

Constructing and Disseminating the Urban Image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area in the Era of the "Short Video Turn"

Hongze Wang¹, Qianjun Liu²

¹*School of Media and Communication, Xi'an Eurasia University, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China*

²*Admissions Office, Xi'an Eurasia University, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China*

Abstract: In the context of the "short video turn", the dissemination medium, represented by short videos, has infinitely enhanced the communication capabilities of individuals. This study uses methods such as content analysis, comparative research, and focus group interviews to summarize the current state of urban image communication in the Xi'an Metropolitan Area. It aims to understand the general perceptions of users regarding the urban image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area on short video platforms, and to identify problems in the construction and dissemination of the city's image. The study suggests that a multidimensional construction of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area's city image can be achieved by creating government short video accounts, enhancing the influence of mainstream media, and exploring diverse city images.

Keywords: Short Video Turn; Urban Image; Xi'an Metropolitan Area; Construction Dissemination

1. Introduction

The "short video turn" refers to the trend of various media gradually shifting their production teams and content structures from static content to short video content. From language to images, human communication media has achieved a qualitative leap. Today, the integration of sound and image has further lowered the threshold for people to access information, and video has gradually become the main way for people to understand the world [1]. In the new era, the Internet and social media are undergoing a "short video turn" in the content field, shifting from readability to visibility, from static to dynamic, and from one-dimensional to multi-dimensional. This is an important direction in the evolution of information dissemination

content.

Urban image is the sum of impression characteristics of a city in the minds of the public. It includes aspects such as the city's natural landscape, historical culture, economic development, and architectural style. Urban image is not only the external manifestation of the city's connotation but also an important embodiment of the city's attractiveness and competitiveness. [2,3] New communication technologies have continuously spawned new communication forms. Short video platforms, led by short videos, have endowed individuals with unprecedented communication capabilities and resources. Urban image communication has shifted from large-scale square-style promotion to scene-based infiltrative dissemination [4].

In April 2022, the "Xi'an Metropolitan Area Development Plan" was officially approved. The plan mentions Xi'an's role as a national central city multiple times, emphasizing its radiation and driving role and its leading role. In recent years, cities have gradually realized the importance of urban image shaping and dissemination. In order to attract more tourists and resources, their awareness of image dissemination has been constantly enhanced. Many cities have begun to construct their own unique urban images and disseminate them through various media platforms. Therefore, urban image construction is an important part of the development process of the "Xi'an Metropolitan Area".

2. Current Status of Urban Image Communication in the Xi'an Metropolitan Area

In recent years, in order to adapt to the development laws of short video media, relevant departments have formulated some strategies and plans for the construction and dissemination of the urban image of the Xi'an metropolitan area. Taking the core

city of Xi'an as an example, the official slogan "Thousand-Year Ancient Capital, Always Visit Chang'an" proposed by the government has achieved good communication results in recent years. Existing short video content combines Xi'an's profound historical and cultural resources to deeply depict and portray the city's humanistic image on short video platforms, resulting in positive representation and user feedback of Xi'an's overall urban image with strong communication and interaction [5]. However, some problems have also been found, such as insufficient representation of Xi'an's municipal government and social and economic development in short video platforms, low participation of mainstream media and official accounts in the shaping of Xi'an's urban image in short videos, and homogenization of video content [6].

2.1 Official City Image Positioning

Xi'an, the core city of the Xi'an metropolitan area, has always been a famous historical and cultural city with rich historical heritage and profound cultural deposits. Through reviewing relevant documents officially released by the Shaanxi Provincial and Xi'an Municipal Governments in recent years, it is found that in the official propaganda of Xi'an's urban image, Xi'an's historical heritage, cultural charm, and scientific and technological innovation capabilities have been emphasized multiple times. The aim is to build a three-in-one urban image of Xi'an integrating historical culture, modern science and technology, and innovation and entrepreneurship. In February 2021, Xi'an released an official city image promotional video titled "Thousand-Year Ancient Capital, Always Visit Chang'an." Since then, this concept has become the focus of Xi'an's city propaganda, fully embodying the positioning of Xi'an's urban image by the municipal government. It highlights Xi'an's historical and cultural characteristics, reflects the concept of livable Xi'an today, and embodies the municipal government's belief in building a city that meets people's pursuit of a better life.

2.2 Prominent City Humanities Image

Existing short video content focuses on historical and cultural sites, urban cuisine,

and reflects traditional culture and urban leisure activities. These short videos present Xi'an's rich human resources and unique cultural charm vividly. Images in some videos, such as "Hanfu transformation" and "Secret Box of the Tang Dynasty," make short video platform users yearn for and look forward to Xi'an [7]. The content reflecting history, cuisine, culture, and leisure activities in the humanistic image is prominent, but there are few videos about talent education. As a major national center for higher education, Xi'an has many well-known universities and research institutions. Many important scientific research projects and innovative achievements originate from universities and research institutions in Xi'an. However, there are few videos about Xi'an's education, talent, and scientific and technological development on short video platforms with certain influence. Xi'an's modern development advantages in education, talent, and technology have not been well presented on short video platforms.

2.3 Significant Social Civilization Image

There are many short videos reflecting positive energy in the social atmosphere of the Xi'an metropolitan area on short video platforms. These contents show the positive and upward side of the social image of the cities in the Xi'an metropolitan area, enhancing the goodwill and identity of short video platform users towards Xi'an and its metropolitan area through the portrayal of urban humanistic customs and social activities. Some short videos have over 1 million likes, constantly encouraging short video platform users to have positive emotions and attitudes towards the Xi'an metropolitan area by showing positive energy events, conveying positive values, and reflecting the warmth of Xi'an and its metropolitan area cities.

2.4 Weak Presentation of Government and Economic Images

The government's image is one of its most important intangible assets and a fundamental element of its influence. Unfortunately, there is currently no short video content explicitly related to the government image of the Xi'an

Metropolitan Area. Information about the government's governance philosophy, official image, major policies, and development plans is not well represented on short video platforms. In recent years, a number of government short video accounts with wide reach and significant influence have emerged on short video platforms, such as "Beijing Government Affairs," "Siping Police Affairs," and "Xiao Jing A Te." These accounts have adapted to new media development trends, innovated content forms, and kept up with hot topics, effectively conveying government information and shaping the government's image. The lack of construction and dissemination of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area's government image on short video platforms reflects the insufficient communication power of relevant government short video accounts. Moreover, the government image-related content published on short video platforms has not attracted public attention and resonance, leading to a lack of understanding of the government's work and a lack of interaction and participation with the public.

The city's economic image is usually composed of comprehensive elements such as technological level, economic development status, price levels, citizen income, and commercial attractions, which can reflect the city's hard power of development to some extent. On short video platforms like Douyin and Kuaishou, videos about the economic image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area with high likes and strong dissemination are mostly commercial attractions, while videos showcasing technological innovation and diverse industrial development are almost non-existent. This is somewhat inconsistent with the official goal of building a city image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area that integrates history, modern technology, and innovation and entrepreneurship. It is evident that Xi'an has presented some internet-famous economic performances through popular attractions on short video platforms, but information about urban economic development, such as the Qin Chuangyuan Innovation Driven Platform, has not been fully disseminated, resulting in a generally weak presentation of the metropolitan

area's economic image.

3. Issues in Constructing and Communicating the Urban Image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area

3.1 Government Participation needs to be Improved, and Mainstream Media Lacks Dissemination Effectiveness

Among the existing short video production entities, content creators from influencer accounts and personal accounts are the most prevalent, while government-related official accounts are almost non-existent. In the Xi'an Metropolitan Area, only the Douyin account of "Shaanxi Urban Express" has achieved considerable data and formed a certain level of influence among Douyin users. The dissemination effectiveness and performance of other local media's short video accounts are not satisfactory.

In the dissemination of short videos for the urban image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area, the low level of government participation and the lack of official accounts reflect the insufficient attention and investment from relevant departments in shaping and communicating the city's image. There is a lack of awareness of city image management from the perspective of the "short video turn," and no effective production and collaboration models have been established between departments and institutions. Moreover, the issue of mainstream media's dissemination effectiveness has always been one of the important challenges faced by Xi'an and regional media. The insufficient dissemination power of short videos for the urban image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area requires local media to grasp the laws of short video communication, actively create and operate their own short video accounts, and provide public opinion support for telling the story of Xi'an and assisting in the construction of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area.

3.2 Lack of a Clear Discourse System and Unified Communication Goals

In short videos that represent the urban image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area, individual accounts, influencer accounts, media accounts, and celebrity accounts all contribute to the portrayal of the city's image. However, the video content often lacks a cohesive

positioning. Urban image communication requires clear communication goals to avoid inconsistencies in content and information, which can prevent users from forming a unified understanding of the metropolitan area's urban image. In the dissemination of short videos for the urban image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area, there is also a lack of clarity in the transmission of information. The communicators of the metropolitan area's urban image need to be able to clearly convey city information and values, yet some existing content is open to interpretation by users. Additionally, there is a lack of a unified language style among the various short video content producers. Different producers and entities have their own unique styles of expression, which can lead to inconsistencies and confusion in the dissemination of information.

3.3 Homogenization of Video Content, Lack of Diverse Image Exploration

There has been a phenomenon of homogenization in the short video content representing the urban image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area, with similar themes, styles, and presentation methods being circulated on short video platforms, lacking innovation and diversity. For example, the "Hanfu Transformation" series of short videos often use the Bell Tower as the background, with the same background music and similar shooting and editing techniques. These videos exhibit homogenization in both content presentation and narrative style.

The core city of Xi'an has historically been positioned as the city of Chinese civilization history, an eco-livable and harmonious city, a city with strong scientific and educational innovation, a commercial and transportation hub city, and a city open to East-West exchanges. These urban image positioning contains numerous exploitable contents of Xi'an's city image, such as the historical culture, iconic landscapes, modern architecture, and artistic performances of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area, all of which can be further explored for diverse urban images on short video platforms [8]. The construction and dissemination of the urban image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area should develop corresponding plans based on the characteristics and resources of the area,

enhancing the quality of short videos and reducing content homogenization.

4. Strategies for Constructing and Communicating the Urban Image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area under the "Short Video Turn"

Based on the current observations of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area's urban image and the issues identified in the dissemination of short videos about the area, targeted strategies are proposed for the construction and communication of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area's urban image under the "short video turn."

4.1 Focus on Creating Official Government Short Video Accounts

The study found that there is a lack of dissemination of the government image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area on short video platforms, which is related to the small number and insufficient communication power of official government short video accounts. To address this, it is important to establish a professional team for operating government short video accounts. Team members should not only be skilled in short video operation techniques but also understand the needs of short video users, the internet ecosystem, and the operational rules of the platform. They should be able to communicate smoothly with fans, respond promptly to their needs, be familiar with the government's work requirements and priorities at each stage, as well as the challenges it faces. Additionally, they should have a strong ability to interpret policies and produce short videos, giving full play to the role of government short videos in building a service-oriented government image [9].

4.2 Enhancing the Influence of Mainstream Media

The mainstream media in the Xi'an Metropolitan Area to some extent face the issue of insufficient influence, which directly leads to their inadequate capability in short video dissemination. Mainstream media should liberalize their thinking, change their perspectives, integrate multimedia platform and brand resources, and focus on a few short video accounts or new media brands to build them into influential media accounts

nationwide, such as The Paper and Southern Metropolis Daily. These media have broken through regional limitations and provide a platform and window for the dissemination of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area's urban image at the media level.

4.3 Updating the City's Calling Card, Exploring Diverse Urban Images

The Xi'an Metropolitan Area is not only rich in historical and cultural resources but also possesses a diverse urban image that includes education and scientific research, innovative technology, green ecology, cultural creativity, and international exchange. With numerous universities and research institutes within the area, short videos can promote Xi'an's educational resources and scientific strength, attracting more people for exchange and learning. In recent years, the core city of Xi'an has actively developed the technology innovation industry, introducing high-tech enterprises and innovation teams. Short videos can create an image of Xi'an as an innovative city, attracting more tech talent. Moreover, Xi'an has been actively involved in international exchanges and cooperation, hosting international conferences, sports events, and cultural activities. Short videos can also emphasize Xi'an's image as an international exchange city. These are elements and objects of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area's diverse urban image that can be deeply explored.

4.4 Establishing a Comprehensive Communication Mechanism for Public Participation

The Xi'an Metropolitan Area must continuously improve the mechanisms for shaping, constructing, and disseminating the urban image to convey a real and comprehensive image to the outside world, enhancing the dissemination power of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area's urban image, and its influence and competitiveness. This requires establishing a mechanism for public participation in the dissemination of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area's urban image, stimulating the enthusiasm of residents and citizens to become active participants and promoters of urban image dissemination, jointly shaping a diverse and vibrant urban image of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area, and promoting the residents' sense of identity and engagement

with the city's image.

4.5 Unifying Communication Goals, Formulating City Image Slogans

Currently, the video content of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area's urban image on short video platforms lacks a cohesive positioning, and the dissemination of the urban image lacks clear communication goals, mostly focusing on the core city of Xi'an but failing to create a unified understanding of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area's urban image among short video users. It is recommended that the government take the lead, with mainstream media responsible for the campaign, to formulate slogans for the Xi'an Metropolitan Area's image promotion. Slogans like "Thousand-Year Ancient Capital, Always Visit Chang'an" can succinctly and powerfully convey the city's characteristics and values. The new slogans should provide clear goals and objectives for the dissemination of the metropolitan area's urban image [10].

5. Conclusion

Under the backdrop of the "short video turn," the enormous communication potential of the public has been activated. The original nature of content production aligns with the new trends in urban image communication and has also encouraged more people to join in the collective construction of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area's urban image. The cities within the Xi'an Metropolitan Area possess rich cultural heritage and unique urban charm. It is an important task to construct and disseminate their urban image on short video platforms.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the 2023 Xi'an Eurasia College School-level Scientific Research Fund Project, project number 2023XJSK08, Research on the Communication and Governance of the Xi'an Metropolitan Area's Urban Image from the Perspective of the "Short Video Turn".

References

- [1] Kevin Kelly. *The Inevitable*. Electronic Industry Press, 2016.
- [2] Lewis Mumford. *The History of Cities: Origins, Evolution, and Prospects*. China Architecture & Building Press, 2005.

- [3] Su Yonghua. Urban Image Communication: Theory and Practice. Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2013.
- [4] Ren Mengshan. Urban Image Communication: From Massive Propaganda to Permeative Dissemination. Youth Journalist, 2021(03): 4-4.
- [5] Xu Hejian, Zhang Yiqun. The Practice and Reflection of Short Videos Enabling International Communication. External Communication, 2024(03): 33-35.
- [6] He Guoping. Urban Image Communication: Framework and Strategies. Modern Communication (Journal of Communication University of China), 2010(08): 13-17.
- [7] Hu Shenming, Mei Mei. An Analysis of the Emotional Transformation in the Shaping of Internet Celebrity Cities. Youth Journalist, 2024(04): 108-112.
- [8] Zhuang Yuan. The Construction of Urban Image under the Participation of Short Videos: Role, Communication Characteristics, and Optimization Strategies. New Media Research, 2023(09): 80-83.
- [9] Li Hui. Strategies for Constructing City Image Using Government Weibo and WeChat Platforms. China Newspaper Industry, 2021(06): 54-55.
- [10] Zhang Yicong. Audio-Visual Reconstruction, Spatial Extension, Rhetorical Innovation: Short Videos and Urban Cultural Communication Strategies. China Publishing Journal, 2023(10): 36-41.