

Image-Building of Chinese Motorcycle Enthusiasts on Chinese Social Media Douyin

Ziliang Zhang*

The School of Art and Humanities, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG1 4FQ, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Abstract. In the post-COVID era, the rise of domestic motorcycle culture and platforms like Douyin have given motorcycles stronger social communication attributes, reducing their function as mere tools. More ordinary people have access to motorcycles, and motorcycle-related topics on the Douyin platform will be more discussed and controversial. This paper will analyze the current public opinion environment related to motorcycle topics on the Douyin platform, and discuss the role played by the social media platform Douyin in spreading motorcycle riding culture and shaping the image of motorcycle enthusiasts. This research will adopt the method of quantitative analysis questionnaire to study the usage habits of motorcycle enthusiasts and the motivation for sharing motorcycle-related content on Douyin and analyze the current status and problems of Douyin's news reports on motorcycles. Douyin has played an active role in promoting motorcycle culture and shaping the image of motorcycle enthusiasts, while constantly influencing and promoting the revision and improvement of relevant laws and regulations towards motorcycle riding. However, due to more negative news reports, society's aversion to motorcycle riding culture and motorcycle enthusiasts will lead to an antagonistic relationship between car drivers and motorcycle riders, which is not conducive to the positive image-building of motorcycle enthusiasts.

1 Introduction

In the after-corona virus era, with outdoor sports becoming a more popular trend, different forms and types of outdoor sports have gradually entered the daily lives of ordinary people. These outdoor sports include outdoor motorcycle riding, road cycling, mountaineering, camping, and other relatively minority outdoor sports. In these outdoor sports, it is easier to form a circle of cultural transmission among the sports fans. With the help of relevant functions of social media platforms, individuals with the same sports hobbies have gradually enriched their communication, and such individuals are more willing to show and share their sports experiences on social media platforms. When sharing and spreading the sports culture, building the image of the sports enthusiasts on social media platforms at the same time.

At present, motorcycle sports and motorcycle riding have become a popular trend, especially the young people between the ages of 20 and 30, more and more consumers buy

* Corresponding author: 1812010426@stu.hrbust.edu.cn

motorcycles to meet their needs for urban commuting and relieving traffic pressure, join the circle of motorcycle riding enthusiasts, and also meet the growing social needs. China Motorcycle Chamber of Commerce released the latest statistics shows in March 2024, China's production and sales of motorcycles reached 172.65 million and 1.673 million, the chain relative ratio increasing to 92.98% and 77.08%. Bin Li, President of China Motorcycle Chamber of Commerce, also claimed that this year's motorcycle sales number will be the same as last year. High-engine-size motorcycles for leisure and entertainment with engine displacement above 250cc (250ml) will become the mainstream models sold in China's motorcycle market [1]. China's motorcycle industry has achieved rapid development. From January to February 2024, the total industrial output value of motorcycle manufacturers reached 16.118 billion yuan, an increase of 2.01% year-on-year, and the industrial sales value reached 16.372 billion yuan, an increase of 2.53% year-on-year [1].

According to the author's statistics, the number of plays on the topic of motorcycles on Chinese social media platform Douyin has reached 131.38 billion times. The number of motorcycle bloggers whose main content is motorcycles is gradually increasing, which reflects the increasing trend of motorcycle enthusiasts. Douyin is increasingly becoming a communication platform for motorcycle enthusiasts. Motorcycle culture has also spread widely in Douyin.

Based on the increasing trend of motorcycle enthusiasts in China, based on the needs of the motorcycle market and motorcycle culture spread, Chinese social media Douyin played an important role in the process. While social media is spreading motorcycle culture, there are also many problems in the image building of motorcycle enthusiasts, and more image presentation is mainly negative news. It is very necessary to study the image-building process of motorcycle enthusiasts through Douyin, the role of Douyin in the building process, the specific problems, the motives and habits of motorcycle enthusiasts in using Douyin, and to put forward reasonable suggestions and measures for Chinese social media platforms on Douyin. This research will greatly benefit from the social media image reconstruction of motorcycle enthusiasts and promote the development of China's motorcycle culture.

2 Literature review

China's motorcycle industry started relatively late. From the last century after the founding of New People's Republic of China until around 2015, commuter models with displacement between 50cc (50ml) and 150cc (150ml) and agricultural motorcycles with delivery as the main demand have been used, and small-displacement motorcycles occupy the main market share [2]. With economic development, Reform and Opening-up policy, more and more large-displacement imported motorcycles into the Chinese market, Jianqiang Liu, The Deputy general manager, of Chongqing Gaojin Industrial Co., LTD claim said that imported large-displacement heavy motorcycles with luxury characteristics of the engine displacement are usually above 250cc (250ml), Once the motorcycle above this displacement is reached, It not only has the attributes of commuting and tools, but also is a big toy for the majority of motorcycle fans to please themselves, and regards large-displacement heavy motorcycles as a kind of consumption to satisfy the spiritual world of themselves [3]. With Adaptive Cruise (ACC), hand heating, Air Bag Protection, Anti-Block System (ABS) [3], Traction Control System (TCS), IMU Six-axis Inertial Measurement Unit, Electronic Accelerator, Riding mode for free setting have become a strong market driving force for the development of motorcycles in the new generation. At the same time, domestic large-displacement motorcycles began to embark on the road of joint venture development with imported motorcycles [2], and the two shared the development of engine transmission platform, engine, and whole vehicle technology. New products developed by domestic large-displacement

heavy motorcycles with the help of imported motorcycle technology have gradually occupied the domestic motorcycle market [4].

China was the first country to motorcycle production and sales, the domestic motorcycle market is mainly concentrated in the eastern coastal cities, and most motorcycle enthusiasts include young people who were born between 1980 and 1990. Most motorcycle enthusiasts participate in various motorcycle riding activities in the form of groups, and publish them through social media platforms to expand the influence of the group and spread motorcycle culture at the same time [5]. With the wave of China's Reform and Opening, more foreign cultures are introduced into China. However, due to the restrictions of traditional domestic society and corresponding traditional dogmatic culture, young people are more willing to seek other ways to realize social identity and value, and riding motorcycles is a very good way [5]. The development of motorcycles in the domestic market has shaped the pursuit of freedom, equality, independence, and the rebel spirit of motorcycle enthusiasts. This has also shaped the lifestyle and personality of motorcycle enthusiasts [5]. The above references can help readers to join the transmission process of motorcycle culture, analyze the motivation and requirements of becoming a motorcycle enthusiast, and get a more complete understanding of the characteristics of this group.

Different motorcycle brands have different brand cultures, and what is displayed on social media is the brand recognition of the riders and the image of the riders riding this brand. For example, Yunos et al. studied the brand image of the famous American motorcycle brand Harley-Davidson and claimed that the motorcycles of this brand have more images of successful entrepreneurs and celebrities. Its unique motorcycle design, workmanship, standard and rich modification culture, and style have surpassed the brand itself and become synonymous with the rough, muscular, and luxurious part of the American motorcycle culture, representing the American spirit and national image [6]. Many motorcycle enthusiasts began to show the image of motorcycle enthusiasts on social media, share riding experiences, and establish and shape the unique motorcycle culture in China. Faced with the pressure of work and life, today's young people need to have a pressure release point in their mind, and the wind and freedom taken by the motorcycle in the process of riding are well suited to the current needs of young people. Topics related to motorcycles have been played 60 billion times on Douyin, and there are more than 1.8 million notes about motorcycles on Red [7]. In view of the growing group of motorcycle enthusiasts on Chinese social platforms, motorcycle enthusiasts give different reasons to engage in motorcycle sports, the most important is the role of motorcycles in releasing pressure. Young and middle-aged people believe that it is the last spiritual comfort after a day of work [8]. According to Erta Sim, Sykes D, and Carter C, the main reason for preferring motorcycle travel is that it can see different scenery, constantly listen to the sound of motorcycle exhaust, and enjoy the feeling of wind and nature, which is a pleasure for people's mind and body [9].

Daokui Li, a famous economist, believes that China is one of the few countries in the world that has formulated laws and regulations on the mandatory 13-year scrapping of motorcycles [10]. China is also the only country in the world that has a serious policy of banning motorcycling [11]. China's Domestic media, including traditional media and social media, are more accustomed to putting "labels" on motorcycle enthusiasts by exaggerating serious traffic accidents, and incorrect motorcycle culture and riding concepts. For example, "When the motorcycle starts, children's parents will lose them automatically; Night is the time for the motorcycle rider crash" and so on. In fact, this is a mainstream culture that resists the spread of subcultures by creating moral panic through serious traffic accidents and trying to assimilate subcultures at the ideological level [5].

Motorcycles not only play an important role in the daily lives of ordinary people in Chinese society but also serve as symbolic cultural icons and are recognized as an official authority and part of national ceremonies. When countries around the world receive foreign

dignitaries, important visitors, and national leaders, these countries often use motorcycle escorts for the solemn ceremonies. For example, the State Guest Escort Unit of the People's Republic of China uses domestic Cfmoto's 650cc and 1290cc Heavy Cruiser State Motorcycles as standard vehicles, and the design of the vehicles also symbolizes the dignity of the state. The current State Guest Escort Unit has three different vehicle configuration types, representing different reception levels for visiting foreign dignitaries. It is usually escorted by 9, 11, or 21 riders. At the same time, when the State Escort Unit is shown, it is usually used in the form of "V" in sequence, which brings a strong visual impact to the public [12].

The above research theories can help the readers understand the development process of Chinese motorcycle culture and the relevant knowledge of Chinese social media platforms Douyin in spreading Chinese motorcycle culture and shaping the image of Chinese motorcycle enthusiasts. However, it is still a blank space to provide suggestions and opinions in the process of Chinese social media platforms Douyin is spreading Chinese motorcycle culture, given the specific problems in shaping the image of Chinese motorcycle enthusiasts. At the same time, the research can also help the traffic management department of the Chinese government to recognize the defects of relevant laws and regulations on motorcycle management, and give better guidance and management methods. This will greatly benefit the traffic management department to manage the gradually huge domestic motorcycle market and guide the development of Chinese motorcycle sports and riding culture in a healthy direction.

3 Methodology

This study mainly uses quantitative research methods by questionnaire to conduct a survey and conducting the research. Since this study mainly focuses on motorcycle enthusiasts and the spread of motorcycle culture on social media platforms, the survey questionnaire was targeted at motorcycle enthusiasts for distribution. All the samples who participated in filling out the questionnaire were motorcycle enthusiasts with certain riding experience. These motorcycle enthusiasts also use Douyin to interact with other motorcycle enthusiasts.

Regarding the quantitative research method used to create the survey questionnaire in this study, the official website of Wen Juan Xing was used to create the survey questionnaire. In order to increase the sample size and better target motorcycle enthusiasts and Douyin users on social media, the author sent the questionnaire recruitment information to the motorcycle forum. After the forum information was posted, it received a positive response from a large number of motorcycle enthusiasts, and a total of 360 survey questionnaires were collected within two weeks, which is the collection time of the questionnaire being set up.

After screening and analysis of the questionnaires, 306 effective questionnaires were collected, while 54 were invalid. The criteria for determining whether a questionnaire is invalid mainly come from the options of the multiple-choice questions in the questionnaire and the answers to the open-ended questions. The options of the invalid questionnaires in the multiple-choice questions show a clear pattern, while the open-ended questions with invalid answers are not adopted due to the simplicity of the key points in the answers.

4 Results

The survey questionnaire consists of a total of 12 questions. The conclusion only discusses the valid questionnaires that were returned, i.e. a sample size of 306. First, the survey sample's gender and age range were investigated. Among the effective sample, 258 were male and 48 were female, accounting for 84.3% and 15.7% of the total, respectively. The age distribution

was concentrated in the range of 21 to 50 years old. Among them, the number and proportion of samples in the age ranges of 21 to 25 years old and 25 to 30 years old were the same, both are 98 samples and 32.14%; The number and proportion of samples in the age range of 31 to 40 years old were 64 samples and 21.43%, respectively; The number and proportion of samples in the age range of 41 to 50 years old were 46 samples and 14.29%, respectively. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that male motorcycle enthusiasts make up the majority, and the age group of motorcycle enthusiasts is mainly composed of young people aged 20 to 30.

Secondly, among the 306 people, 64.29% of them, i.e., 197 people, said they often see negative reports about motorcycles on the social media platform Douyin. There is a proportion of 35.71%, i.e. 109 people who said they occasionally see negative reports about motorcycles on the social media platform Douyin. No one said they have never seen negative reports about motorcycles on Douyin. In this topic, the negative reports about motorcycles on the social media platform Douyin are defined as reporting motorcycle-related news that involves reckless riding, street racing, disturbing the peace at night, speeding, competitive riding, causing serious accidents that result in serious injuries or death to motorcycle riders, and illegal riding without a license. Therefore, motorcycle enthusiasts commonly use the social media platform Douyin; among news related to motorcycles, negative news coverage dominates on the Douyin platform.

When asked about the role of social media platform Douyin in promoting motorcycle culture, motorcycle riding, and spreading motorcycle-related knowledge and traffic safety awareness, 71% of the sample, 217 people, believed that social media platforms disseminate motorcycle culture, popularize motorcycle-related knowledge, and promote traffic safety awareness. 89.29% of the sample, 272 people, believed that social media platforms popularize relevant riding knowledge, including but not limited to traffic safety laws and regulations, the importance of riding gear, and relevant safety precautions. 67.8% of the sample, or 207 people, believed that the Douyin platform shapes a positive and upward image of motorcycle enthusiasts. 53.57% of the sample size, 164 people, believed that the Douyin platform continuously influences and facilitates the modification and improvement of relevant laws and regulations related to motorcycle driving. 42.86% of the sample, 131 people, believed that Douyin has negative reports, which contribute to social resistance against motorcycle riding culture and motorcycle enthusiasts, leading to an antagonistic relationship between car drivers and motorcycle riders. 46.43% of the sample, 142 people, believed that Douyin promotes government and society to pay attention to motorcycle riding groups, and riding culture, and solve related problems while riding.

Next, a survey was conducted to investigate whether Douyin would promote the popularization of motorcycles and the development of motorcycle culture in China. 75% of the respondents, a total of 230 people, believed that Douyin had a significant promotion role in motorcycle riding sports. However, only a small percentage of the sample, or 17.8%, believed that the existence of Douyin would have a significant obstruction in promoting the motorcycle market and spreading motorcycle culture. Interestingly, 7% of the respondents, 22 people, who were motorcycle enthusiasts and Douyin users, were unsure whether Douyin's existence and development would have any impact on motorcycle culture. This sample constituted a small minority.

Among the sample of 306 people, 64.29% of them, i.e., 197 people, frequently use the Douyin platform, including viewing motorcycle reviews, riding tips, and motorcycle science and technology videos, and 35.71% of them, i.e., 109 people, occasionally use Douyin platform to learn related knowledge, mainly from offline communication with other motorcycle friends. This indicates that more than half of motorcycle enthusiasts use Douyin to learn professional motorcycle knowledge. Douyin platform has become a trustworthy social media platform among motorcycle enthusiasts.

Meanwhile, 92% of motorcycle enthusiasts, 282 people, use the social media platform Douyin to interact with other motorcycle enthusiasts, including but not limited to posting their own comments, liking and commenting on relevant motorcycle videos, uploading their own riding videos, sharing the riding data, and posting photos of their motorcycles. The remaining 8%, 24 people, of the motorcycle enthusiast sample do not interact with other motorcycle enthusiasts on Douyin. In 306 valid samples, 89%, 272 people believe that participating in offline riding activities is a supplement to online interactions on social media platforms such as Douyin, while 11% of the samples, 34 people, do not agree with the idea.

The remaining questions are open-ended questions. When it comes to the motivations for interacting with motorcycle-related content on Douyin, most of the samples stated that they did so to record their wonderful life, enjoy the joy of riding, and at the same time, they wanted to showcase their interests and hobbies, meet positive friends with similar interests, and interact with them mainly because they encountered topics they were interested in or discussions related to technical matters. A few people did it to attract fans in order to obtain benefits. Many people believe that it is mainly to showcase their personal lives, followed by attracting like-minded people to comment. As the saying goes, "Like attracts like," and the media is a great stage to make new friends. Once they post their personal updates, they will have like-minded people to exchange ideas and learn from each other, thus not only making new friends but also improving their own thoughts. Some people think they want to expand their circle through social media and learn more new knowledge, meet more new friends, and gain a sense of satisfaction while increasing their understanding of the motorcycle and their hobby, as well as related professional knowledge. Some people think they can meet fellow motorcyclists and see if they can exchange resources for work purposes, etc.

When talking about when and why they would post motorcycle testimonials and engage on Douyin, some people said it was after a ride and encountered beautiful scenery. Others said it was after they had bought some equipment for their motorcycle, changed new tires, chains, brake calipers, and installed aftermarket parts. Meanwhile, some people believe they will share on Douyin when their vehicle's mileage reaches every 9999 km or when they visit a checkpoint and take photos. Some people said they would share after watching an exciting motorcycle race and wanted to express their excitement and nervousness. Others said they would share after discovering a new cycling route and felt it was worth recommending. Finally, some people said they would share when they went on a motorcycle trip on a special holiday and felt a different atmosphere.

Finally, when discussing what good suggestions there are for Douyin to promote motorcycle culture, disseminate knowledge about motorcycles, and spread riding concepts and related news, some people believe that Douyin should promote in a reasonable report, reduce negative impacts, and have more positive promotion and less negative reporting. Others believe that positive energy should be actively promoted in the motorcycle culture, promoting safe riding, advocating for everyone to follow traffic laws and regulations, and eliminating the practice of "making noise on the street." Some also believe that Douyin should disseminate motorcycle regulations to make two-wheel and four-wheel drivers understand the importance of obeying the law and respecting each other. Two-wheelers should not randomly squeeze into gaps, and four-wheelers should not maliciously cut in front of other vehicles. At the same time, Douyin should interact with official channels because promoting motorcycle sports, including improving the riding experience on the road, is an important step in cooperation with the authorities; there are too many negative reports about motorcycles causing some people are afraid of motorcycles. Finally, some people believe that Douyin should use various media channels, such as social media, TV advertisements, and public awareness videos, to disseminate motorcycle riding safety knowledge and raise public awareness of motorcycle safety. It should also share and push more content on the inheritance and protection of motorcycle culture, compile and record the history of

motorcycle culture, including classic models, stories of famous riders, etc., and make the audience learn more about the history of motorcycles.

5 Discussion

The social media platform Douyin has played a positive role in promoting motorcycle culture, spreading safety riding knowledge, cultivating a correct riding concept, popularizing traffic laws and regulations, and shaping a positive image of motorcycle enthusiasts.

First, Douyin is the mainstream platform of social media in China, with a large number of users, regardless of age or interests, users can find related tags on Douyin and join the community of like-minded enthusiasts; Second, Douyin, as a mainstream social media platform in China, has a complete and rigorous certification standard and system, such as when opening an account page, the yellow "V" mark and blue "V" mark both represent official accounts that have been officially certified by the platform, and mainstream official media from various regions have transformed and registered official accounts on the Douyin. These official accounts have a great influence and many followers. This also allows related news reports with the "motorcycle" tag to be widely known and recognized by Douyin users while having a great influence, which can help them recognize the importance of motorcycles as an important means of transportation and transportation tools.

The advantage is that a large number of users in China can quickly recognize the benefits and importance of motorcycles through the Douyin platform, popularizing motorcycle knowledge, reducing the cost of public transportation, and alleviating traffic jams; The disadvantage is that Douyin platform reports more negative news about motorcycles, including noisy riding, and serious traffic accidents, which is not conducive to motorcycle enthusiasts establishing a positive social image. It is not conducive to the growth of the willingness to buy motorcycles. Douyin even has extreme labels, which can trigger conflicts between car drivers and motorcycle riders and is not conducive to building a harmonious and stable social environment and strengthening group confrontation.

In light of the important role that Douyin plays in promoting motorcycle culture, popularizing safe riding, and establishing a positive image for motorcycle enthusiasts, it is crucial to encourage motorcycle enthusiasts to use the Douyin platform for motorcycle-related social media activities and encourage them to share motorcycle-related knowledge, promote positive motorcycle riding culture, and riding concepts. Secondly, motorcycle enthusiasts should organize more activities like charity rides and promote them on Douyin, which is beneficial to the development of motorcycle culture. In response to the fact that Douyin reports more negative news about motorcycles, motorcycle enthusiasts should first be strict with themselves, obey the law, not modify their motorcycles illegally, ride safely, and wear safety gear properly. Secondly, they should strengthen their use behavior of the Douyin platform and post more positive topics and content related to motorcycle riding.

There are many negative reports about motorcycles on the social media platform Douyin, which is not conducive to the development of the motorcycle market and the image-building of motorcycle enthusiasts.

Firstly, Douyin is a mainstream social media platform in China with a huge influence. The online public opinion on Douyin can represent the true public opinion. However, the current reporting on Douyin, especially the official accounts related to motorcycle news, only promotes the wearing of helmets, rather than the wearing of complete protective gear. Especially the local media Douyin official accounts, when a motorcycle accident occurs, if the motorcyclist is not seriously injured, they will add labels such as "thank goodness for wearing a helmet" to the video and report, while ignoring other safety riding gear such as

riding suits, riding boots, and knee pads. This creates a one-sided notion in the minds of the audience that "wearing a safety helmet is enough to be safe." Meanwhile, ignore to mention of the safety certification, type, and level of protection of helmets. This one-sided notion is also caused by the lack of knowledge of motorcycle protective gear, and Douyin's staff who do not ride motorcycles or lack correct knowledge of helmet and protective gear, safety riding, and related traffic laws on liability. Because of these one-sided reports and incorrect reports by official accounts on Douyin, other Douyin users, especially users who do not ride, negative emotions have. Secondly, the posts on Douyin's official accounts have not been subjected to strict review and verification, and a dangerous label has been attached to the motorcycle enthusiasts group. When mentioning motorcycle-related reports, the image that comes to mind is speeding, exceeding the speed limit, and not wearing a safety helmet. This notion has penetrated deep into the hearts of the public and has led to a bad image of motorcycle enthusiasts in society, especially for many non-motorcycle Douyin users who think that riding a motorcycle is equivalent to being unsafe and that any accident is caused by the motorcycle riding too fast.

Above the phenomena on Douyin, the current situation that is not conducive to the development of motorcycle culture and the positive image of motorcycle enthusiasts, as well as the current public opinion environment, as the first official account certified by Douyin, the platform should verify information from multiple sources before promoting it, and report on related accidents involving motorcycles in an objective and truthful manner to guide public opinion. At the same time, changing the image of motorcycle enthusiasts requires more comprehensive reporting on the role of motorcycles in alleviating traffic congestion, promoting economic development, and highlighting the positive contributions of motorcycle enthusiasts to society. For example, the heroic sacrifice and contribution of motorcycle enthusiasts during the mountain fire in Chongqing, the image of the Nationale Escort Team representing the authority of the country, the personalities of motorcycle riders, and the outstanding contributions to society, etc.

6 Conclusion

Through the above research, Douyin, as a mainstream social media platform in China, has widespread influence among motorcycle enthusiasts in China. Currently, motorcycle enthusiasts are mainly male, and the age is concentrated between 20 and 30 years old. Most motorcycle enthusiasts have the habit of using the social media platform Douyin to learn about motorcycle-related news and related knowledge. However, at present, the news about motorcycles on Douyin is mainly in the form of negative news, and more negative news will arouse public discussion.

Douyin has played a positive role in promoting motorcycle culture and shaping the image of motorcycle enthusiasts, while also continuously influencing and promoting the modification and improvement of relevant laws and regulations regarding motorcycles. However, it has also caused a negative reaction from society due to the frequent reporting of negative news. Currently, there are many negative reports about motorcycles on the Douyin platform, which is not conducive to the development of the motorcycle market and building a positive image of motorcycle enthusiasts. In response to these issues, we propose the following measures for the Douyin platform, including reducing the reporting of motorcycle accidents and increasing the reporting of positive and uplifting images of motorcycles. At the same time, report accurately and completely regarding relevant accidents and hot topics. Douyin content creators should fully understand the entire process of the event when reporting on motorcycles and improve media literacy.

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