

The Influence of Short Video on City Image Dissemination in the New Media Era

—Taking Tik Tok as an Example

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Abstract

With the popularity and rise of Chongqing, Chengdu, Xi'an and other cities on the short video platform, short video is increasingly becoming a new weapon for the construction and dissemination of the city image. Researching on the content, methods and effects of the hottest video APP Tik Tok, this paper adopts research methods of case analysis and text analysis to investigate how short videos promote the spread of urban image, and explore how they can enhance urban image transmission in the new media era in a better way.

Keywords: *New Media; Short Video; City Image; Tik Tok; Dissemination*

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, as new media develop with a fast pace, there has been a rise in the short video industry in China, and new media of short video has been blooming. Among them, one type of short videos, which mainly involves the sceneries of cities, customs and culture, and local cuisine, has attracted great amount of attention on the short video app and promoted the rise of many popular cities on internet. Short videos have initiated new areas of city image construction, with its unique characteristics to promote the spread of urban image. On the one hand, the research on how short video affects the dissemination of city image has certain guidance and reference significance for the image dissemination of other cities. On the other hand, it can deeply explore the advantages and existing problems, and provide development strategies for government departments, short video creators and short video platforms to spread urban image in the future, so as to better promote the spread of urban image out of the region, out of the country and to the world.

2 THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF CITY IMAGE AND THE RISE OF NEW MEDIA PROMOTE THE SPREAD OF CITY IMAGE

2.1 The Increasing Importance of City Image Makes It the "Soft Power" of City Development

City image refers to the overall feelings and impressions the city brings to the public by its economic, cultural and environmental factors. Regarded as a city's business card and an intangible asset of the city, an outstanding city image can increase the popularity and reputation of the city, attract tourists for sightseeing, promote the development of tourism and other related industries, and bring about direct or indirect economic benefits to the city. Meanwhile, the enhanced city's image will also change its investment environment, raise the attractiveness of the city, lead to the accumulation of advantageous resources such as talents, funds and technology to the city, and accelerate the overall development of the city^[1]. Under the background of economic globalization and world urbanization, there exists fierce competition between cities. But on the whole, the competition between cities lies in a combination of urban

ecological environment, cultural connotation, government management, citizen quality and other factors. As the "soft power" of city development, city image cannot be underestimated in terms of its shaping and dissemination.

2.2 The Rapid Development of Short Video and the Continuous Expansion of User Scale

In the new media era, many new media forms have emerged, among which short videos are currently one of the hottest channels of new media communication. With the characteristics of low creation threshold, popularizing content, fragmented time, fast transmission speed, strong social attributes, etc., it fills the fragmented time of users with video content in a few tens of seconds to several minutes, which meets the demand of the users for higher density of content information in short period of time^[2]. Therefore, with the popularity of mobile terminals and the accelerated network, this emerging social media with short, fast, and high-traffic content has quickly become a unique way of information transmission among current internet users.

On August 30, 2019, according to the 44th Statistical Report on the Development of the Internet in China issued by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), till June 2019, the number of internet users in China reached 854 million with the internet penetration rate of 61.2%. Among them, the number of short video users is up to 648 million, accounting for 75.8% of the overall netizens. With the advent of the 5G era, time and space constraints of video consumption will be gradually lessening. Based on the large number of Chinese internet users and its increasing trend, the number of users of short videos is still expanding.

2.3 Short Video Creates "Popular Cities on Internet" and Boosts the Spread of City Image

With the increasing number of users and the widespread of short videos, a variety of content has emerged, among which there are many types of content about the city's unique cuisine, landscape, culture and so on, which are related to the city image. This type of short video was played and disseminated on the short video platform at a high frequency and in a wide range. While capturing a large number of short video users, it created huge platform flow and forged "Popular Cities on Internet" such as Xi'an, Chongqing, Chengdu, etc. According to the "White Paper of Research on Short Video and City Image" released by Tik Tok and Tsinghua in 2018, there are 11 "Hot Cities" with more than one million related videos on Tik Tok, and the short video transmission of city image has become the latest blue ocean^[3]. With the help of short videos, the city image of these "Famous Cities on Internet" was shaped and disseminated with increasing popularity and the development of related industries such as urban tourism, economy and culture was boosted. Meanwhile, it has further been broadcast overseas, continuously deepening and expanding the city's influence overseas, and improving the city's competitiveness. Different from the traditional media, the short video is more interactive and the content is more abundant, real and attractive due to its image and sound transmission function. With the advent of the new media era, short videos have taken over the banner of city image construction and initiated new areas of city image construction^[4]. It is undeniable that the formation and dissemination of city images can hardly be separated from the participation of short videos.

3 TWO FEATURES OF SHORT VIDEO BOOST URBAN IMAGE DISSEMINATION

Short video refers to video content that is less than 5 minutes long on new Internet media. Its characteristics of low creation threshold, popularizing content, fragmented time, fast transmission speed, strong social attributes, etc. virtually promotes the dissemination of city image. In the following of this article, I will base on the characteristics of the Tik Tok short video, start to analyze how it promotes the spread of city image from its dissemination content, methods and effects.

3.1 Limited Short Video Time Makes Users Focus on Special Features

There is a certain limit on the length of short videos. For an example on Tik Tok, the length of short videos is generally controlled within 15 seconds and no more than one minute. In such a short period of time, it is difficult to completely present the appeal of a city, but it is possible to show a certain characteristic of the city and express the theme more intuitively. Contents about local specialties such as hot pot of Chongqing, brush crisps of Xi'an, Shimian barbecue of Chengdu, etc. have about 50 million single broadcast volume. Besides, local characteristics of urban landscapes, traditional culture, etc. are also the objects of short videos. Among them, the hottest short video on the

glass suspension bridge Zhangjiajie has exceeded 100 million in Tik Tok. Due to time constraints, the content presented by short videos is often not all-in-one but the essence. Users can make full use of this 15-second time to grasp the characteristics of a city that is different from other places. Moreover, Tik Tok applies a continuous loop playback mode, in the process of refreshing, it is likely to get relevant and repeated content about a city's characteristics, so that it continuously superimposes in the audience's mind, influencing them in an unnoticed way.^[5] Through the presentation of short video content with local characteristics, a three-dimensional image of the city is constructed to deepen the public's understanding and impression of the city, and promotes the dissemination of the city's image.

3.2 Short Video Has Audio-Visual Advantages, and the Combination of Sound and Image Enriches the City Image

Differing from traditional forms of graphic introduction, short videos record and introduce cities through sound and video, so that the image of the city can be presented three-dimensionally, realistically and vividly. The combination of visual and audio, as advantages of short videos, has brought about a number of new city characteristic symbols while highlighting the urban visual image symbols. City visual image symbols include urban landscapes, local cuisine, folk costumes, customs and so on. On the Tik Tok platform, a series of symbols related to visual images of the city are deepened and excavated unceasingly, and meanwhile, new visual symbols are constantly added to the inherent visual image symbols. For example, in the short video about Xi'an city, besides the "terracotta warriors" and Chinese hamburger (marinated meat in baked bun) " which are well-known by the public, the heat transfer of the short video of Xi'an "dropping bowl wine" has unearthed the vision of the ancient city and injected vitality into the image of the city.^[6] In addition, some urban music with clear local characteristics have become new urban symbols in the process of continuous cooperation with the short video for the dissemination of urban image characteristics. For example, the singer Pu Shu's "Ordinary Road" is widely adopted in short videos about Chongqing, which cleverly presents the characteristics of Chongqing: "8D Magic Mountain City"; "Song of Xi'an", which is in line with Xi'an cuisine, manifests Xi'an's abundant and diverse cuisine and cultural characteristics; singer Zhao Lei's "Chengdu" tells about local customs and culture of Chengdu and creates a new rhythm of the city. Different city music expresses various urban cultural atmospheres and styles. The emotional rendering of music coupled with visual presentation can resonate with the communication subject and audience, not only in terms of audio and visual, but also psychologically and emotionally^[7]. In short videos, the image of the city is expressed in richer and more attractive way through the combination of sound and video. It deepens the audience's impression and remains in their mind longer and the city's influence is hence increased.

3.3 UGC Content Production Mode of Short Video to Truly Show the City Image

Since there is low threshold for making short videos, everyone can become a publisher of short videos of city images as long as he has a smart mobile terminal and network. According to the "White Paper on Research of Short Video and City Image", more than 80% of the city image videos with a TOP100 playback volume on the Tik Tok platform were created by individual users^[3]. Most of the users who created short videos on city images are local citizens and tourists to the city, from whose perspectives the production and dissemination of short videos about the city image avoid excessive packaging and design, so that the city image can appear more real, down-to-earth, and convincing. In addition, some users walk through the streets, show some certain city features that are hidden in the corners of the city and are not well known. Such discoveries combining with the existing famous contents will enrich the content of the city image and promote the dissemination of a city image as a whole. The short videos about the city image uploaded by the general public are often related to personal cognition and experience. Since everyone has a different understanding of the city image, each has his unique focus. Such differences provide diversified possibilities for shaping the image of the city, thereby stimulating the curiosity of the audience and promoting the deep dissemination of the image of the city^[5]. On the Tik Tok platform, the sharing of short videos among users makes it a new way of socializing. Users can issue comments and likes under the short video, and also forward it for communication and interaction, hence the short video is wider spread, attracting more people to the city and expressing the characteristics of the city image for multiple times. This cyclical process of communication and dissemination can increase the repetitiveness of the characteristics of the city image on the short video platform, deepen the public's

impression of the city image, form a certain awareness of it, and promote its dissemination.

4 THREE DISSEMINATION STRATEGY OF CITY IMAGE IN THE WAVE OF SHORT VIDEOS

As more and more “Popular Cities on Internet” merge, such as Xi'an, Chongqing, Dunhuang, Zhengding, etc., short videos have constant expanding impact and function on the dissemination of urban image. They have brought new impetus to the shaping of urban image, and are increasingly becoming a significant method of disseminating urban image. In the process of future city image dissemination, it is a key issue worth thinking how to make good use of short videos to help boost the image of the city and push the image of the city beyond the region and the country.

4.1 Government Takes the Lead to Encourage the Participation of Citizens

In the process of broadcasting the city image in short videos, the government, as the definer of the city image ought to take a major responsibility. It should actively encourage the public to participate in the production of content related to the image of the city, and to act as the specific interpreter of the image of the city.^[3] While taking the leading position about the city image, the government should use the power of the people to integrate the resources of all parties, expand and enhance the intensity and depth of communication, increase the city's influence, and make the city's image popular.

4.2 Seek for Unique City Feature and Avoid Homogenization

For the rise of the "Popular Cities on Internet", besides the help of new media, it is very important for the city to own its distinctive features. The dissemination of each city image should be based on its own culture, environment and resources, highlighting its unique characteristics. Not only should we strengthen the apparent characteristics of the city, we should continue to dig and develop the neglected parts hidden in the corners of the city, strive to be unique and enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of the city.

4.3 Embrace New Media Actively to Create Quality Video Content

The advent of the new media era has provided more channels and ways for the city's image dissemination. Hence, the cities need to seize the opportunities of new media development, play the interactivity of new media, encouraging users to actively participate in production and dissemination. In the process, it is crucial to create high-quality video content, maximize the use of new media for promotion, and increase the breadth of dissemination.^[8]

CONCLUSION

As a city's business card and an intangible asset of the city, the city image is the fundamental way to allow the outside world know about the city. Short video, with its characteristics of low creation threshold, popularizing content, fragmented time span, fast communication speed and strong social attribute, promotes the communication of city image formation, so that more people can understand the characteristics of different cities. As the continuous advancing of science and technology, the impact of new media on city image will never stop to grow. We should catch the trend of the times, actively embrace and make good use of new media in the process of city image dissemination, so that it can play a better role.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was financially supported by the Undergraduate Innovation Training Project of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies in 2019.

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