

Exploring China's Image through News Coverage of Sports Events from a Media Framing Perspective: Taking Hangzhou 2023 Asian Games as an Example*

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How to cite this paper: Ruan, X. L., & Zhao, C. (2024). Exploring China's Image through News Coverage of Sports Events from a Media Framing Perspective: Taking Hangzhou 2023 Asian Games as an Example. *Chinese Studies*, 13, 68-85.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/chnstd.2024.132006>

Received: February 27, 2024
Accepted: April 27, 2024
Published: April 30, 2024

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Abstract

With the aim of investigating China's image in relation to a sporting event, this study employs media frames as a technique of analysis to investigate how the Chinese media covered the Hangzhou Asian Games. Based on corpus analysis and content analysis, it was found that eight frames, such as the opening and closing ceremonies, event organization, sporting agenda, the spirit of the Asian Games, Hangzhou Asian Games in the eyes of different people, the host city, new technologies in the Hangzhou Asian Games, and environmental protection in the Hangzhou Asian Games were identified; and images of a country upholding sportsmanship and unity, a country with long history and profound culture, a country empowered by modernization and cutting-edge technologies, a country devoted to sustainability of humankind were established based on the reports. This study offers implications for media framing theory application and image construction strategies in a changing global landscape.

Keywords

Framing, Country Image, The Hangzhou Asian Games, Sports Event

1. Introduction

The 19th Hangzhou Asian Games concluded on Oct 8th, 2023, with a closing ceremony themed “Enduring Memories of Hangzhou” that emphasized the power and solidarity of sports and the Asian Games.

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Sports and politics have always been intertwined in a number of ways. [Bettine et al. \(2018\)](#) claim that sports have also been used as a means of social contestation or legitimation. With time, sports events have grown in size and profitability and are now considered a way to boost not only the economic and urban growth of the host country but also its international image. Over the past few decades, sports journalism has established its place in society as a successful information product. As a result, the media have become key actors in creating, broadcasting, and amplifying discourse during multifarious sports events ([Hasbani et al., 2021](#)).

A nation's identity is a multifaceted sociological construct that encompasses a variety of associations, memories, expectations, and other sentiments that are linked to its national image. The country's cultural confidence, cultural security, and potential for international cooperation and coordination are all directly impacted by how the country is viewed by the outside world ([Giddens, 2006](#)). These factors are all vital to the nation's fundamental interests. This makes it crucial for every nation and every region, especially the developing nations, to establish a national image development program ([Liu, 2023](#)).

Hosting sporting events, such as the Beijing Asian Games in 1990, the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, the Guangzhou Asian Games in 2010, the Beijing Winter Olympics in 2022, etc., was part of the Chinese government's plan to improve its country's image. A plethora of research has been carried out to determine the role that media framing plays in shaping China's image when it comes to mega-sports events. [Han \(2009\)](#) analyzed the news frame conflict between China's official press conferences and the New York Times' coverage of the Beijing Olympics; [Xia \(2010\)](#) prioritized the significance of communication strategies in building the city image of Guangzhou during the 2010 Asian Games; [Zeng et al. \(2011\)](#) noted that while news coverage did not directly improve China's national image, it did indirectly raise awareness of the country in the international media and clarify the image of the host nation; [Boykoff \(2022\)](#) identified and analyzed the dominant frames that US media outlets used when covering the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics; [Yang et al. \(2023\)](#) discovered that social media presents itself as a forum for more general public statements and gives ordinary people the ability to debate social issues in China. Meanwhile, the government's perspective is represented via official media; [Zhang \(2023\)](#) examined the self-shaping national image of China in the coverage of the two Olympic Games in China Daily; [Zhang et al. \(2023\)](#) conducted a topic analysis of six mainstream media reporting about Beijing Winter Olympics and offered practical suggestion on the content, strategies, and effect of communication. From the aforementioned studies, it can be seen that media coverage plays a pivotal role in shaping and enhancing a country's or a city's image through a sports event either regionally or internationally.

By means of sporting competition, the Asian Games seek to promote friendship and understanding amongst Asian nations. Athletes and spectators have the opportunity to interact and learn about different countries and cultures. As a

three-time Asian Games host country, China plays a pivotal role in shoring up peace, solidarity, and inclusiveness through the spirit of good sportsmanship. However, there are very limited studies conducted to approach China's identity and image in the case of the Asian Games through the way of media framing.

This study uses media frames as a method of analysis to explore how the Chinese media portrayed the Hangzhou Asian Games, with the goal of examining China's image in the context of a sporting event. Sports events are thought to be a useful tool for improving or changing the foreign perception of the host nation (Tasci et al., 2019). Several studies have demonstrated that the most popular media frames in each nation when it comes to covering international affairs typically correspond with the actions of each government abroad (Chen & Colapinto, 2010). Therefore, by analyzing articles published during the event in mainstream English portals in China, it is possible to identify the most common frames used by the international media during the Asian Games and thus the effects of the Hangzhou Asian Games on China's international image. In this regard, two research questions are proposed in this study: 1) What are the frames in the Hangzhou Asian Games media coverage? 2) What kind of country images are constructed by media framing?

2. Methods

To identify the frames and images constructed in the news coverage of the Hangzhou Asian Games by mainstream English portals in China, this study analyzed reports published in China Daily, which has grown to become the nation's leading English-language newspaper. With a combined print, online, and mobile readership of more than 350 million, it serves a vital role in telling the world about China, providing valuable insight into the world's second-largest economy.

With the aim of collecting ample data, we utilized the advanced search service provided by <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/>, a leading national website, which is China's most influential English-language multimedia platform. We used "Hangzhou Asian Games" as the keywords of the title and the date range was set between Sep. 20, 2023, to Oct. 15, 2023. Spanning seven days following the conclusion of the Games and three days before the opening ceremony. This time frame was chosen to include the entirety of the Games. The press is normally absent from the host nation in the months before major events and reports are usually more speculative than factual. Following the conclusion of such events, the host nation's media attention quickly wanes. Of the eight main sources of publication on the website, we selected China Daily, web news, and China Daily Global Edition, which is considered to cover various reports regarding the Hangzhou Asian Games. Duplication removal was set on work to conduct initial data cleaning. 56 reports about the Hangzhou Asian Games were retrieved from the website, and 45 valid reports finally entered the data set after the manual removal of network error cases, website forwarding cases, and non-written re-

ports, with a total word count of 20,565 words.

Following the retrieval of the articles, the first author conducted a first-round examination, concentrating on the article's title and first five lines. The frames were then created after the two authors talked about the subjects that came up most frequently. We conducted a further thorough review of the content using the previously established frames, and we classified every piece. While each article was classed in a single frame for the sake of this study, it is noteworthy that some articles may have contained multiple frames. Only the most common frame was taken into consideration when an article has two or more frames.

The act of choosing and emphasizing a number of components, definitions, patterns, and suggestions within journalistic production that result in a specific perception of a topic or event is known as media framing (Entman, 1993). Journalistic news presents a range of facts, perspectives, and assessments of incidents so that readers can construct their own meanings (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

Framing allows the text to be understood as a system of organized elements that can influence certain attitudes and behaviors of the audience. The study of frames can identify the use of certain words, metaphors, visual images, descriptions, examples, and outstanding elements such as titles, among others (Neuman et al., 1992).

It is noteworthy that frames are just one factor in the formation of public opinion. People encounter a wide range of press frames in their daily lives, which they then integrate with their prior knowledge and preconceived notions to form opinions about various topics (Bashir & Fedorova, 2015).

There are two ways to develop media framing: deductive framing and inductive framing (D'Angelo, 2017). Each approach has advantages and disadvantages. The inductive mode of analysis was employed for the purposes of this study. We created our own categories by analyzing the news in an effort to understand recurrent themes and how the media represents them.

3. Findings and Discussion

Of the retrieved 45 reports, 22 were from chinadaily.com.cn, 12 were forwarded from Xinhua, the official news agency of China, offering comprehensive coverage of China, the world, business, sports, culture, entertainment and more, 9 were from China Daily, a leading English-language newspaper in China that covers a wide range of topics, from politics and economy to culture and sports, and 2 were from China Daily Global, an International Edition covering North and South America, Europe, the Asia-Pacific and Africa (Figure 1).

An initial analysis of the self-established corpus was conducted by AntConc (version 4.1.4). From Table 1 and Figure 2, it can be noted that several categories of words frequently appeared in the corpus, such as places (Hangzhou, China, Zhejiang, province, city, stadium), people (athletes, Chinese, people, president, delegation), event (ceremony, opening, events, gold, medals, esports), technology (digital, future), and environment (green, carbon), which, to some extent, reveals the key information that the media coverage intended to convey.

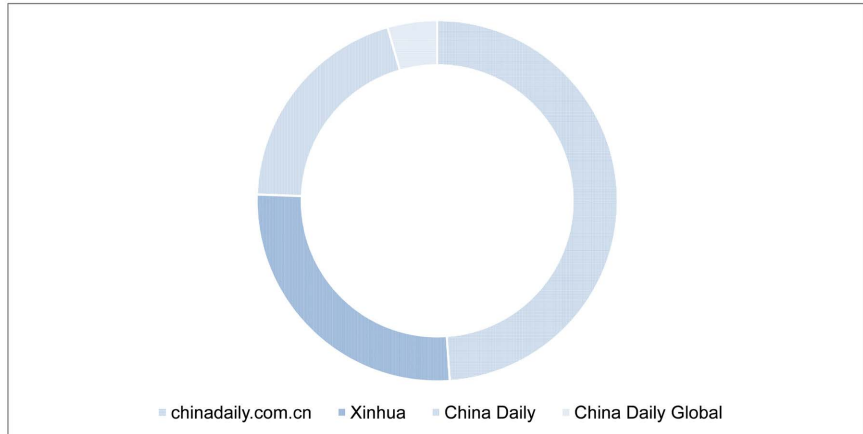


Figure 1. Source distribution of the 45 reports.

Table 1. Word frequency of the retrieved 45 reports.

Type	Rank	Freq
the	1	1582
and	2	662
of	3	633
in	4	538
games	5	425
to	6	406
Asian	7	377
Hangzhou	8	355
a	9	351
for	10	216
on	11	205
China	12	200
s	13	188
at	14	169
with	15	167
sports	16	161
is	17	150
by	18	126
as	19	125
ceremony	20	109
from	21	104
photo	22	101
th	23	99
Zhejiang	24	91
will	25	86
has	26	84
said	26	84

Continued

that	28	82
are	29	81
an	30	80
province	30	80
opening	32	79
Olympics	33	78
athletes	34	73
it	35	71
have	36	70
their	37	67
Chinese	38	65
we	38	65
was	40	62
people	41	59
also	42	57
world	42	57
daily	44	55
which	45	52
be	46	50
digital	47	49
event	47	49
city	49	48
cn	50	47
stadium	51	46
during	52	45
Sept	52	45
such	52	45
this	52	45
who	52	45
Saturday	57	44
all	58	43
President	58	43
esports	60	42
host	60	42
international	60	42
updated	60	42
Xinhua	60	42
Chinadaily	65	41
com	65	41
countries	65	41
I	65	41
events	69	40

Research question one: The frames in Hangzhou Asian Games media coverage

Based on the data analysis procedures described in the previous section, eight frames were developed: 1) the opening ceremony and the closing ceremony (9), 2) event organization (7), 3) sporting agenda (6), 4) the spirit of the Asian Games (5), 5) Hangzhou Asian Games in the eyes of different people (5), 6) the host city (5), 7) new technologies in the Hangzhou Asian Games (4), 8) environmental protection in the Hangzhou Asian Games (4).

The opening ceremony and the closing ceremony

The opening and closing ceremonies of a sports event attract lots of attention because, through music, song, dance, and fireworks, the opening and closing ceremonies invite people to discover the culture of the country in which the Games are taking place.

The following quotes feature the opening and closing ceremonies as “spectacular” “phenomenal” “dazzling” and “unprecedented”.

The Hangzhou Asian Games dazzled the world on Sept 23 with a spectacular opening ceremony. Raja Randhir Singh, acting president of the Olympic Council of Asia, praised the event, calling it “phenomenal” and “the best opening ceremony” he’s ever seen.

—Hangzhou Asian Games opening ceremony receives praise from Asian Olympic Council

Against the night sky, the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Center Stadium, located on the bank of the Qiantang River, was illuminated with dazzling lights.

—Xi Jinping attends the opening ceremony of 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou and declares Games open

The power of sport, the power of the Asian Games is to unite us all in life.and ensured that the Hangzhou Asian Games were an unprecedented success,” said the OCA acting president.

Following the extinguishing of the cauldron, the digital torchbearer stepped out and transformed into starlight filling up the night sky, passing on the flame of sports and the spirit of the Asian Games.

—Hangzhou Asian Games closes as “unprecedented success”

With futuristic yet classic ceremonies, China managed to fulfill its commitment to organize a worldwide sporting event that combines the country’s romantic and cultural aspects with sustainability and intelligence.

Event organization

As a China-hosted sports gala to the world, the organization work of Hangzhou Asian Games plays a pivotal role and catches lots of attention. The following quotes touch upon the digital command system in the opening ceremony, the arrival of delegations to the Asian Games Village, and the journalists getting ready for work in the Main Media Center.

He praised Hangzhou's digital command system for its role in making the feat possible. With a green light signaling their departure, spectators left the venue in an organized manner. Additionally, Hangzhou arranged special subway services near the stadium, further facilitating the swift exit of attendees.

—Hangzhou Asian Games opening ceremony receives praise from Asian Olympic Council

The Hangzhou Asian Games experienced a peak in single-day arrivals of delegations on Sept 21, with over 3,200 people from 35 countries and regions arriving at the Hangzhou International Airport in Xiaoshan to commence their Asian Games journey.

—Hangzhou Asian Games witness record single-day inbound delegations

Journalists from all over the world have flocked to the city to cover the continental sports gala.

—Meet with journalists at the Hangzhou Asian Games

The Asian Games showcased China's organizational capabilities and succeeded in organizing the event in a smart, safe, and sustainable way.

Sporting agenda

In the coverage of sporting agenda, the reports have prioritized coverage of types of sport, such as shooting, rowing competition, tennis, football, and e-sports in particular, which has its debut as an official medal event at the Asian Games.

Indian sharpshooter Sift Kaur Samra clinched the gold medal in the women's 50m rifle three positions at the Hangzhou Asian Games with record-breaking 469.6 points, while Chinese markswoman Zhang Qiongyue grabbed the silver.

—Indian Samra edged world champion Zhang to take women's 50m rifle three positions at Hangzhou Asian Games

The Hangzhou Asian Games rowing competition starts on September 20 at the Fuyang Water Sports Center and China expects to win what could be the first gold medal of the Games. China's rowing team is dominant in Asia, having taken nine golds and one silver at the last Asian Games in 2018.

—Rowing preview: China expects opening gold at Hangzhou Asian Games

China's Wu Yibing revealed his goal of winning both singles and doubles tennis golds at the Hangzhou Asian Games after completing the torch relay here on Wednesday.

—Wu eyes two tennis golds at the Hangzhou Asian Games

Following a series of lackluster performances, China's football sees a prime opportunity at the Hangzhou Asian Games to start anew.

—Challenge and glory ahead for China at Hangzhou Asian Games

On a recent special episode of the 19th Asian Games Youth Power, Gen Z

participants from China, Japan, and South Korea discussed their most anticipated events, Hangzhou's culinary delights, and their expectations for the 19th Asian Games. The young guests eagerly anticipate sports like Golf, Football, Esports, and Table Tennis.

—Anticipation Builds for the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou: A Gen Z Perspective

A milestone is being marked with the inclusion of esports as an official medal event at the Asian Games, currently underway in Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang province. The eyes of players from across Asia are firmly focused on the Games, with many of them viewing this inclusion as the latest boost to esports development.

—Esports marks milestone at Asian games in Hangzhou

Of these types of sport, some are Chinese aesthetes' traditional strengths, some are with people's expectations to see breakthroughs, and some are sporting events welcomed by young people, especially Generation Z.

The spirit of the Asian Games

The attitude of cooperation and solidarity that characterizes the area can be strengthened by the ongoing Asian Games. The retrieved reports not only emphasized peace, unity, and friendship as the enduring spirit of sporting events but also showed inclusiveness through "heart to heart" communication and exchanges.

That's precisely what the official slogan, Heart to Heart, @Future, conveys. It echoes the past while heralding the future, and steering the participating countries toward warm, friendly relationships.

—Experts' views on Hangzhou Asian Games

Here are the highlights of his (President Xi's) remarks: China will deliver a great event that is distinctly Chinese, uniquely Asian, and spectacular. The Asian Games carries Asian people's aspirations for peace, solidarity, and inclusiveness. Asia has maintained overall stability and rapid and sustained economic growth over the past decades. The Asian Games has been a witness, participant, and contributor of this Asian Miracle.

—Xi addresses welcoming banquet of the Hangzhou Asian Games opening ceremony

As the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou approaches, Syria's delegation is preparing for a historic participation, carrying a message of love, peace, and friendly competition to the people of Asia and the world.

—Syrian athletes carry message of peace, and hope at Hangzhou Asian Games

The 19th Asian Games commenced on Saturday night in Hangzhou, East China's Zhejiang province, presenting not just another China-hosted sports gala to the world, but also an opportunity for Asian countries to shore up peace, solidarity, and inclusiveness through the spirit of good sportsman-

ship.

—Hangzhou Games showcase for the Asian Spirit: China Daily editorial
Singh elaborated his understanding of the official slogan “Heart to Heart,
@Future”, describing it as a perfect slogan that means everything by itself.
“It carries the message for the youth and the world that we look for peace
and harmony through sports. So in that manner, you can’t get a better slo-
gan than having it as heart to heart,”

—Asian Games open new chapter in Hangzhou

The Hangzhou Games are important not only because they showcase the positive effects of sports on friendship, cooperation, and unity among people from different origins and cultures, but also because they offer a platform for expanding understanding and mutual learning across different civilizations.

The Hangzhou Asian Games in the eyes of different people

Discovering how the Asian Games have been approached by different people is a significant perspective to evaluate the game.

They praised China’s hard work, infrastructure, and their organization. They all show their excitement and confidence in the success of the event, with remarks highlighting the dream-like experience of visiting China for this occasion.

—International sports officials: Hangzhou Asian games well-organized

IOC President Thomas Bach said on Saturday he is looking forward to the Asian Games, which will set new standards in many different respects.

“We are seeing a great number of new sports. We’ll see an organization that is making use of all the digital expertise..... “We can look forward to the Games, which will be organized in a very sustainable way with the reduction of the carbon footprint with extensive waste management system.....”

—IOC chief: Hangzhou Asian Games will set new standards

The 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou are fast approaching, generating excitement for various sports events. On a recent special episode of the 19th Asian Games Youth Power, Gen Z participants from China, Japan, and South Korea discussed their most anticipated events, Hangzhou’s culinary delights, and their expectations for the 19th Asian Games. The young guests eagerly anticipate sports like Golf, Football, Esports, and Table Tennis.

—Anticipation Builds for the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou: A Gen Z
Perspective

The Hangzhou Asian Games continues China’s focus on warm, friendly international relations. It echoes the past while heralding the future, steering the participating countries toward warm, friendly relationships, said Sunil Kumar, an Indian businessman doing business in China who was presented in Hangzhou yesterday to cheer Indian players.

—Chinese diplomats congratulate India for best performances at
Hangzhou Asian Games

To conclude, the Hangzhou Asian Games have been commented as “success” “dream-like” “with confidence and excitement” “heralding the future” with its “hard work, infrastructure, organization” “digital expertise” and its “sustainable way of carbon reduction”.

The host city

A sports event also promotes the image of the host city and stimulates its development. During the event, the spotlight has been focused on Hangzhou, a city in east China. Hangzhou was described as “with urban development” “beloved” “beautiful” and boomed with the “digital economy”.

Apart from being a green Asian Games, it will also showcase China’s modernization as well as traditional Chinese culture. Hangzhou has also made plans to integrate the infrastructure for the Asiad with its urban development.

—Experts’ views on Hangzhou Asian Games

The 19th Asian Games are a grand celebration of sportsmanship and friendship and, more important, will give the visiting athletes a chance to experience Hangzhou, one of China’s most beloved and beautiful cities.

—Experts’ views on Hangzhou Asian Games

The licensed retail stores of the 19th Asian Games have become hot destinations for citizens and tourists in Hangzhou of Zhejiang province. The licensed products such as toys of mascots, souvenir medals, backpacks, umbrellas, fans, and cups with Chinese cultural characteristics are adored by people.

—19th Asian Games souvenirs enchant Hangzhou

This year, Zhejiang has further promoted digital industrialization and industrial digitalization, nurturing 40 digital companies, each with revenues exceeding 10 billion yuan (\$1.37 billion) and establishing 150 new smart factories and digital workshops, according to figures from the provincial government. An increase of 10 percent in the value added of core industries in the digital economy is expected this year.

—International media visit Zhejiang during the Asian Games

A large-scale sports event like Asiad is likely to promote the image of the host city and stimulate its development. As such, the Asian Games are likely to boost Hangzhou’s development, helping it become a full-fledged modern metropolis.

New technologies in the Hangzhou Asian Games

Hangzhou Asian Games has made “smart” one of its guiding concepts, and this is evident in every aspect of the planning and implementation, such as “smart control systems” “smart viewing” “fully automated cleaning machines” “a 5G-A 10-gigabit network” “optimized payment services”.

“Many high-tech applications have been installed to deliver a smart and safe Games,” said Chen, who is also executive secretary-general of the Hangzhou Asian Games Organizing Committee.

Chen said, adding that smart control systems, enabled by 5G technology, internet of things, big data, and artificial intelligence, among other technologies, have been installed at major competition venues. “Smart viewing” is on offer for those keen on having an immersive experience of the Games without buying a ticket, according to spokesman Mao Genhong, who is also deputy secretary-general of the Hangzhou Asian Games Organizing Committee. “.....Advanced technology at the Hangzhou Asian Games features mosquito eradication bots and fully automated cleaning machines. Hangzhou Asian Games is the first cashless Games, with Hangzhou being a cashless city.

—Hangzhou ready to host smart, safe Asian Games

According to the organizing committee of the Hangzhou Asian Games, this technology has been deployed in intelligent connected vehicles and smart venue operations. The first demonstration of a 5G-A 10-gigabit network has been installed along the route connecting the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Center and the Asian Games Village, it said.

—Hangzhou prepared for intelligent Asian Games

China, the host of the 19th Asian Games held from Sept 23 to Oct 8 in Hangzhou, the capital of East China’s Zhejiang province, has been offering optimized payment services for overseas tourists watching the games.

—Overseas users enjoy improved Chinese payment services during
Hangzhou Asian Games

Hangzhou Asian Games succeeded in interpreting the concept of “intelligence” in its grand opening and closing ceremonies, smart services provided in the Asian Games villages, as well as the digital command system for its role in making the feat possible. With the integration of many intelligent technologies, including artificial intelligence, the Internet of things, and 5G, it was the first “Smart Asian Games”.

Environmental protection in the Hangzhou Asian Games

A trend toward greener and more sustainable major event operations is evident in the Hangzhou Asian Games, including the carbon-zero methanol, no traditional fireworks performance in the opening ceremony, photovoltaic energy used in the venues, and the bike sharing system throughout the city.

The fuel used in the primary cauldron tower was carbon-zero methanol. This is the first time that the methanol fuel has been used in the history of the Asian Games.

—Geely provides methanol fuel for Hangzhou Asian Games

To stage a green Asian Games in Hangzhou, the opening ceremony of the games, which will be staged on Sept 23, will feature no traditional fireworks performance.

—No fireworks at Hangzhou Asian Games opening ceremony

From venue designing and entry process to audience experiences, advanced digital technologies, intelligent applications, and green and sustain-

able design all mark new achievements in digital China.

—Green, smart tech energizes Asian Games in Hangzhou

Emissions curbed Green energy sources are being used at all the Asian Games competition venues. Some of the green electricity used at the venues is photovoltaic energy transmitted from areas such as the Qaidam Basin in Qinghai province, the Jiayu Pass in Gansu province, and the Loess Plateau in north-central China.

—Hangzhou goes all out to host green Asian Games

The eco-friendly approach of the Hangzhou Asian Games includes the inauguration of just 12 new venues out of the 56 being used. The others have all been renovated or repurposed for the event.

Hangzhou boasts the world's largest bike sharing system, with more than 75,000 bicycles available for public use around the city.

—Hangzhou ready to host smart, safe Asian Games

One remarkable example of Hangzhou's green development is a swimming pool that conserves precious resources and does not require water changes for a whole year.

—Anticipation Builds for the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou: A Gen Z Perspective

The Hangzhou Asian Games have become the first Asian Games to achieve carbon neutrality. China's efforts through the Asian Games to promote global climate change collaboration are commendable and deserve recognition, especially in light of the current geopolitical difficulties.

It can be concluded that during the Asian Games, the news coverage centered around the host city, the specific events of the game, the spirit of the game, and the "green" and "smart" aspects of the game, all of which contributes to establishing China's images in the multisport event.

Research question two: China's images constructed in Hangzhou Asian Games media framing

Based on data analysis and interpretation of the first research question, it can be found that the coverage of China's flagship media intends to construct China's image as a country upholding sportsmanship and unity, a country with a long history and profound culture, a country empowered by modernization and cutting-edge technologies, a country devoted to the sustainability of humankind.

A country upholding sportsmanship and unity

The hopes for inclusiveness, unity, and peace among Asians are embodied in the Asian Games. Over the past few decades, Asia has continued to see rapid and steady economic expansion. An observer, participant, and contributor to this Asian miracle has been the Asian Games. As President Xi Jinping mentioned in the welcoming banquet of the Hangzhou Asian Games, China urged initiatives to use sports to spread peace and established Asia as a global peace anchor.

The spirit of sportsmanship is at the basis of China's inclusive and open values, and Asia's unity should be valued in resisting external disruptions. This oc-

casation provides a chance for Asian countries to demonstrate cohesion, resilience, and resolve in the face of outside challenges as outside actors escalate geopolitical tensions.

China's role in world affairs is bound to increase, given its growing weight and relevance due to its population size, its economic size, its military capabilities, and its technological advances. Without a question, one of the biggest real-time dramas of the twenty-first century will be the development of China. East Asia is already changing due to China's remarkable economic expansion and active diplomacy, and in the coming decades, Chinese power and influence will only rise.

A country with a long history and rich culture

During the grand event, Hangzhou managed to showcase China's rich history and profound culture to the world, for instance, the creative performances in the opening ceremony managed to highlight regional features such as the autumn equinox, one of China's 24 solar periods that commemorates the fall harvest, the rising tidal that has observed Hangzhou's historical transformations, and the roughly 5000-year-old Liangzhu culture.

As was put forward by [Guitierrez and Bettine \(2022\)](#), propagating the nation's cultural attributes is a key objective when organizing mega-sports events, since it can boost tourism earnings and other exports of cultural goods. President Xi pointed out in a speech that telling China's stories well and presenting a true, multidimensional, and panoramic view of China is a key task in building up China's international communication capacity.

History and culture are always the wellspring for every country to rise to meet challenges, and to shape the moments of transition. We should follow the spirit of humility, inclusivity, and learning from others based on the profound and enduring values of Chinese culture. We should also use a straightforward, grounded narrative style to communicate events in China and render unbiased assessments of events occurring outside of China.

A country empowered by cutting-edge technologies

China's increasing prowess in science, technology, and innovation can be partially attributed to "a grand experiment" initiated 15 years ago with the publication of the National Medium and Long-Term Plan for the Development of Science and Technology (2006-2020) (MLP) by the Chinese government. MLP introduced the domestic innovation strategy and established objectives to transform China into a nation that values innovation.

China was once the most technologically advanced civilization in the world. But China's technological development stalled, stagnated, and eventually collapsed and its early technological leadership did not set the country on a modernization path. Through unyielding efforts made by generations of Chinese people, China has achieved major scientific and technological breakthroughs in multifarious fields.

China will step up efforts to develop future industries and cutting-edge technologies, in order to offer greater vitality for global industrial development and

economic growth.

A country devoted to the sustainability of humankind

Since ancient times, the Chinese people have sought to establish a harmonious relationship with nature, namely “unity of nature and man” as was mentioned in Taoist thoughts. Nowadays, ecological advancement and conservation have been written into China’s Constitution and incorporated into China’s overall plan for building socialism with Chinese characteristics.

According to President Xi Jinping, Mountains and rivers green are mountains of silver and gold, which calls for a new approach to climate governance that highlights green recovery. China has prioritized environmental protection and made significant advancements in international governance, sustainable development, and resource conservation.

The country will continue to work toward low-carbon and green development, as well as to support international environmental cooperation as it has showcased in the green Asiad.

To conclude, sports event involvement was identified as a significant factor affecting one’s perceived destination image of the host country and the valence of image change after watching the sporting events, therefore, the public gains a great deal of knowledge and understanding of the host nation from the telecasts and productions that are displayed on a regular basis, either during pre- and post-match coverage or in news media reports (Schallhorn, 2019; Kim et al., 2019).

4. Limitations and Future Research

This study sets out to explore the media framing and country images in news coverage of the Hangzhou 2023 Asian Games by means of corpus analysis and content analysis. Through the demonstration of mainframes of the opening and closing ceremonies, the spirit of the Asian Games, the sporting event, green and smart aspects of the Asian Games, etc., the mainstream media in China intends to construct and disseminate an image of a vibrant and influential power in the region and the shared community of humankind.

Despite its endeavors to apply framing theory in the coverage of sporting events (the Asian Games in particular) and its exploration of self-constructed country images through these frames, this study inevitably has its limitations, for example, reports were retrieved through the internal search engine of a flagship English language portal in China, which cannot cover the reports from other media both domestically and internationally. In addition, more comparative analyses of frames and country images are expected to be conducted between the Hangzhou Asian Games and other large-scale sporting events held not only in other cities of China but also in major cities in other countries.

Funding Information

This manuscript was published with financial support from Project of Philoso-

phy and Social Sciences Planning of Anhui province (NO. AHSKQ2020D188).

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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