

# *Research on International Communication of Chongqing City Image in Social Media*

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**Abstract:** Chongqing has been committed to building the image of a famous historical and cultural city, but these positioning is far from enough for the development of a city. Not only because of its historical background, it is simply positioned as a famous historical and cultural city. There are countless such cities in the country and the world. That's something to really think about. The development of urbanization process provides more opportunities for the construction and development of the city, and the image of Chongqing has been constantly exploring and innovating since its direct administration. Based on social media, social media advertising breaks through the publicity and interaction of traditional advertising. Based on the perspective of social media, this paper takes social media advertising as a breakthrough point to conduct a new study on the development and communication of Chongqing city image. This paper analyzes the current situation of international communication of Chongqing city image, and puts forward strategic suggestions on the problems in international communication of Chongqing city image in social media, so as to improve the overall city image and enhance the comprehensive strength of Chongqing city in the fierce urban competition.

## **1. Introduction**

The development of economic globalization has accelerated the process of urban modernization, and also prompted different cities to pay attention to the all-round competition. City managers have promoted the city's soft power to a higher position and paid more attention to it. In the process of city development, city image, as the core of the city's soft power, has also been paid more attention by city managers. With the continuous development and progress of the Internet, scientific and technological innovation has given birth to new media such as Weibo, wechat and short video. With the continuous development of new media and the continuous expansion of its application range, new media are increasingly welcomed by city managers in the process of shaping and communicating the urban image of different cities, and they begin to constantly try to use new media as a communication platform to shape and communicate the urban image.

City image is people's subjective view and concept of the city and the visual image or mirror image formed from it. The current research on urban image at home and abroad mainly includes three aspects: communication channel, construction mechanism and path strategy. In terms of communication channels, researchers found that social media data can be used as a reliable measure

of perceived urban image in the digital age. Due to the rapid development of social media in China and the rise of video platforms such as Douyin and b Station, relevant researches mainly focus on short videos. As a cultural practice, short video production can integrate and shape the image of a city, and realize the transformation from single to multiple. Its immediacy, interactivity and micro-perspective of users are difficult for traditional media to possess. Therefore, some researchers point out that the rise of short video platforms provides a new path for urban image communication. The construction mechanism can be roughly divided into traditional media and new media two times. In the age of traditional media, the urban image is mainly constructed by the government, while in the age of new media, it is mainly constructed by the public through the Internet and appears in the form of graphic video communication. After the study of Chongqing, the researchers found that there are problems such as aesthetic fatigue, fuzzy positioning, and insufficient depth and dimension of cultural communication in the video communication of the urban image spelling and schema [1]. A large number of short videos float on the surface, excessively pursuing modernization and ignoring cultural connotation. Some researchers point out that modernization has led to the fading of the uniqueness of the city and the loss of its meaning as part of the city image. Therefore, the in-depth excavation of the cultural connotation of the city will become an important aspect in the process of constructing the city image. At the level of path strategy, it is generally carried out in the way of case study, such as different cities, different platforms, different presentation methods, etc. Path strategy is the foothold of most urban image studies, including the previously mentioned research on communication channels and construction mechanism, which pave the way for putting forward a reasonable strategy. To sum up, relevant researches mainly focus on emerging media. Media, as an important carrier of city image, is a productive factor for the operation of modern society. However, there are few authoritative studies on the image of international tourism media, especially on Chongqing. Therefore, it is more and more important to study the overseas media image of Chongqing [2].

## 2. Analysis of Chongqing City image

Chongqing, the shame of history and the cultural capital, the heavy history has endowed Chongqing with blood and tears, as well as a long and legendary cultural accumulation. Chongqing has been committed to building itself into a famous historical and cultural city. But these positions are far from enough for the image building of a city. The process of urbanization provides a good opportunity for urban construction. In the construction of the "12th Five-Year Plan", Chongqing has carried out the development strategy of five functional zones, the urban and rural development is increasingly balanced, the regional coordination is gradually enhanced, and the urbanization development has been effective. All these have laid a solid foundation for the arrival of the "13th Five-Year Plan", and the new-type urbanization construction has been put on the agenda. In the favorable political environment, urbanization development and higher urbanization level are the necessary sources of nutrition for the development of urban image.

Yang Qingbo [3] believes that city image is a comprehensive impression and evaluation formed in the public mind by various media through planned and sustainable integrated communication. For a long time, the image of Chongqing as "mountain city" and "bridge city" has been deeply rooted in people's hearts. On foreign social media platforms, these two images are also the focus of professional media and we-media communication. Enter "Chongqing" in Facebook, Youtube and Instagram, and filter out the content published by Chinese media such as iChongqing and CGTN. It is found that among the information posted by overseas social media users, the most frequently used words were "Mendacity" and "the mountain city." "Giant" is often associated with the label "China's largest municipality", while "Mountain city" is often associated with the way Chongqing's rail

transit operates and "3D". These two images are consistent with tourists' traditional impression of Chongqing and are currently the most popular images of the city on overseas social media platforms.

Bayu culture is the foundation of the city of Chongqing, a powerful gene for the development and growth of Chongqing, and the core humanistic basis for Chongqing to stand in the forest of cities [4]. In this thick and mysterious land, there are profound cultural deposits and long educational heritage, forming a local culture with unique regional characteristics. However, there is little content related to these cultures on overseas social media platforms. Even the more influential accounts, such as CGTN and Xi's Moments, focus mainly on showing Chongqing's cityscape and the new changes in the city's development, with little in-depth interpretation of Chongqing cultural heritage and connotations.

### 3. Current situation of international communication of Chongqing City image

**Cultural image communication is insufficient.** City spirit and culture are the "soft power" of city competition. City culture is the foundation and continuation of city spirit, including the city's humanistic feelings, social beliefs, living customs, value judgment and other aspects. The city cultural spirit is the necessary condition for the city to stand up and stand in the forest of the city. It directly influences the difference between the city and other cities and is an important part of the core strategy of the city construction. The charm of a city full of historical vicissitudes lies in its culture, which plays an extremely important role in the development process of a city. The enduring development of a city is not only economic, political and social, but more importantly, cultural and spiritual. The construction of soft environment for cultural development can provide excellent soil for the development of urban culture. At present, the image of Chongqing in the process of communication, too much adhere to the publicity of the urban environment and ignore the shaping of the urban cultural image. Chongqing is a city full of humanity and history. The culture condensed out of Chongqing includes "Bayu culture, Secondary capital culture, Hongyan Culture" and so on. Among these existing cultural resources, what should be done is to fully publicize the existing cultural image, but not to frame the development framework of Chongqing city image only in these positions, nor to simply stick to the above cultural elements, but to expand or explore more representative cultural images of the city [5]. At present, the city image construction of Chongqing is only based on the surface orientation of historical and cultural city, instead of the fundamental construction and promotion of the construction of urban culture, based on the surface construction of the city image, ignoring its unique historical and cultural deposits. Among the topics reported on social media, more emphasis is placed on food, beauty, economy, people's livelihood and other issues, while few contents such as urban culture, customs, intangible cultural heritage and dialect are publicized. The urban cultural image has not been communicated in place, and the urban cultural image has not been put on the propaganda agenda as the main topic. At the same time, the public pays far less attention to the cultural image of the city than other city images. The city image of Chongqing should be combined with the cultural resources of Chongqing, so that no matter the overall layout or local landscape of the city can reflect the unique historical, cultural, religious characteristics and ethnic customs of Chongqing, so that the cultural image will run through the city development, so that the public can internalize the city cultural image in the mind and externalize it in the form.

**One way voice, lack of interaction.** Social media is an important tool to maintain the relationship between cities and consumers. Social media, represented by Facebook, can stimulate consumers' responses and engage in dialogue with consumers, with obvious interactive characteristics. In tourism marketing, interactivity means that communicating interesting

information about a destination, providing content relevant to a specific target market, and telling potential visitors its views and experiences are highly sought after. Interaction can have a positive impact on tourism satisfaction, tourist participation and decision-making, and is the key to successful local brand building on social media [6]. Take Hangzhou\_China, a Hangzhou cultural travel account on Facebook, as an example. Hangzhou\_China usually responds to user comments like "nice", "beautiful" and other similar emoticons by Posting comments like "thank you! Visit Hangzhou!" ", which is often followed by "soon", "can't wait", etc. Such two-way interaction not only increases the heat of the post itself, so that it can be promoted to a greater extent, but also enhances the user stickiness, which facilitates the diversion of online users to offline users and the development of real tourism consumers. A review of iChongqing's posts shows that the account lacks interaction with its audience. The account did not respond to comments on the posts, such as praise comments "nice" and "beautiful" or question comments "where" and "when", and did not deal with some negative comments or spam messages in a timely manner. Such unilateral voice is not conducive to enhancing user stickiness, but also causes negative emotions to spread freely through social media, bringing negative impact to the image of the city.

**Monotonous form, weak marketing.** Whether it is city image communication or city brand construction, the ultimate goal is to guide the audience to the destination and transform the good subjective impression of the audience into real objective actions. Therefore, city managers should treat cities as commodities to be bought and establish marketing awareness. They should not only spread the content that the audience likes, but also spread the content that is easy to stimulate the consumption of the audience, so that the city becomes the first choice destination for tourists or investors. However, at present, most cities are only simple information transmission when they carry out overseas image communication, expecting to complete the accumulation of city brand image by telling the audience "what I have", and lack of activities to further stimulate the audience's behavior. On overseas social media, most travel accounts adopt the traditional graphic form, and the communication effect is not satisfactory. Even if the content is of high quality, user comments are often complimentary of the images themselves or the photographers, without any connection to the city. For users, simply appreciating a few beautiful pictures is not enough to stimulate interest and desire for further action. In the past two years, with the development of livestreaming technology and its wide application on social media, many cities have tried to open livestreaming on overseas social media. iChongqing started to try livestreaming in 2019, and by April 17, 2022, it had set up 134 livestreaming events in total. Among them, the livestream of "Experience autonomous driving with iChongqing during the 2019 Smart Expo" had the best effect, attracting 954,000 views, 12,000 likes and 1,253 comments. The new form of live broadcasting can bring new stimulation to users, which is a brand new experience for users. However, due to the long duration of live broadcasting, it is often difficult to keep users in the live broadcasting room, and the output content is difficult to be fully received by users.

## 4. International communication strategy of Chongqing City image

### 4.1 Strengthen overseas media cooperation and expand overseas channels.

As an urban information platform, iChongqing understood the limitations of its content from the beginning of its design. What iChongqing needs to catch up with is the popularity of the big word "China". China has been a high-frequency word attracting high attention in the world. Therefore, iChongqing does not blindly emphasize "Chongqing" in content production, and tells the stories of Chongqing well is to spread the voice of China. In terms of channel promotion, first of all, iChongqing attaches great importance to such overseas search and social media platforms as Google, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Through advertising on these platforms, it exposes and displays

key news and long-lasting content to attract traffic to its website. It also optimizes keywords so that content produced by iChongqing can appear in the first five pages of search results when users are looking for keywords such as "Chinese investment", "Chinese culture" and "Chinese tourism". This is a long-term process, and the work is still in its infancy. Secondly, Chongqing International Communication Center has established cooperative relations with PR Newswire and other overseas manuscript distribution channels, which has improved the targeted distribution ability of overseas multi-language and multimedia manuscripts. At the same time, since its establishment, the center has attached great importance to exchanges and cooperation with international mainstream media. So far, it has established direct contacts with Nikkei, Wall Street Journal, BBC, CNN, National Geographic and Bloomberg News. Organize and file resources invested by the Wall Street Journal, National Geographic, CNN, Bloomberg and other media, establish direct contact with their correspondent stations in China, and seek cooperation on topic selection and interview. And sorted out the brand activity resources of the above mainstream foreign media, and provided relevant departments to select cooperation according to the external publicity needs of Chongqing. In 2018, Germany's Rheinische Post, Singapore Press Holdings, Kazakhstan's mainstream media exchange Group, Japan's Keizai Shimbun, and Zambia's Media Think Tank Exchange Seminar visited Chongbao Group and the Chongqing International Communication Center. The paper layout exchange, editorial staff exchange, media advertising agency, international project construction and other aspects of cooperation were discussed.

#### **4.2 Brand expansion around the city publicity**

Urban publicity is a new market and a "blue ocean" for local media. Chongbao Group has established strategic cooperation with Chongqing Culture and Tourism Commission and established Chongqing Culture and Tourism International Communication Center, which is responsible for overseas online promotion of Chongqing Culture and Tourism. Based on iChongqing platform, we cooperate with Chongqing Tourism & Investment Group and jointly take charge of the inbound tourism market expansion in America, Asia, Australia and Africa. Centering on city publicity, Chongqing International Communication Center actively expands project resources. The overall publicity and promotion activities of Chongqing International Airlines, "I Fly with Chongqing", have been jointly carried out with the Municipal Communications Commission, Chongqing Airlines and HNA Group. Expand the external publicity needs of counties in the exhibition area, and provide annual external publicity services for districts and counties with iChongqing platform. Overseas media cooperation to facilitate the implementation of the project. In May 2019, under the leadership of Chongqing Government Information Office, Chongqing International Communication Center and Nihon Keizai Shimbun jointly held "Asia300 Global Economic Forum Chongqing Summit". As one of the theme activities of the 2019 Western China International Cooperation Conference, A300 Chongqing Summit attracted more than 300 politicians and businessmen from 180 companies and institutions around the world to gather in Chongqing. Japan Economic Society and iChongqing carried out detailed reports on the summit, and the news was reprinted by more than 4000 overseas websites, effectively improving the voice of Chongqing overseas. Chongqing International Communication Center has just started to use mobile Internet for city publicity. There are many difficulties to be overcome, such as the exploration and mastering of international communication rules, the construction of multi-nationality and well-educated young team, the funding guarantee of platform construction, the improvement of business operation model, and the shortage of leading technical talents. However, through one year's exploration and practice, the center has a direction to move forward, and has also received some modest results. It is believed that under the guidance of the Publicity Department of Chongqing Municipal Committee and the Information Office of

Chongqing Municipal Government, and under the leadership of the Committee of Chongqing Renews Group, iChongqing platform will grow vigorously and become a national benchmark platform for provincial publicity, contribute to the construction of Chongqing's "two high levels", and open up a new "blue ocean" for the media integration transformation of Chongqing Renews Group [7].

#### **4.3 Social networking to highlight Chinese symbols and urban carriers**

The construction of Chongqing's urban image involves multi-dimensional and multi-type cultural symbols and scene elements. These scenes and symbols have both Chinese style and Chongqing characteristics. With the changes of The Times, the meaning and connotation of symbols are constantly developing. In regional publicity, Chongqing International Communication Center generally propagates around symbolic elements with Chongqing characteristics, such as people, events, things and fields, which reflects the evolution path from single plane to diversified space, and conforms to the aesthetic trend of diversified global audiences in the current era. In his book *Image City*, American scholar Kevin Lynch proposed five elements of city image: road, boundary, region, node and marker[8]. By using landmark landscapes such as outdoor buildings, streets and Bridges to condense the city theme, citizens and overseas audiences can enhance their visual perception and memory of the city image, so as to establish a visual identification system of the city image. Chongqing International Communication Center fully taps the communication potential of Chongqing, makes accurate portraits of Chongqing, and creates characteristic business cards with contemporary flavor for Chongqing. As one of the largest cities with mountains and rivers in the world, Chongqing has successfully built more than 14,000 Bridges and tunnels under the leadership of the Communist Organization of China, making it one of the central cities in western China opening up to the outside world, and becoming the real "Bridge Capital of China". In 1958, Chongqing began construction of the first bridge across the Jialing River. During decades of rapid development, bridge projects have increased in size and design styles, from the world's largest stone arch bridge to 5G-line road Bridges, arch Bridges, beam Bridges, suspension Bridges, cable-stayed Bridges, etc. Chongqing holds 17 world bridge records. It has become a veritable "bridge city". In the publicity of the centenary of the founding of the organization, iChongqing extracted the characteristics of the city and selected the growth process of Chongqing, the "bridge capital". The 6 minutes English short video "Change | Landscape in Chongqing in One Hundred China Bridge" joint sichuan international studies university pushed the Russian, French, German, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese and north Korea language version 7 languages, has been forwarded by official media such as Xinhua News Agency, People's Daily English App, China Daily App and overseas mainstream media in more than 60 countries. The video has been read more than 233 million times overseas, making it a highlight of the international communication of the century-old city. Therefore, Chongqing has gained the international name card of "China Bridge Capital", helping to build the international image of China with the good image of the city. "What this city has achieved is incredible. The infrastructure in Chongqing is beyond imagination." Later, Chongqing International Communication Center and iChongqing also released "Chongqing @International Friendly City Street Culture Season" #streetculture activity and short video series of foreigners Vlog shopping and international cities. By capturing Chongqing's bright urban elements such as graffiti, skateboards, sculptures and stadiums, it reflects the cultural prosperity and diplomatic achievements of new China.

#### **4.4 Extending good feeling into interest and customizing fun selections for precise distribution**

The key to determining the image of a city lies in its own political, economic, cultural and

realistic characteristics of the movement track, and with the rapid development of mobile social media, the city image mainly by short video has gradually conveyed a richer embodied experience, urban events increasingly tend to landscape and become the protagonist. In order to fit the overseas communication context and improve the overseas promotion of the communication content, Chongqing International Communication Center recruits excellent communication talents with high salaries around the world and sets up a professional team. Through the professional production process of external topic selection, foreign language production, external specialization optimization and internal review, we can accurately capture the interests of overseas audiences, edit communication content of different styles and forms according to the information receiving habits of users in different contexts, and customize the distribution, so as to effectively improve the effect of international communication. Chinese food, traditional Chinese medicine and martial arts are the three typical elements of Chinese culture and enjoy a high reputation overseas [9]. When the Zhengzhou-Chongqing high-speed railway was fully opened, Chongqing International Communication Center explored the interests of the audience, and targeted the topics at "beautiful scenery" and "Kung fu". On June 22, 2022, with the slogan of "Blowing the night breeze of Jialing River, enjoying the magic of Kungfu in Shaolin", iChongqing linked with Dahe Daily and Henan Video live connected to Henan Shaolin Temple from Chaotianmen of Chongqing, and recommended Zhengyu high-speed Railway -- a new route to visit beautiful China to the world. The live broadcast was simultaneously broadcast on 12 major media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and wechat video accounts of Chongqing International Communication Center, Chongqing microblog, Douyin, Dahe Daily and Yuvideo Kuaishou and Douyin. Anchors from Zheng and Chongqing introduce the history, culture and tourism characteristics of Zheng and Chongqing to overseas audiences at Chaotianmen, one of the 17 famous ancient city gates of Chongqing, and Shaolin Temple, the "most famous temple in the world". They dream to connect the two cities and start a two-way romantic journey. The live broadcast shows the intersection of Chongqing's two rivers on the 250-meter-high glass walkway, and the essence of kung fu in the Shaolin training hall with a history of more than 1,000 years. The integration of modernity and history excited audiences from all over the world, and they all expressed their desire to visit Zhengzhou and Chongqing by high-speed rail. The opening of Zhengzhou-Chongqing high-speed railway is an urban event attracting global attention, highlighting Chongqing's high-speed economic development and developed infrastructure construction. Under the precise external publicity of Chongqing International Communication Center, the urban event has evolved into an international event, enjoying a global reputation. In July 2022, Chongqing International Communication Center hosted the "Feel Chongqing Taste Spread Five Continents" activity officially kicked off. The activity invited overseas students from different countries to learn from chefs to cook Chongqing characteristic famous dishes on site. With the concept of "food make friends with the world", Chinese culinary culture was transmitted to the world, which aroused strong responses from netizens at home and abroad.

## 5. Conclusion

In the context of the unprecedented changes in the world and the interwoven epidemic of the century, China's voice in the international community needs to be strengthened, and the international communication capacity building of local mainstream media has become increasingly urgent. Chongqing has rich cultural resources and profound historical background. In the planning of "One Belt and One Road", the importance of its close political and cultural exchanges with the countries along the Belt and Road has been gradually highlighted. In the practice process of international communication, Chongqing International Communication Center still needs to make

continuous efforts in attracting leading technical talents, guaranteeing platform construction funds, improving business operation mode and other aspects, so as to stimulate the joint efforts of the main body, channels and platforms, so as to form a large-scale international communication matrix, tell credible, respectable and lovely stories of Chongqing, and pass on the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

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