

The Strategy Of Shikumen Architectural Symbols In Contemporary Cultural Communication

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Abstract: This study examines cultural communication strategies for Shikumen architecture, focusing on cultural retention and evolving communication patterns. Using literature review and surveys, it explores whether Shikumen's spatial layout and design elements convey historical, social, and lifestyle meanings, how its symbolic communication varies across media and audiences, and how to develop effective strategies. Findings indicate that Shikumen, as a blend of Chinese and Western cultures, reflects social class identities through its spatial and decorative features. For many Shanghainese, it carries strong nostalgic value. Beyond sensory appeal, Shikumen scenes evoke deep emotional experiences, aiding research on cultural transmission in physical spaces and the impact of architectural forms on urban community behavior and cohesion.

Keywords: Shikumen architecture, Shanghai culture communication, spatial narrative, communication strategy, Symbol encoding and decoding

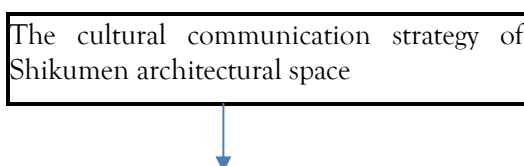
1. INTRODUCTION

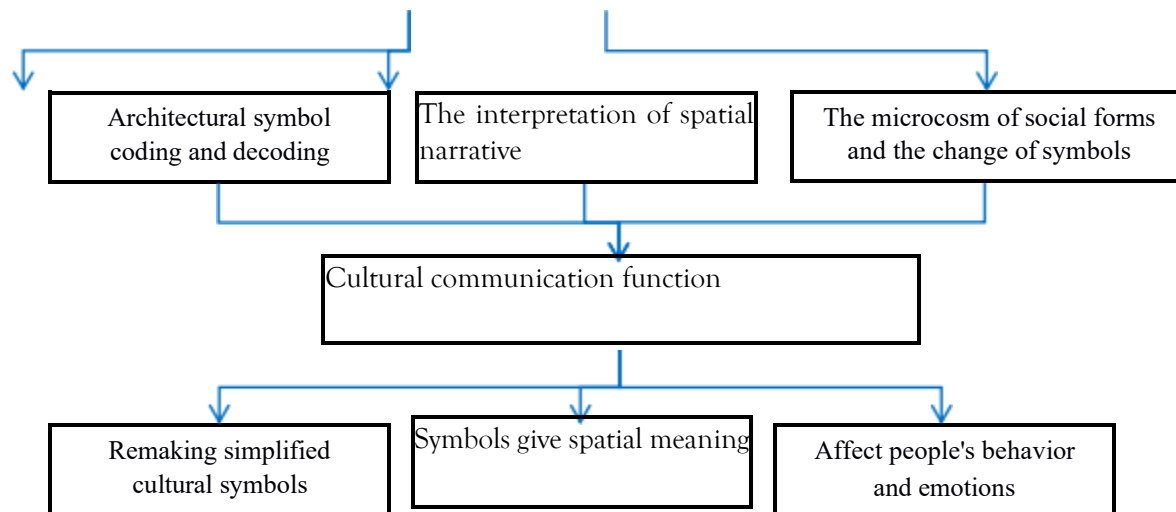
Shikumen architecture in Shanghai, as a typical representative of Shanghai culture, plays an important role in the spread of urban culture with its unique spatial narrative. With the continuous progress of new media, the profound historical and cultural heritage carried by Shikumen architecture is facing the risk of being simplified and distorted. This paper takes Shikumen architectural space narrative as the starting point, deeply discusses the predicament of contemporary cultural communication, and analyzes the impact of architectural scene, a real spatial communication medium, on the cultural fast food and the authenticity crisis of symbols. The research questions of this article are: 1. What are the semiotic meanings of the elements in Shikumen architecture? 2. Does this semiotic meaning differ in different scenes and media? 3. How to propose effective communication strategies based on these characteristics? This paper will demonstrate from the following aspects: 1. To analyze the cross-cultural symbolic meanings in Shikumen buildings through documentary data. To explain the tendency of simplification of cultural symbols in modern media to simplify the spatial narrative of Shikumen buildings, and to analyze the internal reasons why the cultural connotation of Shikumen buildings has been diluted. 2. To analyze modern people's understanding of the connotation and characteristics of Shikumen architectural space narrative, the cultural symbols, historical memory and lifestyle contained in Shikumen architectural space, and the communication strategies for conveying information through spatial narrative through questionnaire survey and Survey questionnaire. 3. To summarize the changes in the symbolic meaning of Shikumen architecture in modern society, review the cultural value of Shikumen architecture spatial narrative, make full use of the strategy and value of spatial narrative in contemporary cultural communication, and better protect and inherit this valuable cultural heritage in contemporary new communication media.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework





This paper first discusses the construction and evolution of Shikumen architectural spatial narrative: how Shikumen architectural spatial narrative is formed, and the role of Shikumen architectural spatial form in residents' identity and information transmission through cultural symbols and spatial narrative is formed. Secondly, with the rise of new media such as the Internet, there is a tendency to simplify the expression of words and other image symbols. In this paper, it is analyzed that modern media transform text or image into a consumer symbol by means of symbol simplification and commercialization, which leads to the crisis of the authenticity of symbols. When people start to get used to this kind of simplified thinking, they are more inclined to choose those simple and entertaining symbols, which further triggers the spread of this simplified culture. In fact, not only Shikumen, but also traditional architectural Spaces in many areas are facing the dilution and distortion of the cultural connotation of the narrative, and the change of the public's cognition of architecture. Finally, through the narration of Shikumen architecture's physical space, the author puts forward the cultural communication strategy of Shikumen architecture space's influence on human behavior and social relations and the symbolic meaning it carries.

Hypothesis 1: The spatial layout and decorative elements of Shikumen architecture can evoke the resonance of Shanghai 's history and culture.

Hypothesis 2: The media formed by Shikumen architectural space can have an impact on human behavior and emotion.

Architectural space itself is a symbol that bears the symbol of urban culture, customs and history. This symbol, which actually exists and is difficult to be reshaped through virtual media, can map the miniature of social form and its own cultural expression, so as to achieve the effect of cultural transmission. This feature can be used to reshape the simplified cultural symbols and re-endow the space with cultural symbol meaning, thus affecting people's behavior and emotion.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2.1 Shikumen Architecture

Shikumen architecture, as a product of modern Shanghai's modernization process, integrates eastern culture and Western architectural technology respectively, and its evolution reflects the historical changes and continuous integration of culture in Shanghai. Shikumen architecture is marked by its combination of western and central features. For example, some of the gables are in the form of shouldered Baroque Guanyin Tui, a combination of Western Baroque and Eastern Guanyin Tui characteristics (Lou & Xue, 2004); The fusion of the sloping roofs and patios of traditional Jiangnan dwellings and the masonry structures and geometric lines of Western townhouses challenges the binary opposition between tradition and modernity, East and West, and becomes a material witness to interculturality.(Ruan, Zhang, & Zhang, 2014).

2.2.2 Architectural space scene as a medium of communication

Architectural space is not just a physical place, but deeply embedded in social life, and has a profound impact on human behavior, relationships and social structures (Silver & Clark, 2016). Space is constantly

constructed and endowed with meaning through social interaction and cultural practice. Space itself is a medium of communication, and the layout of space will affect people's behavior mode, psychological state and social mode. Shikumen alleys once accommodated all kinds of people (merchants, literati, workers, refugees), and were a micro-society with mixed classes. This multiplicity of space makes it a "prism" for observing the social transformation of modern Shanghai. Space is also a manifestation of power relations, and different spaces are allocated different resources and power (Hoppál, 2020). The "door" and "lane" of Shikumen constitute a unique residential form, which is both the boundary of the private sphere (door) and the link of public communication (lane).

2.2.3 Spatial language and symbolic expression

Shikumen architecture is not only a physical space, but also a complex symbol system (Peirce, 2017). The carvings on the door lintels, the materials of the bricks and tiles, and the names of the lanes (such as "Bugaoli" and "Shangxianfang") are not only physical symbols, but also carriers of collective memory. This symbol system is passed down from generation to generation and has become the core medium for citizens to construct their identity as "Shanghainese". However, "the language sign is arbitrary, that is, there is no necessary connection between the language sign and the thing it refers to." (Saussure, 1980) Saussure's view is of great significance for understanding the cultural construction of symbols. Therefore, people from different cultural backgrounds interpret the same space differently. Compared with language symbols, spatial symbols are more complex, containing not only visual information, but also multi-sensory information such as hearing and touch, and they continue to evolve with the changes in social culture. This article uses SBE visual perception simulation to understand different people's understanding of spatial symbols.

2.2.4 Simplification of symbolic meaning

McLuhan's idea that "the medium is the message" emphasizes the power of the medium itself to shape and change the human experience. He believes that media is not only a tool to convey information, but also a part of the environment, which shapes the way we think, the way we perceive and the structure of society (McLuhan, 2011). The symbol system of Shikumen buildings carries multiple meanings: family ethics, neighborhood relations, the integration of Chinese and Western cultures, etc. However, the simplification of modern Shikumen symbols often only retains its superficial meaning as a "symbol of Shanghai culture", while ignoring its deep cultural connotations. According to Baudrillard's theory of "symbolic simulation", the meaning of symbols becomes uncertain and can even be manipulated at will. In the world of symbolic simulation, the boundary between the real and the false becomes blurred (Baudrillard, 2014). In many social media, the symbolic meaning of architectural space is simplified into a simple "Internet celebrity", and people no longer think deeply about the real cultural connotation of architectural space symbols.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Qualitative research

Literature review: Consult relevant historical documents and architectural drawings, decode the Shikumen architectural space as a symbol, and interpret its historical and cultural information, social values and residents' lifestyle. This study analyzes the reporting and publicity of Shikumen architecture by traditional media and new media, as well as the form of architecture itself as a communication medium, and understands the roles and functions of different media in communication.

3.2 Quantitative research

3.2.1 Semantic difference method

Participants chose a point between a number of adjective pairs to indicate their opinion of Shikumen architecture. Through the statistical analysis of these data, we can get the participants' overall evaluation of Shikumen architecture and the differences in different dimensions.

3.2.2 Survey questionnaire

a. Comparison of spatial layout and function: Comparing the spatial division difference between traditional Shikumen and imitation Shikumen.

b. Contrast of architectural elements: Compare the decorative styles of the two Shikumen, such as doors and Windows, walls, furniture, etc.

c. Observation of interactive behavior: Observe the ways of communication, collaboration and conflict between people in different Shikumen Spaces.

Through Survey questionnaire, the differences in spatial communication between traditional Shikumen and commercial imitation Shikumen were compared.

3.2.3 Sample selection

Shikumen Architecture: a. Landmark commercial Shikumen buildings after renovation: Xintiandi, Tianzifang and Baiyulan Square in Huangpu District represent the commercial transformation of Shikumen buildings. It is possible to study how traditional cultural elements are preserved in the commercial development and the impact on the surrounding communities. b. Shikumen buildings still serving as residential functions: Qingfuli of Changle Road in Huangpu District, Xingqingli of Maoming North Road, Xinhuali of Shimen Yi Road in Jing'an District and Daxingfang of Hongkou District, which represent the residential functions of traditional Shikumen, can be studied in terms of its adaptability in modern urban life and residents' identification with traditional lifestyles.

Populations: Valid person-time is 350. Among 319 questionnaires, 48.29% were male and 51.71% were female. The proportion between 18 and 44 years old reached 67.71%, and the proportion between 30 and 44 years old reached 32.57%. The population aged 45-60 accounted for 28.86%. Public officials accounted for the highest proportion, reaching 26.33%, followed by people in other occupations, accounting for 32.6%. The proportion of students and enterprises and public institutions was 20.06 percent and 21 percent respectively. The purpose of sample selection is to compare the evaluation of Shikumen by people of different ages, and to understand the cognitive differences of people of different ages on traditional architecture. To judge the influence of personal experience on perception, compare the evaluation of Shikumen by people with different cultural backgrounds, so as to make the influence of cultural differences on aesthetic judgment.

3.2.4 Research instruments

Wenjuanxing (Wenjuanxing) online survey platform was used to collect data. Questionnaire Star is an online questionnaire survey tool with multiple data collection, sorting and analysis functions. The research will use its logical judgment, random stratified sampling, data export and other functions.

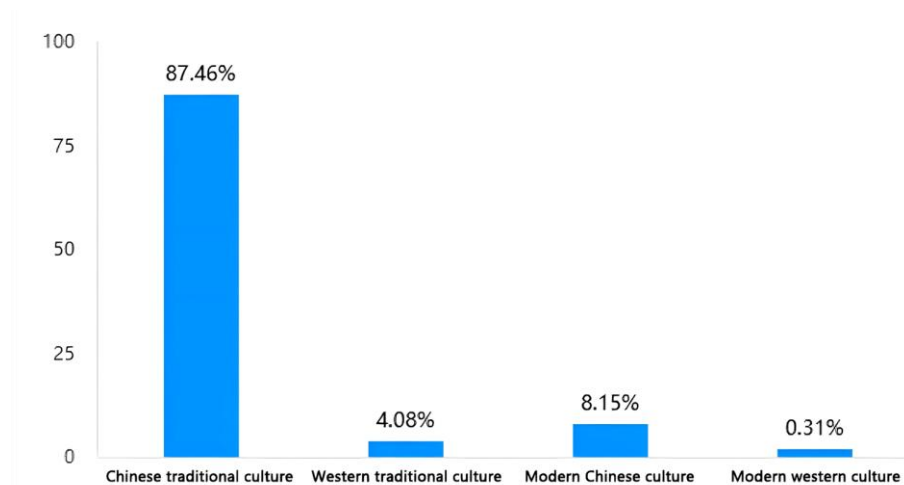
4. Finding

In this reliability analysis, the sample size was 172, the number of items was 15, and the Cronbach's α coefficient was 0.850. This coefficient indicates that the scale has a high level of internal consistency, meaning that the items within the scale are highly correlated with each other.

4.1 Coding and decoding in Shikumen architecture

Shikumen architecture not only adheres to the traditional Chinese "family culture" (such as the layout of the courtyard and the main hall), but also accepts the intensive lifestyle of modern cities through Western-style townhouses. Mr. Xiao Mo mentioned in the book: "Chinese architecture's love for nature and pursuit of harmony between man and nature are most fully expressed in gardens." (Xiao, 2014) Chinese architecture is a place where people live together, carrying the culture and spirit of the family, clan and even the country (Li, 2014). Shikumen architecture Traditional Chinese architecture emphasizes harmony with nature (such as lighting and ventilation in the courtyard, and the ecological nature of brick and wood materials). Although Shikumen is influenced by the West, it still retains some of this concept. Its spatial layout (such as the sequence of front and back halls) implies the Confucian ethical order.

Figure 2: Shikumen architecture embodies the culture



The survey results show that the respondents' cultural cognition of Shikumen architecture is mainly concentrated on traditional Chinese culture, accounting for 87.46%, followed by modern Chinese culture, accounting for 8.15%.

94.67% of people agree that real-life interaction in Shikumen space can trigger emotional resonance, of which 52.98% strongly agree, 41.69% agree, and only a small number of people express indifference or disagreement, indicating that most people believe that real-life interaction can trigger more emotional resonance than virtual media.

Regarding the view that "the transition from Shikumen living form to modern architectural living space reflects cultural changes", 51.72% of the respondents strongly agree, 43.89% of the respondents agree, and only 4.39% of the respondents do not feel it.

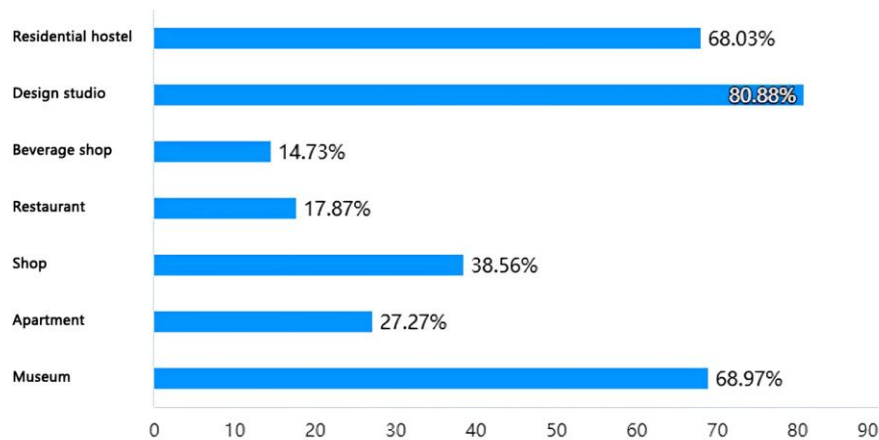
The space of traditional Chinese architecture is fluid, emphasizing the continuity and change of space (Seken, 2017). Mr. Wu Hong's interpretation of space in the book *Monumentality in Ancient Chinese Art and Architecture* emphasizes the social and cultural nature of space, which is inspiring for the study of the spatial layout and function of Shikumen buildings (Wu, 2009). The coding process of Shikumen buildings is essentially a concretization of "existence": through spatial layout, material selection, decorative details, etc., Shikumen buildings encode the lifestyle, cultural identity and historical memory of Shanghai citizens into material form.

4.2 The evolution of the values of Shikumen symbol system

The early Shikumen architecture reflects more traditional Chinese culture. For example, in the performance of the gables, Ma Tou wall and Guan Yin Dou are mainly. With the introduction of Western culture, the symbol system of Shikumen architecture gradually integrated Chinese and western elements. For example, the facade of some Shikumen buildings has Western-style decorative elements, such as Roman Columns and mountain flowers, reflecting the trend of blending Chinese and Western cultures. With the acceleration of urbanization, the symbolic system of Shikumen architecture has also undergone new changes. These new symbols reflect the aesthetic concept and life style of the contemporary society. The factors that lead to these changes include: 1) The development of society and economy provides more materials and technologies for architecture, thus promoting the richness and diversity of architectural symbol system. 2) The communication between Chinese and Western cultures had a profound impact on the symbol system of Shikumen architecture. 3) The government's policy orientation also had an impact on the symbol system of Shikumen architecture.

Shikumen architectural space also embodies the change of values in a symbolic form. The master's room is often located in the deepest part of the building, while the servant's room is located on the outer part of the building. In the middle period, the public Spaces such as lane and lane in Shikumen architecture promoted the communication between neighbors and reflected the extension of neighborhood relations.

Figure 3: Analyze the more suitable use of Shikumen architectural space

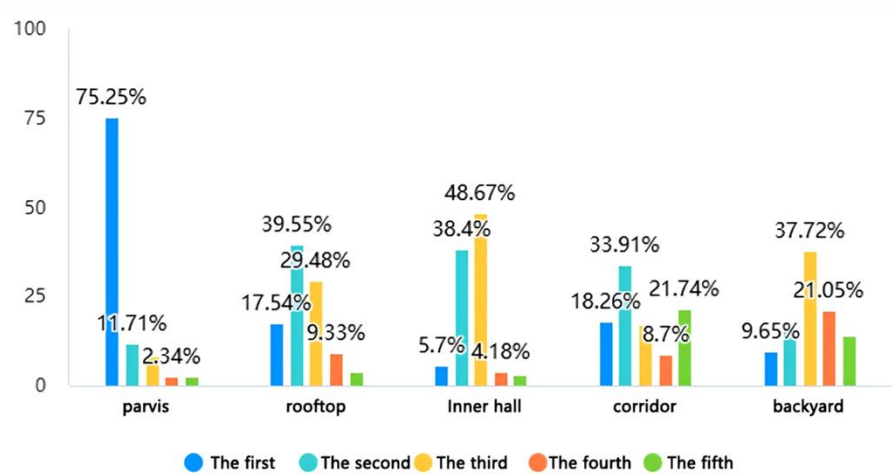


According to the survey data analysis, people agree with the cultural communication characteristics of Shikumen architectural space, so the more suitable uses of Shikumen architectural space are design studios, homestays and museums, which account for 80.88%, 68.03% and 68.97% respectively. In contrast, beverage stores, restaurants, shopping and apartments are less suitable, accounting for 14.73%, 17.87%, 38.56% and 27.27% respectively. In addition, 52.35% of people think that Shikumen architecture is a medium of communication, 17.55% think it is a cultural symbol, and 29.15% think it is a symbol of the city. The symbolic expression of Shikumen space is mainly storytelling, accounting for 57.99%, followed by symbolism, accounting for 24.76%, and evoking memory, accounting for 16.3%.

4.3 Modern Shikumen architectural space as a medium of communication narrative expression

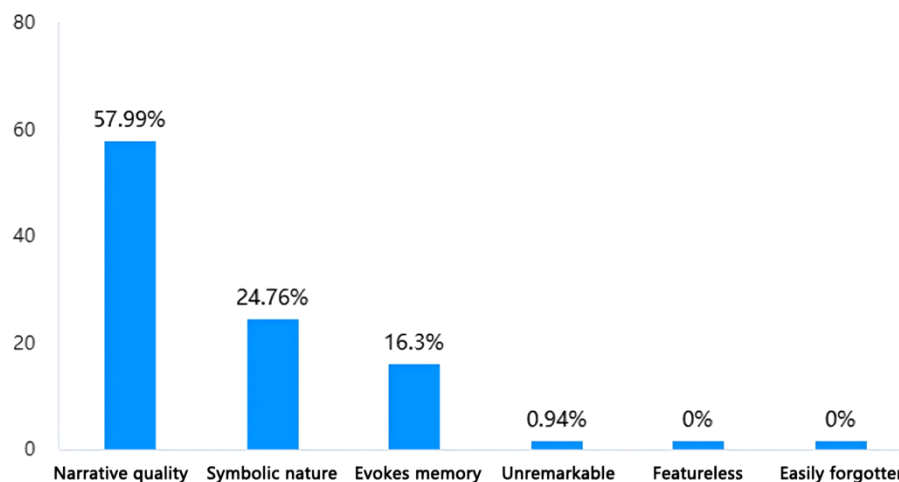
The spatial layout of Shikumen architecture is itself a narrative process. The reason for the architecture of Shikumen is the Shanghai pronunciation of the stone hoop on the door (segu). The stone itself gives people a solid and stable impression, symbolizing the stability of the family, the continuity of the clan and the peace of the society. The stone hoop wraps the gate to form a solid barrier, symbolizing the protection of the family, reflecting people's reverence for the power of nature and the blessing of the family. The stone hoop clearly demarcates the boundary between inside and outside, symbolizing order and supremacy. The entrance is often not obvious, and even a little hidden, which also coincides with the traditional Chinese thought of "seclusion" (Chen, 1997). The patio serves as a transitional space between the interior and exterior of the building, bringing natural light into the interior and blurring the boundaries between interior and exterior. This fuzziness not only reflects the harmonious symbiosis between man and nature, but also symbolizes the complexity of man's inner world (Wang, 1993).

Figure 4: Analyze the most comfortable space in Shikumen architectural space



According to the data table of the matrix scale question, the following conclusions can be drawn: Patio is considered by the most people (75.25%) as the most comfortable space in Shikumen architectural space, and its comprehensive score is the highest 4.27, which indicates that patio is widely recognized as a whole. The roof scored 3 in the overall score, which was ranked first by 17.54% of people, but at the same time, 39.55% of people ranked it second, indicating that the comfort evaluation of the roof was uneven. The inner hall scored 2.8, with 38.4% of people ranking it second and 48.67% ranking it third, showing that the evaluation of comfort in the inner hall was relatively balanced.

Figure 5: Analysis of the symbolic expression content of Shikumen space



The symbolic expression of Shikumen space is mainly story, accounting for 57.99%, followed by symbolic, accounting for 24.76%, and evoking memory, accounting for 16.3%. It can be seen that most people believe that the symbolic expression of Shikumen space is story-telling and symbolic, and can arouse people's memory.

4.4 Relationship between cultural celebrity effect and cultural transmission in architectural space

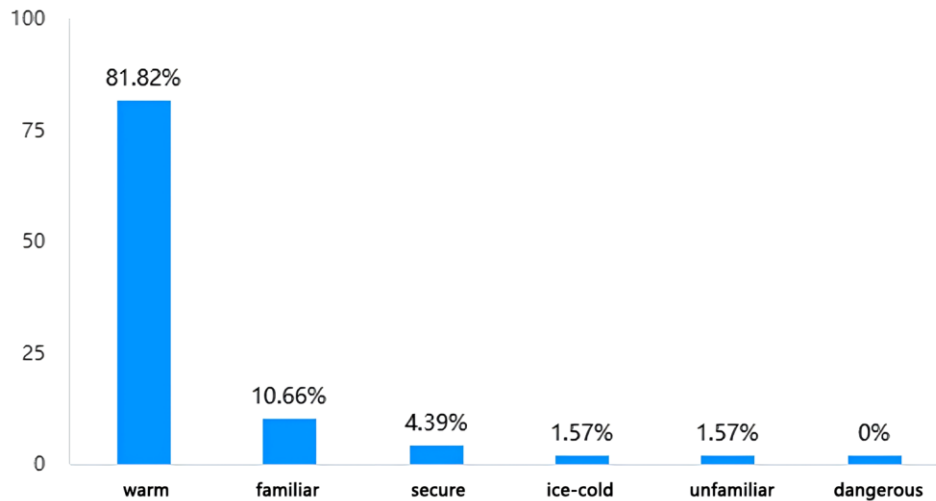
As a place where many cultural celebrities lived, Shikumen in Shanghai will transform the space of the inner hall with its living habits and aesthetic taste, leaving a unique personal imprint. These traces of transformation become part of the narrative of the inner hall space, reflecting the personalities, thoughts and values of the celebrities (Long, 2014). Cultural celebrities as social and cultural symbols, their living environment itself has become a cultural symbol. When they live in Shikumen Inner Tang, this symbolic meaning will be further strengthened, so that the inner tang space carries more cultural connotations.

As for whether the celebrities originally living in Shikumen buildings are additional cultural symbols of Shikumen buildings, 49.22% of people strongly agree with them, 43.89% agree with them, 6.27% have no feelings, and only 0.63% disagree. It can be seen that most people think that the celebrities who originally lived in Shikumen buildings add cultural symbols to Shikumen buildings.

4.5 Symbol interaction in architectural space

Social reality does not exist objectively, but is constructed through social interaction. Our social structures, institutions, and cultures are the result of human interaction (Mead, 2008). The courtyard layout of the Shikumen building promotes interaction between the neighbors and forms a close-knit community atmosphere. This community atmosphere has had a profound impact on human behavior and shaped the unique character of Shanghainese.

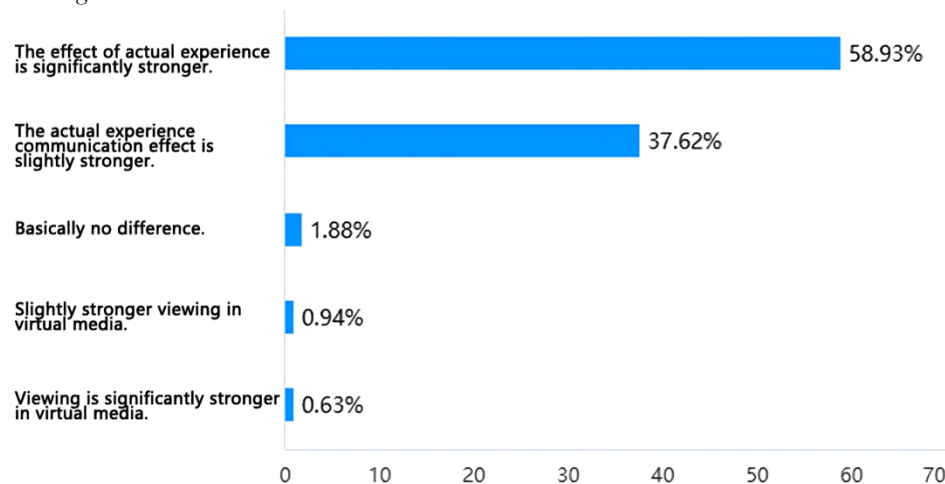
Figure 6: Analyze people 's experience in Shikumen architectural space



In the experience of Shikumen architectural space, the most popular feeling among respondents is warmth, accounting for 81.82%. The familiar is next at 10.66 %.

Through visual, tactile, auditory and other senses to perceive the space, to form a more three-dimensional, real impression. Although virtual media, such as photos and videos, can provide visual information, they cannot provide other sensory experiences such as touch and smell, resulting in limited dimensions of information transmission. In the physical space, people can freely explore, touch and interact with the space, and this active participation helps to deepen the understanding of the space. The interaction of virtual media is weak, users can only passively accept information, and it is difficult to produce a strong sense of participation.

Figure 7: Analysis of the difference between the actual experience of Shikumen architecture and the viewing in virtual media and the effect of cultural communication



According to the results of the data, more than 95% of respondents believe that the effect of actual experience communication is either significantly stronger or slightly stronger, while less than 3% of respondents believe that watching in virtual media is slightly stronger or significantly stronger. 44.51% of people strongly agree that real scene interaction is more able to experience spatial narrative than virtual media, and 51.72% of people agree with this view. Therefore, the vast majority of participants believe that the real scene interaction can better understand the spatial narrative.

The spatial scale of Shikumen architecture is moderate, which can not only meet the needs of personal privacy, but also create a sense of closeness and promote interaction between residents. The traditional customs of helping neighbors and helping each other in Shanghai have been strengthened under the living form of Shikumen. Shikumen residents often organize various activities on their own, such as festival celebrations and neighborhood fellowship, to further consolidate community relations. The close-knit community atmosphere gives residents a strong sense of belonging and increases their sense of identity and responsibility for the community. Frequent interactions promote social interaction among residents, enrich people's social life, and help alleviate loneliness. Living in such a community atmosphere for a long time, Shanghainese often show character traits such as hospitality, helpfulness and valuing the community.

The neighborhood relationship of Shikumen buildings is mainly "warm", accounting for 68.34%, followed by "harmonious" accounting for 30.41%. "Disharmonious" and "cold" accounted for less, at 0.94% and 0.31%, respectively. This indicates that most people consider the neighborhood relationship of Shikumen architecture to be warm and harmonious.

5. CONCLUSION

Shikumen architecture, as a symbolic medium, realizes the encoding, storage and decoding of culture by means of spatial layout, architectural details and embedding of lifestyle. The coding process involves the participation of multiple subjects such as architects, designers, artisans, who embed specific cultural values, lifestyles, and other information into the building. The decoding process is more complex, different people, different social backgrounds, different historical periods, the interpretation of the same building will be different.

5.1 The symbolic meaning of Shikumen buildings

From the data analysis of 4.1 and 4.2, Shikumen architecture encodes specific cultural values, lifestyles and other information into the spatial layout and decorative details of the building. People living in Shikumen or tourists who come here decode these cultural messages and give them new meanings through interaction with the space. This decoding process is a dynamic and evolving process. Different subjects may decode Shikumen architecture in completely different ways: for old Shanghainese, Shikumen may evoke nostalgic emotions and collective memories; for the younger generation, Shikumen may just be a visual symbol of "retro style"; for international tourists, Shikumen may be seen as a symbol of "Oriental style". Shikumen architecture itself is a channel of communication, conveying cultural information to people through spatial layout, architectural details and other means. The encoding and decoding of Shikumen architectural language is not a one-way process, but a dynamic dialectical relationship: the encoder attempts to convey specific cultural meanings through architectural language, while the decoder reinterprets the symbols based on its own context. For example, in the transformation of Shikumen in Xintiandi, its encoding changed from "living space" to "consumption space", while the decoders (tourists, consumers) regarded it as a "nostalgic symbol" or "fashion landmark". This change of meaning reveals the tension between encoding and decoding.

5.2 Communication differences in different scenarios and media

Shikumen buildings in physical space directly participate in people's existential experience through their spatiality, while Shikumen in virtual/paper media indirectly transmit information through media. This difference reveals the difference between "presence" and "absence". Shikumen in physical space is a kind of "presence" communication, while Shikumen in virtual/paper media is a kind of "absence" reproduction.

From the data analysis of 4.3 and 4.4, it can be seen that Shikumen buildings are not only a physical space, but also a product of social construction. Through symbolic interaction, people give meaning to space and use it to construct social reality. This architectural space is a complex of sensory information including vision, touch, hearing, etc. Its spatial layout, architectural style, decorative patterns, etc. all carry rich cultural information and constitute a multimodal cultural text. In online or paper media, Shikumen architecture is mediated into images, texts or videos. This mediatization process changes the essence of Shikumen: from a "living space" to a "cultural symbol". This mediatization has expanded the scope of Shikumen's dissemination, but also questioned its authenticity. For example, Shikumen photos on the

Internet may have been retouched, and Shikumen descriptions in paper media may carry the author's subjective bias. As a communication medium, the differences between Shikumen architecture in physical space and virtual/paper media reveal the complex relationship between spatiality, mediatization and authenticity: Shikumen in physical space provides an embodied and immersive communication experience, but its dissemination range is limited; Shikumen in virtual/paper media expands the dissemination range through abstraction and symbolization, but it may also lead to the loss of authenticity and historical depth.

5.3 Shikumen Architecture as a Communication Strategy of Media

As a symbolic medium, Shikumen buildings spread culture through the interaction between space and people. This process of communication is a dynamic, multi-layered and profound process. The data analysis in 4.5 shows that there is an interactive relationship between Shikumen buildings as objects and people as subjects. In the process of using and appreciating Shikumen buildings, people will have cognition, emotion and understanding of them. This interaction between subject and object promotes the spread of cultural significance. For example, the daily life of residents in Shikumen and the visit of tourists to Shikumen are all interactions between the subject and the object of Shikumen. Through this interaction, the cultural value contained in Shikumen can be spread and inherited. Modern communication media itself can indeed expand the propaganda power, but symbols in modern society often break away from their original references and become a "hyper-real" existence. In online media or paper media, Shikumen buildings may become a "simulacrum": it no longer points to the real Shikumen buildings, but to a mediated "Shikumen image". The fate of Shikumen in the process of urbanization (partial demolition and part "museumization") is precisely the embodiment of this "ruin logic". The remaining architectural shells have become monuments to the violence of modernity, reminding people to reflect on the engulfment of tradition by the discourse of "progress". At the same time, the nostalgia of Shikumen (such as the "old Shanghai style" in film and television dramas) reflects the dilemma of "liquid modernity": when tradition collapses, people reconstruct a "false memory community" through symbolic consumption.

5.4 Recommendations

Architecture plays an important role in cultural communication. Architectural space is a place for people to carry out social activities. Through their behavior and interaction in space, people constantly give new meaning to architecture and integrate it into their cultural life. Architectural space carries the memory of history and is an important part of urban culture. Through the protection and utilization of historical buildings, cultural heritage can be passed on and people's cultural identity can be enhanced.

Shikumen is not only an architectural entity, but also an "event" in a philosophical sense: it condenses the cultural choices, identity reconstruction and survival strategies of modern China under the impact of globalization. Cultural identity needs to be self-renewed in collisions, rather than sticking to essentialism. At the same time, tradition is not a static heritage, but a dynamic practice. Only through creative transformation can it resist the nihilism of modernity. This study reveals the multiple meanings and social functions of architecture as a cultural symbol by exploring the cultural transmission of physical space and the impact of architectural form on the behavior patterns and cohesion of urban community residents. Shikumen architecture is not only a physical space, but also a material expression of a cultural carrier and social relations. Through practical experience and symbolic interaction, cultural convergence can be broken and the simplification of symbolic meaning in modern society can be reduced. Specifically, Shikumen architecture, through its unique spatial structure and architectural form, conveys the lifestyle, neighborhood relations and identity of Shanghai citizens. This cultural transmission is not only a continuation of the past, but also a call for the future: through the "habitation" of physical space, residents can find a sense of belonging and cultural identity in the rapidly urbanizing modern society. At the same time, the architectural form subtly influences the behavior patterns of residents and enhances community cohesion through its spatial layout and functional design. Through actual experience (such as community activities, cultural festivals) and symbolic interaction (such as architectural restoration, artistic intervention), the cultural connotation of Shikumen architecture can be reactivated and cultural convergence can be broken. This symbolic interaction based on actual experience has transformed Shikumen architecture from a "nostalgic symbol" to a "living cultural practice". In addition, by exploring

the multiple meanings of Shikumen architecture (such as historical memory, social relations, and cultural identity), the simplification of symbolic meaning can be reduced, making its meaning richer and more diverse.

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