

The influence of stereotype on urban brand communication and its development strategy

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Abstract:

In the long-term urban construction and urban information dissemination, people generally attach fixed labels to a certain city and form stereotypes influenced by the natural environment and humanistic habits at that time. Even if these impressions are given new characteristics with the change and development of the city over time, it is difficult to reverse the inherent cognition of the audience's psychology. This paper aims to explore the relationship between these stereotypes and urban brand building, find out the relationship between them through a series of research methods such as questionnaire survey, and explore the impact of stereotypes on urban brand communication in audience cognition. While the government and other subjects make efforts to create new urban characteristics, they fully recognize the "double-sided effect" of stereotypes, effectively avoid risks, and seize the advantages of communication. At the same time, they also hope to make full use of the communication advantages of current emerging media technologies and media platforms in urban communication, so that more urban personalities can be seen and urban brands can achieve breakthroughs in the inevitable rise and fall cycle. In summary, according to these research contents and conclusions, this paper puts forward corresponding development strategies, so as to realize the construction and improvement of the city image publicity system, so that the city brand can receive certain guidance at each stage, provide reference for building a city brand with its own characteristics, and finally realize the sustainable development of the city brand.

Keywords: stereotype, urban brand, urban communication, brand activation

1. Research background and significance:

In scientific research, city brand reflects people's general impression of city characteristics to some extent. For example, Beijing is the political center, Shanghai is the financial center, Kunming is spring all year round, Shenzhen is young and inclusive...

At the same time, as a kind of city soft power, the role of city brand is paid more and more attention by people. For city managers, how to change the bad impression of the public on the city and build city brand has become an important task. 275 city image propaganda videos released after the 19th CPC National Congress were selected as samples.

According to the data of the report, the top ten cities in terms of overseas communication influence are: Shenzhen, Hangzhou, Wuhan, Shanghai, Beijing, Qingdao, Changsha, Suzhou, Xi'an and Xiamen. Among them, Shenzhen's communication index is far ahead of other cities, Wuhan and Shenzhen have a very bright performance in the viewing amount of a single promotional video and

the total viewing amount; The overall performance of Hangzhou city image promotional videos is good, and the overseas broadcast volume of 3 Hangzhou city promotional videos is more than 200,000; Shanghai has the highest release index; Changsha has the best performance in the interactive index. At the same time, it is worth noting that Qingdao, Suzhou, Xi'an, Xiamen and other "network red cities" and well-known tourist cities also have a good performance in the production of city image publicity videos and overseas communication efforts and effects. [1]

All over the country, from provincial to municipal and even county governments, without exception, have continuously launched official city image publicity videos to shape the image of the city, promote local resources, and win the public's mind. These cities use new media platforms to publicize promotional films with their own urban characteristics, thus establishing a new image in the hearts of the public. While more audiences understand their urban characteristics, they attract more resources and tourist support, enhance the city's visibility, and bring more opportunities for urban brand construction.

With the development and changes of society and The

Times, each city should put forward new development countermeasures and policies in order to better conform to the development trend, and explore new business cards and labels for the city. However, due to the long-standing social cognition, people have a solidified impression of the city and are bound by “labeling”. Therefore, in the process of improving urban brand construction, breaking through the existing restrictions and allowing the audience to accept new information and characteristics has become a key part of urban brand construction.

Today, with the vigorous development of media information environment, it is a cause that all city governments and local residents should work together to build a new image of the city by using media, refresh the audience’s cognition, and promote the sustainable development of the city. This research is helpful for the city to continuously break through the audience’s inherent cognition in brand construction, and promote the audience to update their cognition in a timely manner. So that the city brand and city image can be sustained development.

2. Literature review at home and abroad (according to keywords)

2.1 Urban stereotype

There have been many studies on the keyword of stereotype. The concept of stereotype first appeared in American scholar Lippmann’s book *Public Opinion*. Stereotype refers to people’s simplistic and fixed impression or view of things, which is usually mixed with people’s likes and dislikes and value evaluation of things. [2] While stereotypes help people understand things quickly, they can also lead to perceptions of things that deviate from the real situation, preventing us from obtaining a full and accurate understanding. In the early studies, scholars mainly stayed on the analysis of superficial phenomena and deeply explored the stereotypes existing in the field of social cognition, such as the stereotypes held by people in terms of gender, age, occupation, race and so on.

In addition, Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2006) put forward the concept of two-dimensional structure of city brand: City brand includes both the behavior of the city itself and the perception and impression of the public on the city. [3] Here it is reflected that breaking the fixed impression and constructing new urban characteristics are of great significance to the audience’s cognition of different cities.

In the study of urban image construction, some scholars focus on the “stereotype” brought by urban communication and urban landmark buildings and the degree of recognition of urban signs. Combine stereotypes with locally identifiable objects.

In the continuous study, researchers have found that ste-

reotypes are affected by self-intention and social motivation, and the experiments on the elimination and reversal of stereotypes have become new research objects and highlights.

2.2 City Brand Communication (Brand activity)

Foreign city brand research originated from city marketing, and city marketing appeared as a branch of regional marketing at the earliest. The concept of “city marketing” originated from the western concept of “national marketing”. Philip Kotler believes in “National Marketing” that a country can also be managed as attentively as an enterprise, and there are identity roles involved in the establishment of national image similar to that of enterprise experience management. In national marketing, we should highlight our own characteristics, find our own advantages, and improve our competitiveness. [4] Brand activation is also called brand revival, brand activation, brand rejuvenation, similar to the concept of brand activation: brand revival, re-branding, brand repositioning and so on. [5] It was first proposed by Kevin Lane Keller in his book *Strategic Brand Management* and has since been refined. Similar to part of the product life cycle theory, brands, like products, may also face aging and decline.

On the basis of previous research, the product activation strategy has been further developed. The product itself puts forward seven activation strategies: to increase the number and frequency of brand use by consumers; Develop new functions to increase the use value of the product; Enter new markets, expand the brand new continent; Repositioning, discarding outdated and outdated brand statements; Optimize the quality of products and services and abandon uncompetitive products or services; Introduce new technology, introduce new products, replace old products; Expand the brand width and carry out brand extension. [6]

In addition, Chinese scholars Hu Wangsheng and Xue Hua have linked the two-factor theory with brand activation. In their research, they believe that brand nostalgia is a health factor in brand activation, while brand experience is a motivating factor. Consumers can be activated by awakening brand nostalgia, triggering brand resonance and optimizing brand experience. It can be seen that while using the audience’s existing cognition to promote their sense of identity, they should also start to develop fresh content, attach importance to the experience brought by the brand to the audience, and constantly stimulate the audience to obtain satisfaction, so as to better realize brand activation. [7] According to the above researches, it can be seen that if urban brands want to maintain vitality and achieve sustainable development, they must grasp all stages of brand

activation, continuously inject fresh content into urban brand construction, and do a good job in communication and promotion.

3. Research Methods and data collection:

3.1 Survey Method

Based on the research theme, this paper designed a questionnaire titled “Study on the Influence of Stereotypes in city brand building” and set 15 questions, including whether people think there are stereotypes about cities, their attitudes towards stereotypes in city brand building, the main ways to understand city brand information in daily life, and the effective ways to reverse and change stereotypes and create new characteristics of cities. Survey the attitudes of the audience and residents towards this phenomenon. 277 questionnaires were collected, of which 264 were valid, and the effective rate was 95.3%.

Among the respondents, 119 were male, accounting for 45.0%, and 145 were female, accounting for 54.9%; The age range included all age groups, with 221 respondents aged 18-54, accounting for 83.7%; Among the respondents, 34 people came from China’s “super first-tier cities” (namely Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen), accounting for 12.8%, 118 people from first-tier and new first-tier cities, accounting for 44.6%, and 112 people from second-tier and lower-tier cities, accounting for 42.3%. The sample is balanced and effective, which can objectively reflect the cognition between stereotypes and urban brand building of people from different cities.

3.2 Data Analysis

Based on the data processing and analysis of the collected questionnaire contents, the degree of the influence of stereotypes on city brand building from various dimensions such as cognition, emotion and suggestion was calculated, and some measures were proposed to balance the relationship between the two.

According to the above questionnaire survey, nearly 80% of people think that every city needs to have its own distinctive characteristics, 87.5% of people will have stereotypes about the city or the region when referring to a city, and these stereotypes or established cognition are not completely accurate, and more than 60% of people think that it is necessary to break through and change these understandings through some ways.

3.3 SWOT Analysis

Through the analysis of the above data, based on the internal and external competitive environment and the situation analysis under the competitive conditions, it enumerates the four aspects of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities

and threats, and conducts a comprehensive, systematic and accurate study on the situation of the research object, so as to formulate corresponding development strategies, plans and countermeasures according to the research results.

According to past literature research and survey data analysis, stereotypes can not only bring negative effects on urban development and audience cognition. On the contrary, if we can grasp the communication effect brought by this kind of thinking, we can better publicize urban characteristics.

At present, people’s understanding of many cities is stuck in the negative understanding brought by the natural environment, human habits and public security situation in the past. Even though these limitations have been improved with the development of society and the prosperity of economy and culture, deep-rooted impressions and relatively lagging publicity make it difficult for people to have a new understanding of these cities. It brings more challenges to the sustainable development of the city and the high-quality construction of the brand.

Therefore, more effective ways are needed to break the challenge brought by this impasse to urban development and help these cities establish a more distinctive, distinctive and attractive urban image.

4. Research results and discussion:

4.1 Data

Table 1 Ways in which stereotypes hinder city branding

	Case summary					
	Effective		Missing		total	
	Number of cases	percent age	Number of cases	percent age	Number of cases	percent age
What are the stereotypical aspects that hinder urban brand building ^a	264	100.0%	0	0.0%	264	100.0%

a. The value 1 is used to tabulate the two groups.

What are the stereotypical aspects that hinder urban brand building (frequency)

		respond		
		Number of cases	percent age	Percentage of cases
What are the stereotypical aspects that hinder urban brand building ^a	Economic development	88	16.5%	33.3%
	Cultural characteristics	123	23.0%	46.6%
	Public security situation	148	27.7%	56.1%
	Natural environment	95	17.8%	36.0%
	Humanistic habit	80	15.0%	30.3%
total		534	100.0%	202.3%

a. The value 1 is used to tabulate the two groups.

Based on the data collected by the questionnaire “Exploring the Impact of Stereotypes on urban brand Building”

Table 2 Main ways to understand the latest urban development characteristics

Case summary

	Effective		Case Missing		total	
	Number of cases	percentage	Number of cases	percentage	Number of cases	percentage
\$The main way to understand the latest development features of the city ^a	264	100.0%	0	0.0%	264	100.0%

a. The value 1 is used to tabulate the two groups.

\$The main way to understand the latest development features of the city (frequency)

	respond	respond		Percentage of cases
		Number of cases	percent	
\$The main way to understand the latest development features of the city ^a	Public information service platform	146	18.6%	55.3%
	Books and newspapers	164	20.8%	62.1%
	Communicate with family and friends	160	20.3%	60.6%
	New media platform	168	21.3%	63.6%
	Promotional film, film	149	18.9%	56.4%
total		787	100.0%	298.1%

a. The value 1 is used to tabulate the two groups.

Based on the data collected by the questionnaire “Exploring the Impact of Stereotypes on urban brand Building”

Table 3 The most effective city brand building strategies for changing stereotypes

Case summary

	effective		Case missing		total	
	Number of cases	percent age	Number of cases	percent age	Number of cases	percent age
\$The most effective city brand building strategies for changing stereotypes ^a	264	100.0%	0	0.0%	264	100.0%

a. The value 1 is used to tabulate the two groups.

\$The most effective city brand building strategies for changing stereotypes (frequency)

	respond	respond		Percentage of cases
		Number of cases	Percent age	
\$The most effective city brand building strategies for changing stereotypes ^a	Advertising (including documentaries, feature films, etc.)	124	18.6%	47.0%
	Organize cultural or tourist activities	151	22.7%	57.2%
	Social media promotion	172	25.9%	65.2%
	Work with local residents or opinion leaders	81	12.2%	30.7%
	Continuous improvement of local departments	137	20.6%	51.9%
total		665	100.0%	251.9%

a. The value 1 is used to tabulate the two groups.

Based on the data collected by the questionnaire “Exploring the Impact of Stereotypes on urban brand Building”

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Make good use of the linkage characteristics of “stereotype”

“Stereotype” plays a “double-edged sword” role in the construction of city brand. In the publicity of city image, we should regularly evaluate and analyze the current communication focus and communication direction, and timely eliminate and reverse some outdated and deviated content.

Grasp the key points that are easier for the audience to ac-

cept, more affinity and proximity in the publicity, and help the audience to put down the defensive psychology and sense of estrangement when accepting the information. The correct use of stereotypes in publicity can promote the audience to accept the “established fact” in a non-defensive and non-contradictory environment, so as to quickly achieve the identification of urban cultural characteristics. At the same time, stereotypes can also increase the audience’s association with the brand image and enhance the memory. [8] When people reach the initial stage of city brand promotion, they have already reached a preliminary impression in their minds and triggered associations. In the subsequent stage of repetition and reinforcement, it is easier to stimulate the audience to deepen their understanding of these memories, and constantly consolidate them, and finally achieve better communication effects.

4.2.2 Taking a new route through the media platform

In the research, it can also be clearly found that in the stage of increasingly diversified and developed media platforms, the vast majority of audiences mainly learn about the latest development characteristics of their own cities or other cities through new media platforms, propaganda videos and public information service platforms. Therefore, making good use of media means has become a key part of breaking the audience’s stereotype of cities. Short video has the advantages of concise content, prominent focus, lively form and strong interaction. Its user stickiness is stronger, which encourages consumers to make use of fragmented time and obtain information more intuitively and quickly, which is more in line with the current audience’s habits of information acquisition. [9] It is an effective choice to make good use of short video platforms to realize the dissemination of city image. In a short period of time, the audience can quickly perceive the core of the content and the communicator can get immediate feedback. In this two-way interactive mode, both the receiver and the disseminator can capture the information characteristics more quickly, which is conducive to the direct communication of the content to the audience. Combine music, graphics and special effects to create a deeper impression and a more unique memory point. While making good use of short videos, it can also combine the advantages of long videos to spread specific information about the state of urban construction, economy, culture, nature and other aspects in a comprehensive and detailed way, so that the audience can get a more global sense of cognition.

4.2.3 Seize opportunities at all stages of the brand cycle

Just like human development, brands have their own life cycle. According to Philip Kotler’s research, brands and

products in the market go through four stages: introduction, growth, maturity and decline. And in the city brand construction should also grasp this law, seize the opportunity to achieve more effect.

In the construction of city brand, we must first have a clear brand positioning, according to market research to determine the core competition points of the city, and carry out preliminary publicity. Growth and maturity is crucial, and it is also the climax stage of brand building. It is necessary to optimize and improve infrastructure, improve service quality and residents' experience according to brand characteristics, hold rich activities to attract investors and foreign tourists, and increase the publicity of city brands with the help of the communication advantages of new media platforms to improve their exposure and popularity.

In addition, the government and other departments should also strengthen cooperation and communication with residents and enterprises. Timely update and clarify publicity ideas according to development trends, provide adequate financial support, and put forward supporting policies in a timely manner to support the development process. For example, when the brand in Xi'an, Zibo and other cities is well-known enough, the government departments put forward a series of protection policies to benefit tourists and protect and stabilize the rights and interests of local residents.

Recession and transformation are often the most challenging stages. At this time, we should maintain a sense of innovation, seek new growth points and development characteristics according to the changes in urban development, reshape and adjust the city brand, integrate new elements, and create new publicity features to maintain the activity of the city brand while achieving diversified urban development.

4.3 Result

According to the research findings in this paper, stereotypes have a huge impact on the construction of city brands. When facing or mentioning a certain city, people tend to have a fixed understanding of the local area, and at the same time, people have also suffered good or bad evaluations brought by others due to this understanding in their daily life. However, these perceptions are not comprehensive, objective and consistent with the real situation on the ground. It can be seen that stereotypes have a certain negative impact on urban development. People tend to have preconceptions and hinder people's objective understanding of a certain area and the people living in this area. If it is not effectively broken, it may cause regional estrangement, misunderstanding, and make regional development lag.

According to the survey, 81.6% of the people think that the image of their city has changed and new characteristics have been produced in terms of social development. Meanwhile, only 5.4% of the people have never noticed that the city is trying to change or break stereotypes in brand building activities. All these data mean that the government and residents want to break the constraints brought by stereotypes. To present a new image to the audience and people in other regions, hoping to create new features in the brand building, to achieve the reshaping of the environment, resources and people's impression.

4.4 Limitations

This paper studies the relationship between stereotype and city brand, and puts forward corresponding countermeasures by analyzing the duality of stereotype and the periodicity of brand activity.

However, this study still has some limitations. First of all, stereotype itself, as a complex concept, involves factors at multiple levels and is influenced by many individual differences. Therefore, it is often difficult to accurately grasp the full connotation of stereotype and connect and evaluate the impact of urban brand communication. In addition, the current research on stereotype and urban brand communication mostly adopts qualitative or quantitative methods such as questionnaire survey. Although these methods are scientific to a certain extent, there are differences in sample representation. In the communication strategy, the dimension focuses on the media platform and comments on the process and mode of communication, but there are still many aspects that are closely related to the construction of city brand and its sustainable development.

Future research needs to have a deeper understanding of the nature and law of stereotype and urban brand communication, adopt a more scientific and comprehensive research method, and fully consider the influence of various factors, so as to propose more effective development strategies.

5. Conclusion

Stereotype has an inseparable influence on the development of urban brands. Only by making good use of the advantages of this influence and avoiding the challenges brought by its limitations can brand activity be better activated. At the same time, we should also actively use technology and media means to seize the opportunities of brand construction at each stage and take specific measures, so as to effectively promote the construction and development of urban brands, enhance the city's visibility and reputation, achieve sustainable development of cities and urban brands in continuous innovation and improvement, optimize the living environment, and let the beauti-

ful city image deeply rooted in the people's heart.

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