

China's International Influence in global media: A Case Study of Sin Chew Daily's Coverage on China's Aerospace Industry

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Abstract

In the current global landscape, technological innovation stands as a prominent symbol representing a nation's comprehensive strength. Among these innovations, aerospace technology capabilities serve as a critical yardstick for assessing technological prowess. China's technological prowess has been consistently on the rise, with its aerospace technology sector experiencing significant growth. The exploration of the unknown cosmos and the development of aerospace technology are endeavors shared by humanity. China's influence in the field of aerospace technology has far-reaching implications, and the mainstream Malaysian media, Sin Chew Daily, has been consistently reporting on China's advancements in this field. This paper, through an analysis of various reports by Sin Chew Daily, aims to assess the international influence of China's aerospace endeavors.

Keywords

China aerospace, Malaysian media, Sin Chew Daily, international influence.

1. Introduction

This paper provides a comprehensive exploration of China's growing influence in the global aerospace industry, as perceived and portrayed in the Malaysian mainstream media, Sin Chew Daily's coverage. In a world marked by rapid geopolitical shifts and technological advancements, comprehending how Malaysia frames and responds to China's aerospace progress holds immense significance. To achieve this understanding, the research employs a multifaceted approach that combines investigation methods, quantitative analysis, and qualitative analysis. This triangulation of research methods allows for a nuanced examination of Sin Chew Daily's reports. The analysis uncovers the expanding scope of China's international influence, underpinned by its remarkable aerospace achievements, and the pivotal role aerospace plays in rejuvenating the nation. Simultaneously, it delves into Malaysia's responses to these developments while offering strategic insights to augment discourse authority within the aviation domain. By shedding light on the intricate interplay between media, diplomacy, and technology, this study yields valuable insights into the evolving landscape of China's global influence, transcending boundaries and offering a comprehensive perspective on China's role in the international arena, as perceived through the lens of Malaysian mainstream media.

2. Research Background

2.1. Sin Chew Daily

Sin Chew Daily, a Chinese-language news website in Malaysia, serves as one of the largest mainstream media in Malaysia. Its namesake newspaper was founded in 1929 and remains the highest-selling Chinese-language newspaper in Malaysia. This website not only holds a prominent position within its nation but also wields a significant influence throughout the

Southeast Asian region. Furthermore, it serves as one of the primary content providers for original Chinese-language internet news.

2.2. China Aerospace

China's aerospace industry traces its origins back to 1956. Over the past several decades, Chinese leaders have shown a profound commitment to the development of aerospace endeavors, channeling substantial financial resources and nurturing a vast pool of talent to foster technological innovation and growth. Through the relentless efforts of Chinese aerospace professionals, the country's aerospace industry has consistently expanded and strengthened. Today it shines brightly on the global stage. Pioneering innovations have enabled China to achieve remarkable milestones in fields such as rocketry, human spaceflight, space stations, satellites, quantum technology, space laboratories and so on. Presently, China's aerospace technology stands at the forefront of the world, commanding significant international influence.

3. Hierarchical Coverage Analysis

3.1. High-level framework analysis

A keyword search for "China's aerospace" on the Sin Chew Daily website over the past three years yielded approximately 60 results. Among these, a majority consisted of short articles with a word count of around 500 words, while approximately one-third comprised longer articles spanning approximately 1,000 words. The topics covered a wide spectrum, including a focus on astronauts, space stations, and new exploration missions.

3.2. Mid-level content analysis

3.2.1. China aerospace achievement

In the analysis of reports on China's aerospace technology from Sin Chew Daily, it is observed that their coverage is relatively specific and objective. Sin Chew Daily's online platform features a plethora of articles on China's aerospace innovations, including topics such as "Chinese Private Enterprises Developing Hypersonic Aircraft," "China's Overhaul of Private Space Discussion Forums, Removing All Launch Data," and "Integration of Space Technology with Swimming Training." While the quantity of reports may not match those within China's domestic media landscape, they exhibit a comprehensive approach by encompassing various facets of China's cutting-edge aerospace technology. It is evident that Sin Chew Daily provides real-time coverage of China's aerospace technological advancements from multiple angles, thereby showcasing the nation's technical prowess in this field.

3.2.2. Emphasis on "women" in China aerospace industry

One noteworthy aspect to consider is the significant attention garnered by Wang Yaping, the female astronaut aboard the Chinese Shenzhou 13 satellite mission. She holds the distinction of being the first woman astronaut in Chinese history to complete a spacewalk. During that time, she attracted substantial national interest, with meticulous coverage within China. Furthermore, an investigation into reports on Wang Yaping published on the Sin Chew Daily website revealed that this media outlet also extensively covered her exploits with a series of consecutive articles.

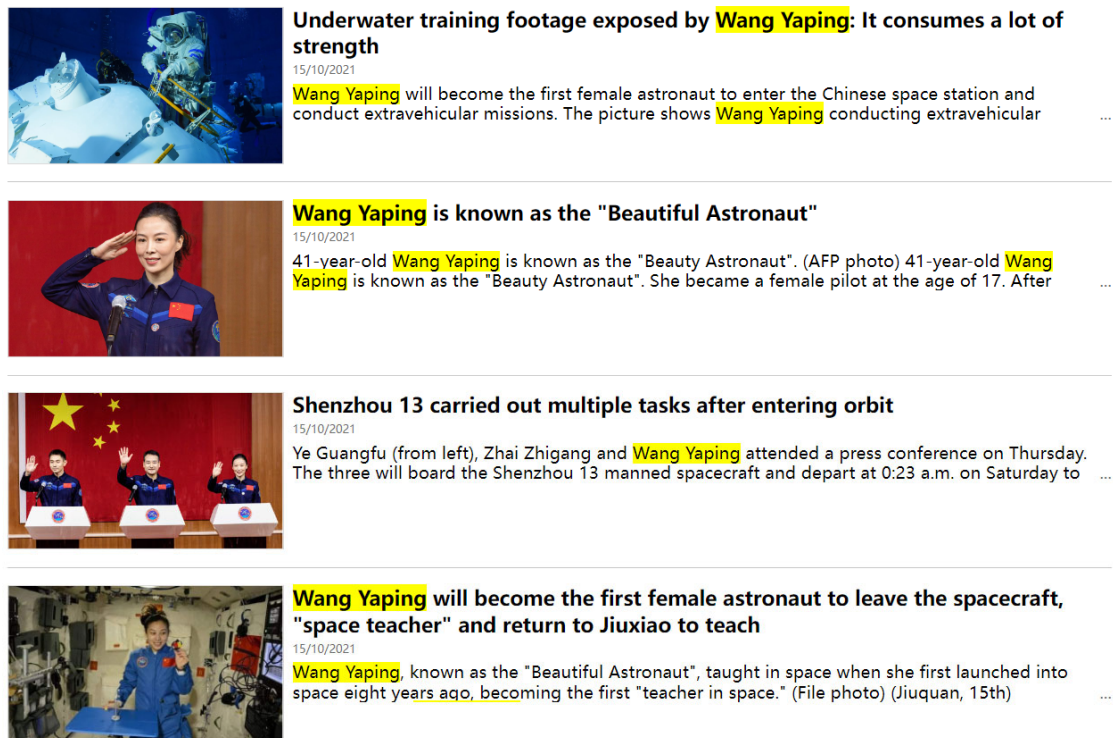


Figure 1. In the reports on Shenzhou 13 found on the Sin Chew Daily website, there are multiple consecutive articles featuring Wang Yaping.

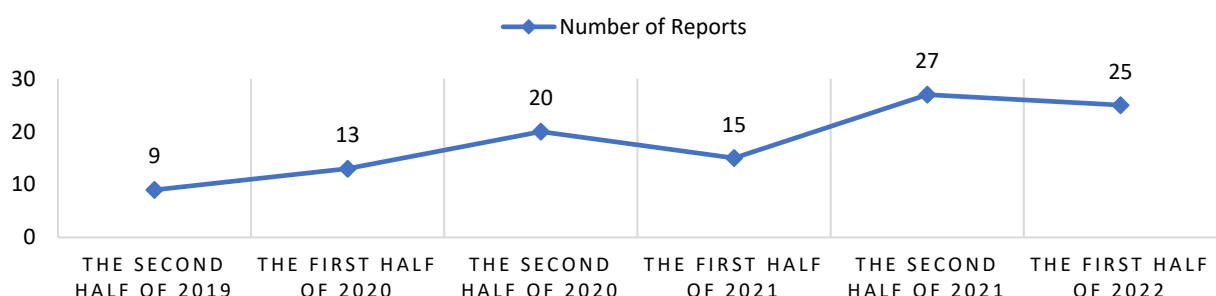
From this, it can be observed that this media outlet has shown a high level of interest in China's female astronauts in human spaceflight, indicating the significant influence that China's space technology and astronauts hold in Malaysia.

4. Analyzing China's Influence through Reports

4.1. China's international influence has expanded and its strength has increased

From reports in Sin Chew Daily, it is evident that the influence of China's aerospace technology is continuously on the rise. Based on the analysis of the frequency of reports from 2019 to 2022, there has been an overall increase in the number of articles related to Chinese aerospace on the Sin Chew Daily website. The number of reports has fluctuated at times, influenced by changes in the frequency of Chinese aerospace activities. However, on the whole, there has been a consistent upward trend. Notably, when comparing the cumulative reports from different years, it becomes apparent that there was a significant increase in the number of reports in 2021 compared to 2020.

Table 1. Number of Reports of China Aerospace on Sin Chew Daily



From this analysis, it is evident that China's aerospace endeavors are increasingly exerting a significant influence in Malaysia. In addition, an investigation has revealed an increase in the number of in-depth reports in 2021 compared to the previous two years. This indicates that Sin Chew Daily is allocating more resources and efforts towards covering China's aerospace technology. This, in turn, indirectly underscores China's substantial contributions and influence on the global aerospace sector through continuous research and innovation in the field of technology.

4.2. Aerospace enlighten the spirit and revitalize the Chinese nation

In the reports from Sin Chew Daily, it is evident that there are numerous mentions of the Chinese manned spaceflight spirit. The spirit of manned spaceflight encompasses profound philosophical connotations and distinct contemporary characteristics; it represents the inheritance and sublimation of the "Two Bombs, One Satellite" spirit and serves as an extension and expansion of the great national spirit. Vigorously promoting the spirit of manned spaceflight in the new era holds immense significance for accelerating the development of a spacefaring nation and forging new glories for China's aerospace endeavors[1]. It is precisely due to the enduring legacy of the spirit of manned spaceflight passed down through generations of the Chinese nation that China has been able to consistently demonstrate resolute innovation and achieve remarkable milestones in aerospace technology. Such a spirit conveys the call of the predecessors and continues to play a pivotal role in exerting substantial influence on China's aerospace technology in the modern era.

5. Reflections on National Aerospace and International Outreach

In reports from the international arena regarding China's space endeavors, it is evident that China has already assumed a significant role in the global aerospace landscape. The following section will provide some reflections and recommendations on how to further enhance the national space capabilities and augment their outreach.

5.1. Establishing the foundational framework for the discourse system of aerospace external communication

The concept of "Building a Community of Shared Future for Mankind" represents China's proposal for global governance. Grounded in this ideology, China has formulated the purpose of advancing its aerospace endeavors as follows: "To explore outer space, expand understanding of Earth and the universe; utilize outer space peacefully, promote human civilization and social progress, benefiting all of humanity; meet the needs of economic development, technological advancement, national security, and social progress; enhance the scientific and cultural literacy of the entire population; safeguard national interests; and strengthen comprehensive national power.[2]" It calls for the establishment of an international communication discourse system and narrative framework that align with the spirit and philosophy of China's aerospace, focusing on the intersection of scientific and narrative storytelling, technical terminology and everyday language, Chinese culture and multiculturalism. In the future, aerospace communication should explore the amalgamation of these elements within broader cultural, economic, and social contexts when selecting issues and setting agendas, thus creating a more expansive international communication context for the aerospace industry that addresses the common future of humanity.

5.2. Constructing a multimedia sharing system and implementing multi-platform advancement

On a global scale, discussions on aerospace topics exhibit a diversity of characteristics across three dimensions: communication scenarios, communication entities, and interaction modes.

Mainstream media, professional institutions, specialized media outlets, and professional bloggers are interconnected, forming the core circle of the most influential communication entities, with the influence of specialized communication entities steadily increasing. For instance, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the United States has established a news office and an independent social media team, along with appointing social media managers at each of its subordinate centers.

Presently, China's mainstream media has relatively matured in terms of topic planning, content production, and the operation of integrated media communication in the international dissemination of its aerospace endeavors. The development of news offices within aerospace professional institutions and the operation of overseas social media accounts have been initiated and have achieved significant communication outcomes in relaying information about aerospace missions. However, there is still room for improvement in the development of professional media outlets and professional bloggers as two categories of communication entities. The dissemination of aerospace information through media channels is an essential part, as Benedict Anderson believes: in modern society, newspapers and other media have increasingly become an important force for information transmission and cohesion of social relations, which can make people who do not know each other in a huge society form a consistent social identity, and play an important role in inspiring the masses and uniting social forces[3]. It is imperative to seize opportunities, adapt to the characteristics of the new era's society, leverage the advantages of self-media on the internet, and implement the construction of a promotional framework for China's aerospace endeavors.

5.3. Strengthening the top-level planning for the aerospace industry

In history, the extensive dissemination of space events such as the Soviet Union's inaugural manned spaceflight and the United States' manned moon landing played a pivotal role in shaping and projecting national images. Presently, an increasing number of nations consider the development of their space programs as a vital component of their overall national development strategy, thereby attaching great significance to space communication. Both the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) have actively incorporated the development of in-house media resources, strengthened collaborations with the media, engaged in facility operations and events, and provided diverse educational resources to support online and offline communication activities as central elements of their organizational missions.

For China's space program to flourish, it is imperative to establish a commensurate international reputation and recognition that aligns with its status as a leading space power. International communication in the realm of space endeavors is characterized by high technological barriers and wide-ranging domains. Therefore, it is essential for China to incorporate the capacity-building for international communication of its space program into its strategic development blueprint as a spacefaring nation. Starting from an overarching plan for the development of the space program, China should formulate a top-level design for international communication, which can serve as a guiding framework for relevant industry organizations and individuals. This framework should encompass long-term visions, phase-based objectives, focal areas, participating entities, and implementation pathways, among other considerations.

5.4. Establishing genuine aviation discourse authority

The international dissemination of Chinese space events faces dual challenges in terms of both international public opinion and misinformation. Not all foreign media outlets maintain an objective and neutral stance when reporting on Chinese space technology. For instance, in an article titled "She Is Breaking Glass Ceilings in Space, but Facing Sexism on Earth" in The New York Times, details from Chinese media reports about female astronauts preparing cosmetics

and sanitary products were distorted to portray them as manifestations of inherent gender discrimination within Chinese culture[4]. Some Western media outlets selectively misinterpret relevant information. This reinforces stereotypical impressions of China among foreign audiences, misguiding their understanding of the professionalism and values associated with China's space development. Consequently, it hinders the construction of China's narrative discourse authority in the field of space exploration.

In the complex and ever-changing landscape of global politics and economics, the authenticity of information constitutes the core foundation for constructing narrative discourse authority in space narratives. Currently, the international community finds itself amidst a profound transformation unseen in a century. The pursuit of peaceful development in the international arena necessitates China's contribution of its intellectual insights and national strength to the global community[5]. The authenticity of international communication regarding space events encompasses three dimensions: timeliness, objectivity, and accuracy. Timeliness involves effectively utilizing various communication channels to promptly release information during the preparation and execution of space missions, allowing facts to speak for themselves and ensuring that authentic information prevails over misinformation. Objectivity entails using scientific logic as the narrative basis for communication and developing new communication methods. Accuracy entails presenting facts accurately and with precise and appropriate expressions. This can be achieved through the use of user-profile-based information delivery systems, enabling precise matching and direct delivery of information to recipients in terms of information form and channel, reducing information dissemination hierarchies, and enhancing the accuracy of audience comprehension in cross-cultural communication.

6. Conclusion

As China increasingly emphasizes the development of aerospace technology and continues to make significant strides in the field of technological innovation, its influence in the aerospace sector has been steadily rising. Foreign media reports have highlighted the profound impact of China's aerospace and space technology. However, in reality, due to the ever-evolving international landscape, there are still some issues with news coverage related to aviation. Therefore, it is imperative that we acknowledge and address various challenges, persevere in our efforts, and proactively seek solutions. This approach will enable China's aerospace endeavors to achieve a more objective and positive global reputation, ultimately enhancing China's technological influence on the world stage.

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