needs, achieving and increasing economic benefits, and enhancing the convenience and diversity of information transmission. However, it also brings negative consequences, such as user alienation, the dilution of rationality, and even violations of regulations and intellectual property rights. In light of this, proposing prudent governance strategies for improper or harmful audiovisual communication is undoubtedly beneficial for the creation of audiovisual products and the orderly advancement of the industry.

**Keywords:** Text-Based Communication, Media Forms, Audiovisual Communication, Media Ecology

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Information dissemination is a fundamental activity that enables human society to communicate, develop, and sustain civilization. Media serve as the essential tools that facilitate all forms of communication, as well as the primary means through which humans reflect, reproduce, comprehend, and construct the objective world. In recent years, with rapid technological advancements, audiovisual images have demonstrated increasing communicative advantages, significantly impacting the overall media environment and cultural ecology. Particularly in the context of accelerating digital innovation and the deep integration of the "Internet Plus" strategy, audiovisual images have evolved beyond mere information transmission tools to become cultural phenomena embedded in social systems. There is an evident trend of audiovisual media surpassing text-based communication as the dominant medium (Witteveen & Lie, 2020).

To a certain extent, in the postmodern digital media landscape, the transcendence of audiovisual communication over text-based communication is an undeniable fact. Understanding the current state of the media ecology, tracing its historical evolution, analyzing its contemporary implications and both positive and negative influences, and proposing feasible governance strategies from an academic perspective to address the adverse effects of audiovisual communication are urgent and meaningful topics for the creation of audiovisual products and the orderly development of the industry.

## 2. THE EVOLUTION AND CURRENT STATE OF MEDIA FORMS

The evolution of media forms is essentially a reflection of the transformation of human society. Human cognition and understanding of the objective world have always relied on specific media forms, which, at different historical stages, have exhibited characteristics aligned with the prevailing cognitive approaches to external reality. To date, human history has witnessed three major transformative media shifts. In the primitive era, humans relied on visual symbols such as totems, stone carvings, sculptures, and paintings to perceive and transmit information. These served as simple representations of social life, reflecting an early epistemological approach to the objective world. It can be said that the earliest form of media communication in human society was dominated by visual symbol systems, characterized by pictorial and simplistic expression. With the invention of written language, human cognition of the objective world advanced significantly. The most notable shift was the elevation of rational thinking to an unprecedented level. Understanding the world was no longer merely about "representation" based on a rudimentary epistemology but transitioned to a "cognition-expression" stage grounded in rational thought. Written symbols became the dominant medium throughout human history, distinguished by their high degree of abstraction and generalization. The subsequent invention of printing technology enabled the preservation and transmission of written language through writing and printing, granting textual communication an extended temporal and spatial reach. The first major transformation in media communication was the transition from visual imagery to written symbols as the dominant form. The second transformation occurred with the rise of modern industrial civilization. The advent of mechanical reproduction, optical technology, and the photographic camera ushered in a new era in which visual imagery

once again became the leading medium of communication. As Walter Benjamin observed, "With the invention of photography, humanity finally acquired the fundamental conditions for image-based communication. The human hand was no longer required to reproduce images manually; instead, this task was delegated to the eye fixed behind the camera lens." During this period, cinema emerged as the dominant form of visual culture and art due to its mass commercial appeal, visual impact, and technological novelty (Yao, 2024). Balázs Béla, in *Aesthetics of Cinematography*, enthusiastically wrote: "At present, a new discovery, or rather a new machine, is striving to restore people's attention to visual culture and attempting to provide them with new methods of facial expressions. This machine is the cinematographic camera. Like the printing press, it employs a technological method to mass-produce and disseminate human intellectual products. Its impact on human culture is no less significant than that of the printing press." Visual symbols once again became the dominant medium because they aligned closely with natural human cognition and visual principles, effectively conveying the dynamic imagery that mirrors human everyday experiences (Kovács, 2007). As Martin Heidegger stated in *The Age of the World Picture*: "When understanding the world image, it does not fundamentally mean the image of the world but rather the world perceived and grasped as an image." Following this, the emergence of phonographic and recording technologies further transformed visual imagery media into fully integrated audiovisual media (Heidegger, 1977). At this stage, communication was dominated by a fusion of visual and auditory symbols, marking the advent of the audiovisual era. With the rise of modern linguistics, particularly through the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, the understanding of the objective world transitioned from the "cognition-expression" paradigm to the "cognition-construction" paradigm. This shift suggested that the world we live in, along with our perceived reality, is fundamentally constructed and shaped by language. Henri Bergson, in his reflections on cinema, presciently remarked: "Cinema is no longer a machine for perfecting the oldest illusion; rather, it is an organ for improving new realities." The emergence of cinema provided a direct form of "movement-image," employing dynamic segmentation, temporal framing, and montage techniques to connect abstract spatial-temporal forms and moments (Deleuze, 2013). Through this "movement-image," new characteristics of reality were generated, fostering novel modes of thought. As a unique linguistic form, audiovisual media—exemplified by cinema—have exerted profound influences on real life, social culture, and human cognition. In the era of deep internet integration, audiovisual media

play an increasingly central role in shaping perceptions of reality. This marks the third major shift in media forms toward audiovisual imagery. However, this shift is not merely a linear evolution or replacement of previous media forms. On one hand, it reflects a return to the early dominance of visual symbol systems; on the other hand, it integrates audiovisual elements with technological advancements, increasingly becoming a digital audiovisual medium that represents virtual reality. From the 20th century to the present, audiovisual communication has evolved from traditional mass art forms such as film and television to diverse, integrated audiovisual formats in the internet era. It has undeniably become a new linguistic form that reshapes human cognitive processes. More importantly, public engagement with audiovisual media has been steadily increasing. The authority of audiovisual media as a mass communication tool is gradually being eroded, while its level of individualization continues to rise. On March 29, 2023, the China Internet Audiovisual Development Research Report (2023) (hereinafter referred to as the Report), recognized as a benchmark for China's internet audiovisual industry, was released. According to the Report, as of December 2022, the number of internet audiovisual users in China had reached 1.04 billion, surpassing instant messaging users (1.038 billion), making it the largest internet application. The penetration rate of internet audiovisual services among Chinese netizens stood at 97.4%, reflecting a 1.4 percentage point increase from the previous year and maintaining stable growth at a high level. Additionally, the average daily usage time per short video user had reached 168 minutes, far exceeding that of other applications (with comprehensive video content averaging 120 minutes per day, surpassing instant messaging as the second most-used application since the end of 2020). These data indicate a fundamental characteristic of audiovisual communication in the digital age: "The dominance of professional mass media in communication has been dismantled (Studies, 2019). With the support of internet and mobile communication technologies, individuals in society have acquired the capability for mass communication." Various forms of audiovisual content now use the internet as a platform for dissemination and storage. Traditional media such as film, television, and advertising have adapted to digital dissemination, while fragmented audiovisual content—driven by mass participation—has emerged as a new form of communication that transcends geographical, cultural, and ideological boundaries (Xue et al., 2024). This new model of audiovisual communication, with its absolute advantages in immediacy, integration, mass participation, individualization, and interactivity, has come to dominate the information age, solidifying its

media hegemony. In summary, audiovisual communication has become an inescapable cultural core issue and a crucial, widely used means of information expression and dissemination in contemporary life. Moreover, under the influence of virtual digital technologies, the sanctity of audiovisual imagery has been dismantled, its authority has been abolished, and its boundaries have become increasingly blurred, ultimately evolving into a “pan-audiovisual” media ecology.

### 3. THE IMPACT OF AUDIOVISUAL COMMUNICATION ON TEXT-BASED COMMUNICATION IN THE MEDIA ECOLOGY

The evolution and proliferation of audiovisual media in the media ecology have driven a global and historical transformation in human society and culture. Some scholars have described this phenomenon as follows: "Contemporary culture is experiencing an invisible ‘war’ between images and text. Some have vividly referred to this era as the ‘age of image reading.’ This seemingly paradoxical term aptly captures a significant cultural shift. The dominance of images over text does not imply the disappearance or diminished importance of text. Rather, in a comparative sense, the once-unrivaled authority of text has declined. In contrast, images exhibit clear advantages, possessing greater appeal and allure." In today's world, where visual culture dominates, audiovisual media, with their distinct communicative advantages, have become the most rapidly expanding and widely applied media form within the media ecology (Manovich & Douglass, 2009). The transcendence of audiovisual communication over text-based communication has emerged as a significant cultural phenomenon that cannot be overlooked in contemporary society. Behind every cultural phenomenon lies a complex interplay of historical, economic, political, and technological factors, encompassing both necessity and contingency. This suggests that one should neither blindly affirm nor outright reject this new trend in a simplistic manner. Instead, a more objective and balanced perspective is required to conduct a comprehensive and dialectical examination of its impact on the media ecology, considering both its positive functions and its negative consequences.

#### 3.1 The Positive Significance of the Integrated Audiovisual Media Ecology

(1) The Spiritual Dimension: Fulfilling the Audience’s Cultural and Psychological Needs: From the "lead and fire" era to the "light and

electricity" age, and now to the "digital and networked" phase, information dissemination media have continuously evolved and advanced. Compared to text-based communication, the evolution of audiovisual communication and the development of new technologies have exhibited a mutually dependent relationship. From film and television to today's diverse forms of audiovisual content, these media are becoming increasingly integrated with communication infrastructure such as 4G, 5G, the Internet of Things (IoT), Industrial Internet, and Satellite Internet, as well as with digital production technologies. On the one hand, technological advancements have reshaped the forms and landscape of audiovisual communication, meaning that as internet technologies become deeply embedded in daily life, the popularity and acceptance of audiovisual communication have also significantly increased. On the other hand, beyond technological factors, the widespread preference for audiovisual communication can be attributed to its evolutionary characteristics, which align with what Paul Levinson describes as the humanistic evolution of media—that is, “the functional evolution of media increasingly conforms to the sensory pleasures of human perception”. Throughout the history of media evolution, the transition from visual-dominant communication to text-dominant communication, and then back to audiovisual-dominant communication, is largely due to the fact that audiovisual symbols are more closely aligned with human sensory cognition (Levinson, 1979). From a cognitive perspective, audiovisual communication is highly adaptive to the development of human visual and auditory perception, as well as to the inherent desires associated with these senses. “Studies indicate that vision plays a primary role in human perception of the external world, and among all sensory organs, the eye is one of nature's most remarkable and extraordinary gifts. Research suggests that approximately 80% to 90% of external information is processed by the brain through visual perception,” whereas auditory perception accounts for about 10%, and the combined contributions of olfactory, gustatory, and other senses amount to less than 10% (Plotnik et al., 1989). Thus, vision and hearing are the most critical sensory faculties for humans. As perceptual abilities acquired through human evolution, visual and auditory senses continue to demand higher levels of visibility and psychological satisfaction throughout human history. Audiovisual content has managed to fulfill both physiological and psychological human needs to the greatest extent possible. As Jean Mitry explains: "An image as a content of consciousness (an image derived from something) can serve as a symbol representing or signifying a certain reality, though it is not a complete reproduction of that reality. As an image, and

precisely because it is an image, it can transcend the reality it reflects." In other words, one of the most profound characteristics of audiovisual imagery is its ability to evoke a compelling sense of wholeness while maintaining an inherent contradiction between the perceived reality and the infinite 'potential attributes' suggested by resemblance (Lewis, 2008). Nowhere else is the duality between essence and representation, the concrete and the abstract, the immanent and the transcendent, as clearly evident as it is in the audiovisual medium, where these elements complement, reflect, and validate each other within a unified visual form. In today's integrated media environment, audiovisual communication surpasses text-based communication in terms of content and distribution channels, offering unparalleled immediacy, vividness, and diversity (Wulff & Kaczmarek, 2009). Its ability to reflect reality, condense represented experiences, and project psychological and emotional resonance onto audiences goes beyond merely satisfying human sensory desires—it also achieves a transcendence and extension of physiological limitations. As scholars have noted: "The evolutionary trend of humanized media lies in the continuous enhancement of reality reproduction. However, this reproduction simultaneously aims to maintain, or even amplify, the spatial and temporal extensions achieved by primitive media. This means that the goal of the humanization of media technology is not to replicate pre-technological environments but to respond to the biological constraints of communication in the real world—striving to exceed the innate biological limitations of the human body." With the aid of virtual digital technologies and high-definition imaging equipment, audiovisual media can not only fulfill humanity's pursuit of perfectly replicating reality but also present hyperreal audiovisual spectacles beyond ordinary perception (Weiguang, 2017). The widespread application of 3D animation, digital compositing, and optical synthesis in visual effects has not only expanded the technological boundaries of realism but has also introduced: "A hyperreal aesthetic—one that has the potential to transform or even overturn traditional cinematic language and forms, offering an experience that is even 'more real than reality' and providing audiences with an immersive and presence-enhancing sensory environment." This phenomenon is not limited to science fiction productions that rely on technological empowerment; even in mobile short-video platforms, a simple tap on the screen can seamlessly integrate complex visual effects into the most straightforward footage (Eijaz, 2018). This further exemplifies the ease and accessibility of hyperreal visual expression. From

this perspective, audiovisual media differ from text in their cognitive demands on imagination and abstract thinking. By leveraging visual sensory perception, audiovisual imagery bridges the gap between reality and fantasy more effectively than text, thereby maximizing its ability to meet the diverse spiritual and cultural needs of contemporary audiences.

(2) The Industrial Dimension: The "Pan-Audiovisual" Effect Driving Economic Benefits: The rise of audiovisual communication today is not solely attributed to technological advancements; its economic development potential and industrial value have also played a significant role in its success. The economic potential of audiovisual content itself is immense—box office revenues for films, copyright sales, and online streaming traffic can all be converted into substantial economic value. Beyond this, audiovisual communication is now fostering industry-wide synergies, contributing to the economic growth of the cultural and entertainment industries. In the integrated media era, various media forms—including novels, anime, theater, video games, drama, films (including online films), and television series (including web series)—are experiencing increasing cross-media integration and a blurring of boundaries. One of the most prominent trends is the transformation of non-audiovisual content into audiovisual formats. Examining the entertainment industry ecosystem, we see that film adaptations of bestselling books have achieved global success, such as the Harry Potter and The Lord of the Rings series. In China, the television adaptation of the classic RPG game Chinese Paladin gained a massive following. Similarly, in recent years, TV series based on popular literary works—such as *The Lost Tomb*, *The Journey of Flower*, and *Nirvana in Fire*—have dominated the Chinese television landscape. These audiovisual productions have leveraged their intellectual property (IP) value to establish full industry-chain development models, creating sustainable value-generation potential. The development of high-quality IP-based audiovisual content not only benefits from an existing fan base, which helps reduce investment risks and marketing costs, but also revitalizes original novels, plays, and comics through audiovisual adaptation. Furthermore, when an original literary work enters the public eye through audiovisual adaptation, it facilitates the creation of a full-fledged, industry-chain-driven audiovisual economy. This approach enables comprehensive and sustainable re-development of the same product, leading to spinoffs such as themed exhibitions, immersive art experiences, cultural merchandise, and other peripheral products. In doing so, the economic value of audiovisual IPs is maximized and diversified.



Today, the IP economy—or more broadly, the cultural and entertainment industry—holds significant economic and social importance. Recognizing the commercial potential of IP, many corporate investors have entered the market. In China, for example, Tencent Literature and Shanda Literature merged to form "China Literature", aiming to dominate the online novel IP market, while Alibaba launched "Alibaba Literature" to compete in the IP industry. Within this landscape, the transcendence of audiovisual communication over text-based communication has surpassed mere technological evolution—it has become an inevitable result of economic and social development trends (Tian, 2022).

(3)The Communicative Dimension: Convenience and Diversity in Information Transmission and Reception: In contrast to text-based communication, audiovisual communication offers a more accessible and inclusive mode of information transmission and reception. Due to the abstract nature of written symbols, individuals must possess reading and writing skills to comprehend textual content. This requirement inherently excludes certain groups, such as children and individuals who lack formal education due to various socioeconomic factors. However, audiovisual communication relies on visual and auditory symbols for encoding, transmitting, and decoding information, allowing for a broader and more inclusive dissemination of content. This effect is particularly pronounced in the era of the mobile internet, where new audiovisual formats—especially short videos—have become deeply embedded in everyday life. The advantages of audiovisual communication in this context are threefold: Interactivity and Instant Feedback – Audiovisual content, particularly in the digital age, leverages the real-time and interactive capabilities of the internet, enabling effective engagement and feedback between content creators and audiences. Global Reach Across Regions and Cultures – Audiovisual content can be transmitted globally, transcending geographical and cultural barriers with ease. Unlike text, which may require translation and linguistic adaptation, images and sounds possess a more universal communicative power. Lower Barriers to Entry and Mass Accessibility – The relatively low threshold for both content creation and consumption enables audiovisual media to reach wider demographics, making it the primary medium for entertainment, news acquisition, and interpersonal communication in everyday life. According to the China Internet Audiovisual Development Research Report (2023), accessing news and learning-related knowledge has become one of the primary reasons users watch short videos. In fact, short-video platforms have already surpassed traditional news sources as the primary channel for information

dissemination among netizens. In today's fast-paced society, audiovisual media have an advantageous balance between compactness and high information density. The fragmented nature of audiovisual communication aligns well with modern life patterns, allowing audiences to acquire timely and comprehensive information in short periods while simultaneously enjoying an immersive audiovisual experience. Beyond enhancing the speed and convenience of information reception, audiovisual communication has also democratized, diversified, and decentralized the process of information exchange. This shift fosters greater inclusivity by encouraging a collision and fusion of diverse perspectives, enriching the media landscape with a plurality of voices—a transformation that holds profound social significance. In China, for example, user-generated content (UGC)—primarily in the form of short videos—has decentralized media power, granting ordinary users the ability to create and distribute content. Platforms like Douyin (TikTok China) and Kuaishou provide users with personalized digital stages, where individuals can freely express themselves and showcase their creativity. As a result, individualized audiovisual communication has rapidly and extensively permeated contemporary life. Furthermore, modern audiovisual media provide individuals with an alternative to mainstream ideological narratives and grand historical discourses, offering a space for “micro-narratives”—the self-expression of diverse, niche, and subcultural communities. This development has empowered marginalized voices, allowing them to articulate their identities and gain visibility in the public sphere. Overall, audiovisual communication has fundamentally altered the traditional mass media system, which was once dominated by a small group of professional elites. Today, ordinary individuals can collectively contribute to a rich, diverse, and dynamic flow of information, generating valuable insights and socially impactful content.

### 3.2 The Negative Phenomena and Future Concerns of the "Pan-Image" Era

#### (1) User Alienation: Over-Entertainment and Aesthetic Deviation

The rapid expansion of audiovisual communication has led to its absolute dominance in modern daily life, with an overwhelming volume of audiovisual content available. However, an objective and rational assessment is necessary: while the multiplication of content producers might suggest an increase in communication efficiency and value, this is not inherently the case. Due to varying levels of media literacy among content creators, there exist significant disparities in ideological perspectives, cognitive depth, economic resources, and technical expertise.

Moreover, China's current audiovisual platform regulatory mechanisms remain imperfect, and the anonymity of the internet, combined with the portability of digital devices, makes media supervision highly challenging. Consequently, the quality of audiovisual content is highly inconsistent, ranging from highly valuable works to low-quality, harmful material. This raises a critical concern: while audiovisual media surpass text-based communication in reach and influence, they also pose a risk of alienating users. Mentally undeveloped and socially inexperienced groups—especially adolescents, who are naturally drawn to novelty and stimulation—are particularly vulnerable. Many young users become trapped in the audiovisual world, exposed to vulgar, violent, and pornographic content, which distorts their perceptions and values, leading to a disconnect between the intended benefits of media and their actual impact. To be objective, the seemingly vibrant landscape of contemporary audiovisual communication indeed harbors risks of excessive entertainment, superficiality, and homogenization. In the virtual digital world, where the "eyeball economy" and "attention economy" dominate, traffic metrics have become the sole criterion for many audiovisual content creators. While audiences appear to be surrounded by a vast influx of information, they are, in reality, trapped in a traffic-driven echo chamber, where spectacle-laden visuals cater only to superficial sensory pleasure. This lack of depth in aesthetic experience not only fails to enrich the spiritual world but also deepens society's immersion in the consumerist ideology of "amusing ourselves to death," making it difficult to escape. As a result, individuals risk being molded into one-dimensional beings, allowing their lives to be entirely dictated by entertainment saturated with consumerist ideology. Neil Postman, in *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, revisited Aldous Huxley's prediction in *Brave New World*, stating: "The real danger is not that people replace thinking with laughter, but that they no longer know why they laugh or why they have stopped thinking." Even more alarming is his assertion that: "All public discourse is increasingly presented in the form of entertainment, shaping our cultural consciousness (Postman, 2017). The end result is that we become a species that is entertaining itself to death." For adolescents, the digital audiovisual world significantly increases their exposure to morally ambiguous content, while spectacle-driven imagery can easily reinforce irrational consumer behaviors, stripping them of their innate innocence and curiosity in favor of symbolic consumption within the virtual realm (Davidoff, 2002). Moreover, the rapidly expanding virtual audiovisual world is further fragmenting user demographics into three distinct categories: "Digital Refugees" (primarily elderly individuals who

struggle to adapt to digital technologies), "Digital Immigrants" (mainly middle-aged individuals who grew up in a pre-digital era but have adapted to technology), and "Digital Natives" (young people who have been immersed in digital media since birth). Among these groups, adolescents are the most susceptible to becoming overly immersed in a virtual audiovisual world of questionable quality, at the cost of real-world social interactions. Prolonged exposure to digital media may severely impair their communication skills, logical reasoning, and language expression abilities, ultimately hindering their ability to navigate and engage with the real world effectively.

(2) Dilution of Rationality: The Emotional Shift Weakening Logical Thinking: To some extent, audiovisual communication prioritizes emotion over reason and intuition over logic. Neil Postman discusses this phenomenon in his book *The Disappearance of Childhood*, where he focuses on children and argues that the supremacy of images over text is a key factor contributing to the "disappearance of childhood." He asserts that books help children develop the essential cognitive abilities needed for adulthood, including an active sense of individuality, logical and orderly thinking, the ability to maintain a critical distance from symbols, the capacity to manipulate high-level abstract concepts, and the ability to delay gratification—all of which require extraordinary self-control. In contrast, according to Postman, "pictures and other images can be considered a cognitive regression, at least in comparison to printed words (Baudrillard, 2022). Printed text requires readers to engage intellectually with its 'real content.' While people may not always be able to critically evaluate what they read, in theory, as long as they have sufficient knowledge or experience, evaluation is possible. However, pictures demand an aesthetic response; they appeal to emotions rather than intellect. They require us to feel rather than think." Indeed, compared to static images, audiovisual media amplify emotional and intuitive thinking even more profoundly (Jacklin, 1985). From Heidegger's perspective, which views media technology as both an instrumental and constructive language, images serve first as a tool for conveying information and representing the "presence" of the real world, and second, as a mechanism for shaping human experiences and perceptions of reality, making them possible. As he argues, images are not merely representations or reproductions of a pre-existing world; rather, they function as tools for visualizing and constructing reality itself, exerting a tangible influence on the real world. As a linguistic medium, audiovisual images affect, shape, and even define the way humans think and perceive reality. With the "audiovisual turn"

exerting an unprecedented influence on contemporary human experience, it has also introduced a new "emotional turn" in social life, wherein audiovisual content tends to exaggerate contradictions, amplify conflicts, and even intensify antagonisms within a short time frame (Casati, 2021). As a result, narratives increasingly adhere to emotional appeals rather than being guided by facts and logic. Currently, China is in a deep-water zone of reform and a critical period of overcoming challenges, with a complex and ever-changing landscape of social interests. As a result, individuals with different perspectives or positions inevitably become highly sensitive to issues arising from social transformation, such as legal system deficiencies, widening wealth gaps, and urban-rural disparities. Particularly in an era where short-video platforms have become the primary source of news for internet users, some individuals, shielded by the anonymity of the internet, tend to neglect moral constraints. When discussing police-civilian relations, doctor-patient conflicts, gender disputes, or teacher-student interactions, they are more inclined to use emotionally charged expressions and misleading edits to capture audience attention. Even ordinarily law-abiding individuals may, in this context, develop a sense of "safety in numbers" (law does not punish the masses), leading to a loss of social responsibility and self-control, ultimately indulging their irrational impulses. Fundamentally, a communication logic that prioritizes emotion over facts often discourages rational thinking, preventing social issues from being explored in a constructive and positive manner, thereby delaying or obstructing the advancement of a harmonious society. Moreover, prolonged exposure to an emotion-driven media environment can have negative and detrimental effects on the personal growth of adolescents.

(3) Violations and Infringements: The Abuse of Technology Challenging Public Order and Morality: While audiovisual communication provides audiences with spectacle-driven and diverse information, it also locks streaming platform users into distinct "information cocoons" through big data algorithms. The virtual digital image world is far from an egalitarian and free utopia. In some sense, written text offers a relatively equal playing field for recipients, with differences primarily arising from individual reading comprehension abilities. However, images are more susceptible to manipulation by capital, power, and technology, making them more likely to exert uncontrollable and negative influences on recipients. At its core, the intuitiveness of images does not equate to simplicity—hidden behind audiovisual media may lurk privacy violations or gendered gazes driven by privilege or bias. A striking example is the 2019 emergence of the app "ZAO." With its simple operation and innovative features, the app gained

a massive user base overnight. By merely uploading a frontal portrait, users could leverage the app's built-in AI technology to seamlessly swap faces. However, malicious actors exploited this technology to generate vulgar, violent, or defamatory images and synthetic videos, which were then widely disseminated to attack or slander others. Clearly, privacy infringement remains one of the most pressing risks in audiovisual communication. Social platforms like Douyin (TikTok) and Kuaishou, which primarily rely on audiovisual media, not only control users' public expression channels but also, with the rise of social media and e-commerce, collect and manage vast amounts of private user data. As users engage in self-expression and performance through audiovisual devices, their IP addresses, browsing histories, social relationships, and behavioral data are automatically recorded in online databases. In fact, every word and action of a user may be codified into data, effectively turning individuals into "transparent people" exposed to technology. Under the current online platform mechanisms, user privacy is at significant risk of exploitation. Moreover, audiovisual communication can easily provoke and stimulate the human instincts of curiosity, voyeurism, and even prurience. This makes digital technology—often regarded as the "primary productive force"—vulnerable to being co-opted by illicit industries, thereby challenging public order and morality. When audiovisual media empowers such "black" digital technology, it spreads like an acute infectious disease, disrupting the fabric of social norms and ethical standards.

#### 4. GOVERNANCE STRATEGIES FOR THE CHAOTIC LANDSCAPE OF AUDIOVISUAL COMMUNICATION IN THE MOBILE INTERNET ERA

Considering both the positive impacts of audiovisual communication on the media ecosystem and social life, as well as the various negative phenomena it has produced, this paper argues that while we should actively leverage the advantages of audiovisual media in the digital information age, we must also address its negative aspects. To this end, it is crucial to strengthen the governance of audiovisual communication by focusing on content production, policy regulation, and media literacy among diverse user groups.

##### 4.1 Enhancing the Cultural Innovation of Audiovisual Communication

Undoubtedly, the shift from text-based to audiovisual communication

has triggered a profound transformation in the cultural ecosystem. With the support of the Internet and digital technologies, audiovisual media has propelled the mass visual culture that emerged in the 20th century into an era of instant, universal, and highly individualized audiovisual experiences. In today's digital and globalized era, cultural exchanges between nations and ethnic groups are continuously expanding. Due to language and literary differences, “abstract linguistic symbols based on verbal language often struggle to transcend national and ethnic boundaries, whereas visual imagery can overcome these barriers.” As a result, people from different linguistic backgrounds can achieve better communication, cognition, interaction, and understanding through audiovisual symbols (Geise & Xu, 2024). However, alongside these benefits, audiovisual content generated through digital media has also exhibited trends of excessive replication, oversaturation, vulgarity, fragmentation, and decentralization—where images exist purely for their own sake, devoid of deeper meaning. What people encounter are merely fleeting, rapid, and shallow audiovisual products. In an era dominated by hedonism, consumerism, and the spectacle of entertainment, individuals have ceased to engage with the deeper historical, philosophical, or intellectual dimensions of audiovisual media. Instead, they indulge in the immediate sensory gratification these images provide, consciously or unconsciously subjugated to the discourse of capital. At the same time, a silent wave of cultural and existential anxiety is spreading among the public, driving contemporary individuals to experience an unprecedented form of anxiety unique to this era. Daniel Bell, in his book *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, once asserted: “The entire visual culture, because it caters more effectively to the modernist impulses of mass culture than print culture, is itself culturally exhausted at a much faster rate.” While this statement is not absolutely correct, it does carry a certain degree of foresight. Today, audiovisual communication has permeated and dominated nearly every aspect of daily life (Bell, 1972). However, it is precisely this instantaneous, convenient, explosive, and globally synchronized mode of audiovisual dissemination that repeatedly pushes homogeneous and meaningless content to users. These mass-produced audiovisual messages—akin to mechanical reproductions—provide sensory entertainment to the public while simultaneously eroding cultural depth. From both theoretical and practical perspectives, to address the issues of content homogenization, oversimplification, and vulgarity in audiovisual communication, we must enhance the cultural innovation of audiovisual content while developing a

comprehensive audiovisual media system and improving communication effectiveness. This includes strengthening content production quality, fostering cultural awareness, and creatively transforming traditional culture. Considering the current state of audiovisual communication in China, reshaping the media ecosystem, strengthening the construction of the audiovisual media system, and comprehensively enhancing the cultural innovation of audiovisual content are of great significance for promoting mainstream values, disseminating policy information, guiding public opinion, and advancing cultural entertainment and education. With the convening of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the country has embarked on a new journey toward the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through "Chinese-style modernization." As China regains its central position on the world stage, building a distinct Chinese discourse system and amplifying China's narrative power has become a strategic task for national rejuvenation. This requires that, in constructing and disseminating China's discourse globally and innovating the audiovisual communication system for Chinese narratives, we must uphold a strong Chinese cultural standpoint, distilling and showcasing the essence of Chinese civilization from thousands of years of traditional culture. It is essential to conduct in-depth exploration and meticulous creation of content related to outstanding traditional culture, historical figures and events of cultural significance, distinctive local cultural elements with strong Chinese characteristics, and inspirational contemporary figures and achievements that embody the spirit of the era. By doing so, we can produce audiovisual works with unique Chinese characteristics, style, and aesthetics, effectively conveying China's stories and diverse experiences to the world through compelling national imagery and narratives.

#### 4.2 Strengthening Industry Regulation and Policy Governance

Currently, China's audiovisual industry is experiencing a phase of rapid and comprehensive development, marked by significant advancements in national internet infrastructure, innovative media convergence efforts, and increasingly diverse audiovisual communication channels and formats. In this context, establishing a healthy audiovisual communication ecosystem has become an urgent priority, necessitating stricter regulation by authoritative agencies and the implementation of mandatory policy measures to govern the industry effectively. To address the current challenges in China's audiovisual sector, especially the negative impacts of audiovisual media, the National Radio and Television Administration



(NRTA) issued the "14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Broadcasting, Television, and Online Audiovisual Media" in 2021. This plan explicitly states: "Adhering to the principles of administrative supervision, localized management, and hierarchical responsibility, we must enforce ideological work responsibilities, strengthen systematic governance, legal governance, comprehensive governance, and source governance, and continuously improve the modern governance system of the industry (Duan et al., 2023)." To enhance and implement the optimization and upgrading strategies for industry management, it is essential to establish a comprehensive legal framework for the audiovisual sector, ensuring that audiovisual communication is governed by laws that are strictly enforced. Additionally, a rigorous and pragmatic comprehensive governance mechanism must be developed to address both immediate and long-term challenges. Moreover, leveraging technological empowerment is crucial for enhancing monitoring systems, particularly through cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and blockchain technologies, to enable all-encompassing supervision of user behavior, platform operations, and communication environments. At the same time, big data intelligence must be actively utilized. In the era of information explosion, the sheer volume and complexity of data have surpassed human analytical capabilities. By leveraging big data analytics, human resources can be freed from tedious data collection and analysis, allowing for more efficient resource allocation. Beyond governing low-quality content, the system should also encourage and support the production of high-quality content. On one hand, government policies play a crucial role in guiding and supporting the audiovisual industry. In recent years, the government has introduced a series of policies and funding initiatives to foster the development of the audiovisual sector, offering strong support and global promotion for outstanding audiovisual works with international communication potential. In addition to government-led initiatives, collaboration between private enterprises and official regulatory bodies, as well as industry self-regulation, is essential for building a sustainable audiovisual content production and communication ecosystem. On the other hand, strengthening audiovisual talent cultivation mechanisms is equally vital. The industry must identify and nurture a new generation of audiovisual communicators who uphold correct public opinion guidance, possess expertise in advanced audiovisual technologies, maintain high ethical standards and strong media literacy, and demonstrate a keen awareness of content quality, creative thinking, aesthetic discovery, and perceptual sensitivity.

#### 4.3 Enhancing Media Literacy Among Multiple Stakeholders

Beyond authoritative regulation and governance of audiovisual communication, strengthening media literacy across multiple stakeholders is also of great importance. As the media landscape continues to expand, the risks and challenges associated with audiovisual communication have also intensified. How to mitigate the negative impacts of audiovisual media has become a widely discussed issue in society, leading to the emergence of media literacy research. The concept of "media literacy" originated from foreign discourse, with one of the most widely cited definitions being "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate information in various forms," a definition proposed at the 1992 U.S. National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy. " In today's rapidly evolving digital era, the meaning of media literacy has expanded and evolved in response to new realities (Potter, 2013). Technology critic Evgeny Morozov, in his book *To Save Everything, Click Here: The Folly of Technological Solutionism*, repeatedly expresses his concerns about the temptations of digital existence—namely, how modern individuals attempt to "solve" all problems using gamification and quantification-based digital tracking techniques. However, he warns that if we fail to recognize the dark side of digital life, we will ultimately be destroyed by the very technology we adore. Given the negative consequences arising from audiovisual communication, targeted media literacy education is undeniably of urgent and practical significance (Morozov, 2013). At the level of media usage, " electronic media have realized 5A communication: users can access any content (Any content) at any time (Anytime), from any location (Anywhere), through any network (Any way), and on any device (Any device). " Under today's algorithm-driven recommendation mechanisms, audiences are easily trapped in a cycle of self-reinforcement, spending excessive time immersed in the dazzling world of audiovisual media (Tigga, 2009). This calls for individuals to actively enhance their media literacy, striving to exercise autonomy and use audiovisual media in a moderate, reasonable, and lawful manner. For children and adolescents, who lack strong self-regulation skills, a collaborative supervision system involving families, schools, and platforms is essential, ensuring parental guidance, school education, and platform regulation work in synergy. At the level of information reception, audiovisual communication is ultimately a form of information dissemination. The ability to extract accurate and valuable information from the vast sea of content is a key indicator of media literacy. Therefore, information recipients should actively develop their observational skills, critical thinking abilities, and discernment when engaging with audiovisual

media. Moreover, audiovisual content creators must enhance their sense of social responsibility and historical mission, striving to improve content quality from the very source to foster a healthy and ethical audiovisual environment. For filmmakers and audiovisual creators—especially young creators who play a dominant role in the industry—artistic integrity and moral discipline are paramount. They must continuously refine their artistic skills, uphold ethical boundaries in their work, and prioritize content that resonates with and benefits the people. As a guiding principle, they should avoid sensationalism and the subversion of mainstream ideology simply for the sake of gaining popularity or virality. As the saying goes, "To be an artist, one must first be a virtuous person; and to be a virtuous person, one must uphold moral integrity." Young cultural creators should embrace socialist core values, pursue positivity and goodness, and remain steadfast in their commitment to artistic justice and ambitious aspirations (Yuechun et al., 2024). In conclusion, under the backdrop of the visual turn, and with audiovisual communication becoming an inevitable trend, it is essential not only to recognize the unique charm and vitality that audiovisual media brings to social, economic, and cultural development, but also to identify and address the risks and concerns associated with the spread of inappropriate or harmful audiovisual content. In an era of media saturation, to implement the "Double Hundred" policy and strive for the prosperity of socialist literature and art, we must objectively assess both the advantages and disadvantages of audiovisual communication and adopt a case-by-case approach. The regulation and governance of the media ecosystem should neither be overly restrictive nor entirely laissez-faire. From the strategic perspective of future media ecosystem development, only by allowing various communication methods to play their respective roles, leveraging their strengths while mitigating their weaknesses, and fostering synergy among them, can our media environment gradually improve in the era of digital technologies and media convergence driven by the "Internet+". This will ensure steady and sustainable progress in the long run.

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## Author

Jiang Yueying, Associate Professor, School of Journalism and Communication, Minjiang University, Director of the Department of Advertising.

Contact Information: No. 504, Unit 2, Building 5, Jinbuli New Village, Mawei District, Fuzhou, Fujian Province Phone: 18149557750.

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