

# Research on Self-Presentation and Interpersonal Interaction of the Elderly Group in Smart Media: A Case Study of Elderly Hosts in Himalaya App

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**Abstract**—Paul Levinson once said that "the use and popularization of each new media technology creates a new communicative configuration in its particular socio-cultural context." With the popularization and maturation of smart media technology, more and more people choose to live digitally in smart media and build their own identity. Nowadays, China's aging population is rising sharply, and according to the latest data from the National Bureau of Statistics 19.8% of the total population will be over 60 years old in 2022. The scale of the Internet aging user group is getting bigger and bigger, and the online interaction behavior of the elderly group has become an indispensable part of life. In this paper, we will try to explore the interpersonal interaction and self-presentation of elderly anchors on the audio medium, an analysis of the changing relationship between people and people and people and the medium, and propose age-appropriate optimization methods for this kind of communication medium.

**Keywords**— Self-presentation, interpersonal interaction, mobile audio, intelligent media.

## I. INTRODUCTION: THE RISE OF MOBILE AUDIO APPS IN THE ERA OF INTELLIGENT MEDIA

From the technical level, the development of technology mobile audio media provides the physical level of support. Intelligent media relies on artificial intelligence, cloud computing, big data, human-computer interaction and other technologies, and can accurately screen user needs to enhance the user's sense of presence, immersion and interaction. In the past, the application of 4G technology made online audio spread more rapidly, while the popularity of 5G technology also provides a broader development space for the mobile audio industry, and the application of big data, artificial intelligence and algorithms brings users a more personalized and intelligent listening experience; IoT technology makes audio scenes more diversified, covering such fields as smart speakers and smart wear; the increasing maturity of online payment technology also opens up The increasing maturity of online payment technology has also opened up the profitability channel of mobile audio knowledge payment. [1] Mobile audio uses smartphones, wearable devices, car stereos, and the Internet of Things as technical carriers to provide voice reception and other services for the general audience. Specific services can include radio dramas, comedy, novels, music and film radio, educational consulting, etc., which are now more widely involved. 2022, the market size of China's

sound economy industry also reached 381.66 billion, and the rise of the short video and live industry has also promoted the booming development of the sound industry. [2] According to Ai Media Consulting, China's online audio users have reached 690 million people, and the sound economy has a promising future. [3] In addition, according to CSM12 urban basic research data to see the mobile audio app as well as become one of the important entertainment interaction of the elderly users nowadays, 65 years old or older elderly group users increased by more than 35%, the growth of the elderly user group also further promote the development of mobile audio and age-appropriate transformation. [4]

On a cultural level, the rise of mobile audio media is a return to the auditory medium. The bias of visual media has allowed images, short videos and other media to continuously encroach on people's visual resources, and the excessive connection has also made people feel visually tired, people urgently need auditory media to free their eyes. McLuhan once said, "Medium and extension, extension and truncation." Since the advent of phonetic script, the visual medium has gradually dominated the world, and "complex tribal cultures have been transformed into simple visual forms", and people have eventually become "visual people". [5] The visual medium extends the range of human visualization, but also weakens the sensitivity of hearing. In contrast, the auditory medium is non-linear, directional, and more immersive than the visual. The Canadian composer Schaeffer called for a return to the auditory medium and introduced the concept of "soundscapes". Nowadays, the return of the auditory medium also allows people to achieve sensory balance again, and human subjectivity is emphasized. [6] Mobile audio as an auditory medium allows people to get rid of their sense of sight and touch, and enjoy the charm of sound through one-touch playback in life scenes such as driving, cooking and exercising. According to the 2022 China Audio Industry Product Insight Report, 80% of audiences are used to listening to audio content on their commute, 45% prefer to listen at home, followed by night and work study scenes. [7] Mobile audio is loved by the majority of audiences as an accompanying auditory medium.

From the policy level, along with China's entry into a new stage of development, cultural construction has also become the basic construction of national development, of which

sound content is also one of the important carriers of cultural dissemination. The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China further clarifies the basic strategy of cultural construction in the new era, and in 2021, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) issued the Notice on the Release of Digital Copyright Management Standard System for Audio and Video Content Distribution to promote the standardized development of the audio and video industry and create more high-quality innovative new works, and it can be seen that the state also vigorously promotes the cultural and creative service industries such as audio, online literature and publishing industry. The integrated development of the [8] The development of the mobile audio industry is highly concerned by the government and supported by national industrial policies at the macro policy level, and copyright protection and regulatory policies promote the output of high-quality content, so that the mobile audio industry will maintain encouragement and regulation in parallel and continue to develop smoothly in the future.

## II. THE DEVELOPMENT STATUS AND PLATFORM CHARACTERISTICS OF HIMALAYA APP

### 2.1 *The development status of Himalaya app*

Himalaya FM was founded in August 2012, and the Himalaya mobile app was officially launched in 2013. It is a professional and audio distribution platform, integrating the "PGC + UGC + social" model, and is also the fastest growing and largest mobile audio sharing platform in China. [9] Different from other audio applications, Himalaya FM is more like a paid audio version of Taobao, the platform content can meet the needs of different kinds of users, covering novels, comedy, parenting, business, finance and other fields, through a large number of audio content to attract a large number of user groups, it adheres to the "everything has a voice" concept, and promotes the "ear economy" featuring audio. It adheres to the concept of "everything has a voice" and promotes the "ear economy" featuring audio. According to the prospectus of Himalaya, from 2019 to 2022, the number of Himalaya monthly live users will grow from 140 million to 282 million, and the growth of monthly live users is relatively stable. [10] Yu Jianjun, founder and CEO of Himalaya, revealed at the 2022 annual meeting that Himalaya achieved a single quarterly profit of 10 million for the first time in the fourth quarter, which is also the first time that Himalaya has achieved profitability in the ten years since it started.

From the product level, Himalaya adopts "listen" as its logo in white and red, and the interactive design page is simple and clear. If you are a member of Himalaya, you can directly enter the member channel, which also highlights the profit model of Himalaya content payment. The top of the page contains 23 channels, involving live streaming, recommendations, novels, audio books, comic book reviews, emotional life and other pages, basically covering the range of user interest. In addition to listening to audio content, the Himalaya app also includes sub-functional categories such as social and part-time jobs. For example, in the "Follow" page, users can conduct a one-click lottery in the welfare square, using membership and book-listening content as prizes to

attract users to actively forward to participate in it. In "Circle", users can join different interest circles and expand their social network with other fans.

In addition to the above popular versions, the Himalaya app also actively carries out age-appropriate transformation and introduces an exclusive interface for the elderly groups. For the elderly who have difficulty using the Internet, Himalaya has bridged the digital divide through the "large character mode" of the text interface, offline audio libraries, and the removal of ad pop-up modules. Older users themselves are also taking the initiative to join the audio creation team. At present, Himalaya has more than 50,000 elderly anchors over 60 years old, the oldest of whom is over 100 years old, and 3,680 elderly people are also doing live streaming on the platform. For example, there is a program on Himalaya with more than 70,000 listeners, "The Seven Moms Walk freely in Forty-eight Countries in Five Years", whose creator Wen Xinla said: "Audio is more suitable for us elderly people to make records, the elderly do not have good eyesight, text records are not convenient, audio can be recorded as long as you open your mouth to speak, very convenient; 'say ' way can also make people very passionate, it is easy to resonate with the listener." Himalaya app will also continue to create a convenient and simple Internet environment for the elderly in the future, so that more elderly people can share the dividends of Internet development.

### 2.2 *Platform features of the Himalaya app*

#### 2.2.1 *Content level: UGC + PGC + PUGC diversification coexist*

In the era of new media, the rise of user identity has broken the monopoly of content production by the upper elite in the previous era of mass communication, and now everyone has a microphone, and they are eager to join the ranks of content creators and let the public hear their own voices. Himalaya provides a platform for these users to stimulate more content inspiration and produce more personalized audio works by encouraging users to produce UGC (User Generated Content). For example, among the elderly hosts, there is a retired Tianjin veteran police officer named "Jinmen Old Policeman Talking About Cases" who tells original criminal investigation stories; retired drama actor Wang Update also created his own podcast channel "Those Things in the Ming Dynasty" on Himalaya, which is also known as the most classic and authentic audio version of the book and has been played more than 471 million times. In addition to a large number of UGC podcast channels, Himalaya also introduces PGC (professionally produced content) to supplement them, such as the currently hot Mr. Luo Xiang speaking criminal law, Luo Fat's logical thinking, and comic sketches by well-known artists such as Guo Degang Yu Qian. In addition, Himalaya also allows high-quality user-produced content to be upgraded by applying for V-adding system, which gates its content, thus expanding more PUGC (professional user-produced content) and inspiring more general public anchors to embark on professional production mode. For example, Himalaya has created the "Second School for College Students" by inviting experts and scholars to open PUGC

courses such as Wang Defeng's Essential Course on Chinese and Western Thought and Yu Qiuyu's Essential Course on Chinese Culture to dig deeper into high-quality content and create personal IP images.

With the rising demand of user consumption, Himalaya has realized AIGC (AI production content) by introducing artificial intelligence and Internet of Things, which has also become an important direction for future audio development. [The AI sound effects are getting closer and closer to the real life voice, which solves the problem of difficult dubbing recording and also improves the listening effect. In the future, the Himalaya platform will also be a situation where UGC, PGC, PUGC and AIGC coexist in multiple ways, creating diversified audio content for users together.

#### *2.2.2 Profit level: multi-channel to broaden the audio profit model*

Himalaya has four main profit models under its diversified and existing ecological strategy. The first is precision advertising. Himalaya inserts audio ads accurately through big data, so that advertisers can precisely target users. However, at present, there are also users who are dissatisfied because of too much advertisement insertion, for which Himalaya is also trying to use audio native advertisement, creative advertisement and so on. The second is knowledge payment. Himalaya has a huge user scale and user stickiness, which also gives rise to a greater willingness to pay. As early as 2016, Himalaya opened an audio payment business such as the "123 Knowledge Carnival". Users can buy audiobooks or choose to subscribe to the section to listen to it with a membership discount. The third is the scale of IP operation, by using the celebrity effect to attract capital flow and information flow, opening up high-quality recommended columns, activities to attract fans. With not only stars such as Yang Lan and Guo Degang moving in, but also segmented head IPs in various fields, Himalaya has opened up a greater degree of profitable revenue through scaled IP operations. [12] The fourth is live rewarding, since 2015 Himalaya has also explored the business in the field of live short video, fans can establish a closer connection with creators by rewarding their favorite anchors or participating in paid live broadcasts, etc.

#### *2.2.3 Technical level: technology to stimulate new scenes of the future new applications*

Himalaya also helps users achieve a more convenient and richer creative experience by actively introducing smart media technologies. For example, cloud editing technology is an online audio editing tool launched by Himalaya for creators, which allows them to edit audio efficiently and simply on the web side and easily cut out professional effects, making audio creation more intelligent and humanized. "AI manuscript" can convert audio into text version with high accuracy through ASR (speech recognition) technology to achieve "listen and watch". The average accuracy rate is over 93% by 2022, and more than 600,000 people use the AI script every day. In addition, there are smart media technologies such as smart volume, smart cover, smart music, etc. that combine with user scenarios to provide personalized services and improve the quality of UGC creation.

### III. A STUDY ON THE USAGE NEEDS AND MOTIVATIONS OF ELDERLY ANCHORS IN THE HIMALAYA APP

#### *3.1 Basic use of the Himalaya app by older anchors*

In the Himalaya platform, there are more than 50,000 senior citizens over 60 years old who are anchors in the Himalaya, of which 44% are men and 56% are women. The oldest elderly anchor is 100 years old, and the retired doctor Liu Guanghan in Himalaya is "Dr. Liu Guanghan Helps You Treat Difficult Diseases", and the elderly anchor with the most fans is "Those Things in the Ming Dynasty" by the actor Wang Update. These silver-haired anchors also present a diverse cultural mirror image in the Internet space, and these silver-haired anchors both respond to the current trending hotspots and inevitably play against each other with the old stereotypes. Podcasts such as "Old Class Leader's Entrepreneurship" and "Insight" tell content about life experience and cater to the values of "old people have fun, learn and do something for themselves" in the context of an actively aging society; there are also programs such as "China's Big Criminal Case" and "Beijing Old Pay Talks about Workplace" that respond to young people's curiosity and doubts about suspenseful cases and workplace culture. The programs such as "China Criminal Investigation" and "Beijing Lao Fu Talks about Workplace" respond to the curiosity and doubts of young people about mysterious cases and workplace culture. [13] By creating their own programs, silver-haired anchors can further integrate their social resources and social networks to compensate for their original disadvantaged position.

From the point of view of program production, Himalaya senior anchors in addition to carry out to create personal characteristics column, but also cooperate with the platform to form PUGC knowledge payment type content. For example, David Wan, as a member of the senior anchors with more than 1,000 fans, not only recorded the audio biography "My Experience of Studying Abroad to the Extraordinary", but also participated in the podcast "Extraordinary Children Must Be Raised This Way" about the 12 core education items for children's lifelong development, which was played 40,000 times, with each episode lasting about 10-20 minutes. Economist Han Xiuyun also created specialized audio content "Han Xiuyun on Economy", which has more than 100,000 fans. The audio columns he participated in cooperation with, such as "Economics of Spring Festival", "China's Economy after the Epidemic" and "Tsinghua Han Xiuyun on Economy", were well received by the majority of users, with an average play count of more than 10,000. The increasingly large scale of Himalaya's elderly anchor group and the emergence of silver-haired anchors also highlight the current demand for self-expression and self-fulfillment among the elderly.

#### *3.2 Exploring the usage needs of elderly anchors for the Himalaya app*

##### *3.2.1 Companion Motivation: Mobile Audio to Create Accompaniment*

The elderly group faces more loneliness than the young group when they are removed from their work environment

and the overall rhythm of society. Lin Mingxian believes that the family and social environment and the interactions therein have the greatest impact on the formation of loneliness in the elderly. Most of the elderly anchors have retired from work and their children are not at home for many years, so the phenomenon of "empty nest elderly" is common. As an auditory medium, mobile audio is more participatory, communicative and intimate than visual media, which is alienating. [14] The Himalaya app, a medium with auditory communication properties, can focus more on the spiritual and emotional communication of individuals, and can not only communicate with the elderly with warm and soft voices, but also accompany them in a way of "continuous presence". With the speed of information dissemination due to technologies such as 5G and big data, fragmented information forms the entire picture of people's lives, and people's perceptions are gradually becoming scattered and fragmented. The sound can flow in these "fragmented gaps" and become a kind of companion medium, which can eliminate boredom and loneliness by pressing the play audio button in scenes such as walking or cooking.

Himalaya app has become the primary way for many elderly people to share their lives and spread their knowledge due to its strong accompaniment and easy learning and dissemination. At the same time, with the new technology developed by Himalaya, audio production has become a "foolproof" operation, and the simplicity has lowered the threshold for senior citizens to be anchors. For example, Jiang Jianfang, an elderly Himalaya anchor, has registered her own account "Cottonwood Tree in the Wind" and harvested a large number of analyses by playing "Shanghai Nursery Rhymes", with a cumulative total play count of over 3.3 million, and she also said that Himalaya has made her retirement life fuller and more fulfilling.

### *3.2.2 Material motivation: active digital labor to achieve re-employment*

The digital divide is a social inequality phenomenon that arises along with the Internet and new media technology, and in the current digital society has become a prominent feature of the current era, new technology provides convenient conditions for the elderly group to share the dividends of Internet development, and also provides new solutions to eliminate the digital divide and intergenerational differences among the elderly. According to the "2022 Research Report on Retirement Re-employment for Older People" released by MileagePlus, 68% of older people have a strong intention to re-employ after retirement, and 34.3% of them hope to increase their income and meet higher-level consumption needs through re-employment. [15] The Himalaya app also provides a way for the elderly group to achieve re-employment. In the elderly anchor group, 67-year-old independent scholar and author of "The General Theory of Material Evolution" Wang Dongyue became the highest-paid elderly anchor by speaking "Wang Dongyue's Chinese and Western Philosophy Enlightenment Class" in Himalaya, while Wang Update and Wang Liqun also ranked in the top three.

### *3.2.3 Motivation for Interaction: Bridging communication through the medium of sound*

According to Maslow's needs theory, the needs of the elderly can be classified as social needs, respect needs and self-actualization needs. Elderly anchors interact live with their fan base through digital interactions or discuss topics in interesting circles to increase the emotional experience of elderly anchors. Some studies also show that there is a significant positive relationship between the use of new media on interpersonal interactions of older adults, which broadens the information access of older groups and strengthens their subjective motivation. [16] The Himalaya app, represented by the circle of interactions formed by Funky Edge and the weak connection, creates conditions for older anchors to establish interpersonal relationships and their social identities are reshaped. Elderly anchors use voice as a medium to connect others with audio, and use the Internet to achieve the dissemination of knowledge in the field, allowing themselves to share the same frequency with the world.

## **IV. A STUDY OF ELDERLY ANCHORS' SELF-PRESENTATION IN THE HIMALAYA APP**

### *4.1 A study of self-presentation of older adults in the Himalaya app*

The study of self-presentation first originated in Mead's *Mind, Self and Society*, which argued that the formation of self-concept arises from dynamic social relationships. Based on this, Goffman also proposed the mimicry theory, which is also the theoretical starting point of self-presentation. People always play different roles on different "stages" to actively manage their impressions. The Himalaya app also provides a new self-presentation platform for elderly anchors, and "data-based performance" has become the daily existence of a netizen in the current Internet era. [17] Some foreign scholars found that people tend to define themselves in terms of their uniqueness, in terms of interpersonal relationships with others, and in terms of social groups. The elderly anchors' self-presentation in the Himalaya platform can also be reflected in three aspects both individual self, relational self and collective self. [18]

#### *4.1.1 The individual self: self-empowerment to enhance voice*

In the era of traditional mass communication, older people are often presented in a dependent image by borrowing others' words, but in the era of smart media, older people are passive objects. Empowered by technology, senior citizens can break away from the stereotypical image of "digitally disadvantaged" and actively present their individual self-image through self-construction. Elderly anchors use the Himalaya platform to show their real life and unique views, and join the fun interaction with young people in China, which breaks the stereotypical image of elderly people.

For example, in terms of headshot presentation, elderly anchors tend to choose real-life photos to show their living conditions, and beautify their appearance through shooting angles and composition. The advancement of selfie technology also enables senior anchors to enter into self-aesthetic state from the perspective of others to appreciate themselves and strengthen the sense of subject. For example, senior anchor Wen Xinla chooses a life photo with a duck-tongue cap and a punching suit to echo her program "Free

Travel to 86 Countries at the Age of 70", which reflects her individual appearance of loving life. For example, scholar Wang Dongyue set his nickname as "Mr. Dongyue" and economist Han Xiuyun chose "Tsinghua Han Xiuyun" to attract users with the halo of high education. Some elderly anchors also choose to cooperate with professional MCN agencies in order to get more listeners and attention, and further create individual self-image. [19]

#### *4.1.2 Relational self: role extension to show three-dimensional self*

Marx once said that man is the sum of all social relations, and the construction of individual self-imagination is always inseparable from the real social network. In the process of aging, elderly people also face the disconnection of work relationship and the replacement of family relationship. In this context, elderly anchors in smart media often choose to construct their self-image in social relationships. For example, in terms of screen name presentation, elderly anchors will choose to set nicknames in family relationship network, such as elderly anchor "Grandpa Xiaobai's 365 night stories"; or social relationship "Ai Baoliang official studio", "Hong Bing Professor", the nickname of relationship can also help fans to identify themselves quickly and close the distance with them. Older anchors have already accumulated certain social resources and social status in real life, and their role-playing in intelligent media platforms is also an extension and reconstruction of their real social roles. Also as Manuel Castor left-eye, in a broad historical perspective, the proliferation of networked logic essentially changes the operations and outcomes of production, experience, power and cultural processes. The individual image of the aging anchor changes in the network of relations also in the midst of interaction with others, a process that is not closed or open-ended.

#### *4.1.3 Collective self: group attributes strengthen personal IP image*

In addition to strengthening their individuality, senior anchors choose to join a group to make their self-presentation more in line with the mainstream values of the current aesthetic. For example, elderly anchors will choose two aspects of self-presentation, namely, occupation and aging group, to train themselves. Some elderly anchors will add professional labels to their screen names, for example, Feng Jiyu relies on his identity as a police officer to speak about "China's Greatest Criminal Investigation Case" on the Himalaya platform, which makes listeners understand this profession through real police stories, and also shows his professional pride and social identity, which is also a way for elderly anchors to expect to gain self-image recognition in the past collective. In addition, Lu Yaoxing, a retired physics teacher who has been teaching for 30 years, has created his own physics interest teaching method, and his appearance as a "teacher" IP image also strengthens the professionalism and reliability of his individual image. On the one hand, the elderly anchors' group affiliation strengthens their own convergence, which is in line with the society's perception of active aging group as wise, professional and rich in life experience; on the other hand, the elderly anchors strengthen

their individual traits in the collective relationship, which expands the IP communication effect.

### V. A STUDY OF INTERPERSONAL INTERACTIONS OF ELDERLY ANCHORS IN THE HIMALAYA APP

Auditory communication styles are the basis for building auditory communities. Sound as one also hooks up social interactions between different people. [20] On the Himalaya app, digital audio brings a new type of communication configuration with digital cultural space as a carrier. The elderly anchor group responds to fans' needs by uploading digital audio content to attract their continued attention and listening, while fans will comment and appreciate below the dynamics, and elderly anchors will interactively like and interact interpersonally after browsing the comments below. Whether it's suggestions or praise, the senior anchor will listen carefully and further correct his content to meet the fans' expectation. Underneath the updates of the elderly anchor Wang, there are often comments from elderly users, such as "I love listening to your audiobooks! As long as it's Mr. Wang's novels, I'll follow them all! Very good!" Excellent!". This shows that the elderly group uses audio as a new social tool to showcase themselves and interact with each other on the Himalaya platform.

Compared with the circle of friends in WeChat, which is connected by strong relationship, the Himalaya app is more of a relationship connection circle based on interesting edge. Older anchors no longer deal with each other because they are blood and geo communities, but will gather together because of their common interests. For example, Himalaya provides a circle for senior citizens. Compared to other social media circles that do not have a specific character center, Himalaya is organized by each senior citizen anchor to belong to their specific circle of interest. For example, Wang's circle "We become friends because of history" is more in line with the nature of the program itself, in which there are prehistoric civilization, Xia, Shang and Zhou, Warring States, Spring and Autumn, and other history sections for discussion. Older fans will also see other people's comments and likes, and older anchors will actively interact with their fans. In such a circle with common interests, the senior group and the senior anchors get together for specific audio columns and build up a whole new network of interpersonal relationships.

### VI. CONCLUSION

The elderly anchor group has taken on a new life on the current mobile audio platform. As a digitally disadvantaged group in the past, the elderly group had been sidelined and obstructed by the development of smart media. However, under the background of active aging, supported by technological benefits and social policies, elderly anchors actively embrace digital technology, transform their identities and become the emerging force of content creation in smart media, and gain the attention and praise of a large group of young people with their rich knowledge and life experience. In the Himalaya app middle-aged anchors build a new communication configuration in the digital audio medium, and audio content serves as an important clue to interact and

attract others' attention. Whether it is history and culture or current economic and educational knowledge, senior anchors build their own circle of interest by creating audio programs. The elderly anchors present themselves through their individual self, relationship bath and collective self, and are also a personal business card for socializing and interpersonal communication with others by relying on weak relationship circles. In the future, the Himalaya platform will actively develop intelligent audio technology and continuously optimize the age-appropriate interface to meet the needs of more elderly groups.

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