

Research on the Communication Channels and Strategies of Hangzhou City Brand From the Perspective of Internationalization

YU Pengfei^[a]; YE Yanghan^[b]; ZHANG Yu^{[c],*}

^[a]School of Foreign Languages, Zhejiang University City College, Hangzhou, China.

^[b]School of Information and Electrical Engineering, Zhejiang University City College, Hangzhou, China.

^[c] Associate professor of English and applied linguistics. School of Foreign Languages, Zhejiang University City College, Hangzhou, China.
*Corresponding author.

Supported by National College Students' Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program, No.: 202213021032.

Received 9 September 2022; accepted 20 November 2022

Published online 26 December 2022

Abstract

In this paper, the authors analyze the difficult situation of Hangzhou's brand communication channels in the context of epidemic prevention and control from the perspective of internationalization, and propose a new strategy for Hangzhou's brand communication under the Internet medium to accelerate Hangzhou's internationalization and further enhance its international influence.

Key words: Brand image; Culture transmission channel; Internationalization

Yu, P. F., Ye, Y. H., & Zhang, Y. (2022). Research on the Communication Channels and Strategies of Hangzhou City Brand From the Perspective of Internationalization. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 18(4), 64-68. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/12866>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/12866>

1. DEFINITION AND VALUE EXPLANATION OF CITY BRAND

As subsystems of a city brand, city images are the product of the highly refined raw data about a city and the fusion and simplification of associated city representative symbols. The urban brand is a much broader concept than the urban image. It is a comprehensive and one-of-

a-kind urban promotional label created after the image is embodied according to the dominant characteristics of the refined product, and the positioning and packaging is carried out using special media (Zhang and Zhang, 2006).

Branding has become a major urban development positioning strategy for various countries to participate in the international market amid the ever-changing international perspective of economic globalization, political multipolarity, cultural diversification, social information and the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, city brand positioning can be divided into three types based on the nature of the city: political city brand, economical city brand, transportation-oriented city brand, cultural city brand, and tourism-oriented city brand (Yin and Wei, 2003). The positioning angle of an international urban brand is not only integrated with the general urban brand positioning, but also based on frequent cross-border exchanges and international influence characterized by regional radiation and driving forces (Gao, 2016). Taking international typical well-known cities as examples: such as Beijing, China, A typical political city brand, Xi Jinping positioned Beijing as an international communication center in the "Beijing City Master Plan (2016). Under the international perspective of economic globalization, political multipolarity, cultural diversification, social information technology, and the COVID-19 pandemic, branding has become a positioning strategy for the development of major cities and the participation of all countries in the international market. Positioning Based on the nature of the city, general city branding can be categorized into political city branding, economic city branding, transportation city branding, cultural city branding, and tourism city branding. In addition to the general brand positioning of international cities, the brand positioning of international cities is more based on frequent cross-border communication and international influence characterized by regional radiation and power. Consider the following examples

of well-known international cities: For example, in the United States, New York is the global business, economic, and trade network center. Compared with other large American cities, New York has many foreign businesses. Frequent cross-border exchanges and regional influence have propelled New York into one of the world's top three financial centers.

2. DEVELOPING PROCESS AND DIFFICULT SITUATION OF HANGZHOU'S INTERNATIONAL BRANDS

2.1 The Development Process of Hangzhou City Brand Internationalization

The city brand of Hangzhou has undergone a long "evolution." Following the "City of Love, Paradise City" in 2001, it became the "City of Quality of Life" in 2007. In 2008, "City Internationalization," one of the six major strategies of the Hangzhou Municipal Government, "lays the foundation for the basic development trend of Hangzhou's brand in the next ten years." As the capital city and political center of Zhejiang Province, Hangzhou's

urban brand will gradually shift from a cultural city brand to an economic city brand, eventually accelerating the integration of politics, economy and culture. Transport, tourism and other brands have been influenced by the radiation from Shanghai, China's international metropolis, and Hangzhou has gradually developed into a city that integrates politics, economy, culture, transport and tourism, has frequent international exchanges and radiates from the surrounding area. A high-impact international city. The urban brand building should be in line with the current era's hot spots, and the city brand image should be marketed with the help of the current era's hot spots. For example, influenced by the hot spots of the 2017 G20 Summit, Hangzhou adopted the international exhibition as its urban brand positioning, amplifying the effect of the G20 and launching a brand belonging to Hangzhou. Own city brand: "International Convention and Exhibition Capital, Event City." The 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games is currently a major international sporting event. It will amplify the combined effect of the Asian Games. With the help of the Asian Games effect, it will build Hangzhou's "Song Yun" culture into an international urban IP, accelerate excellent international cultural exchanges, and create a distinctive city. International city image.

Table 1
The evolution of Hangzhou's city brand positioning in the past 20 years

Years	City Brand Positioning	Tagline
2001	The City of Love	The city of love, the city of paradise
2005	The City of Women's Clothing	The city of silk, the city of women's clothing
2006	The City of Oriental Leisure	Hangzhou - the city of leisure in the East
2007	City of Quality of Life	Building a city of quality of life through entrepreneurship and innovation
2008	The City of E-Commerce in China	
2012	Quality City of the East	Building a city of quality in the East, building a happy and harmonious Hangzhou
2016	World City of Fame	Building a beautiful Hangzhou in line with the world-famous city
2017	World City of Gastronomy	
2017	City of International Exhibitions City of Events	To promote the internationalization of the city
2020	The City of Digital Consumption	Amplify the G20 effect and build a city of international exhibitions and events Building a city of digital consumption and branding "New Consumption - The Intoxicating Hangzhou"
2021	Southern Song Cultural Brand	Launching the "Song Rhythm and Memory"
2022	City of Wisdom Song Yun Asian Games	Campaign to build a cultural brand for the Southern Song Dynasty in Hangzhou Celebrating the Asian Games - Taste the Song Dynasty

Source: Official website of the 19th Asian Games Hangzhou 2022.

2.2 Difficult International Brand Communication Status Quo

(1) Influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, Hangzhou has limited offline channels for international brand communications. According to the survey and research of Chinese scholars, in the Internet age, 31.1% of international tourists prefer the information dissemination channel "recommended by relatives and friends," and

the role of traditional word-of-mouth is still the primary dissemination factor (Wang and Wang, 2021). Since the outbreak of novel coronavirus in 2019, China's economy, tourism and cultural exchanges have suffered. According to the data released by the Hangzhou People's Government and the Hangzhou Municipal Party Committee in China in 2021, the total tourism revenue in 2020 will decrease by 16.7% compared with last year (2019), the number

of foreign tourists will decrease by 86.5% year-on-year, and the average length of stay will be compared with that of last year (2019). It fell 26.6 % points in 2019. With the global impact of the novel coronavirus epidemic and geographical barriers, it is difficult for some international tourists to overcome geographical conditions and social factors to come to Hangzhou and subjectively experience Hangzhou's urban hardware brand.

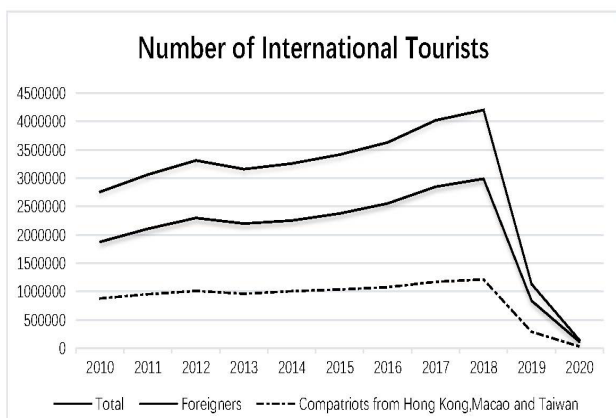


Figure 1 Overseas Tourism in Hangzhou in the Past 10 Years (Data Source: Survey and Statistics of Hangzhou Municipal People's Government of Hangzhou Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China)

(2) Exports of some of Hangzhou's international cultural and creative products have been hindered by cultural barriers between countries. The IP of cultural and creative products is also one of Hangzhou's international brands. The external scale of Chinese cultural and creative products is not large, and cultural and creative products will encounter complicated "cultural trade barriers" when they are exported. Cultural and creative products must have "customs clearance documents" without "ethical contradictions" issued by the customs (including "cultural products export licenses" and "certificates of political responsibility"). Businesses need to expend a lot of effort in filing and reviewing relevant documents, resulting in a lot of time, effort and capital consumption (Zeng, Peng and, 2021). With the exception of Hangzhou's top 10 cultural and creative industries, most other cultural and creative products are independently designed by university students. It is difficult for students to have the ability and access to issue relevant certificates, which has hampered the export of a large number of excellent international cultural and creative products from Hangzhou universities. The hindrance to the export of cultural and creative products has made it difficult for Hangzhou's outstanding international cultural and creative products to flow abroad, which has restricted the channels for Hangzhou's international brand communication lines.

(3) Constrained by the interests of netizens, Hangzhou lacks international opinion hotspots. According to the research of scholars Liu Xi and He Yixing and the data

from Facebook and Twitter, the most popular overseas topics are scenic tourism and local cultural activities, and the percentage of the popularity of scenic tourism entries is 35.14 % (Facebook), 22.62% (Twitter). The lowest level of discussion is in science, technology and economics. The percentages of technology entries are 0.86 % (Facebook), and 1.19% (Twitter), and the percentages of economy articles: are 1.36 % (Facebook), and 2.38% (Twitter) (Liu and He, 2015). Since 2010, the most represented international events in Hangzhou have been the China Hangzhou West Lake International Expo, the G20 Summit, the 14th West Lake International SME Symposium, and the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games. Some of them are international hotspots in economics and technology. International netizens lack interest in this aspect of Hangzhou, and Hangzhou's international public opinion is relatively low.



Figure 2 Entry search popularity word cloud

3. SOLUTIONS

3.1 An Online City-Branded IP Mesh Chain Was Created to Mitigate the Impact of the Epidemic on Offline Transmission Channels

Under the background of "Smart Hangzhou, Internet of Everything," Hangzhou should take its city IP as the lead, use virtual technology as the medium to create a sustainable Hangzhou international city brand IP mesh chain, and use Hangzhou's "city brain" system to build a 3DsMax-based Based on the technology, create a 3D model, and then use Unity3D to build a virtual roaming platform. At the same time, VR technology can be used to turn various fields (such as Hangzhou's historical evolution, natural geography, administrative regions, historical culture, famous and special products, etc.) into "Three World Heritage + Song Rhyme" ("Three World

Heritage”: West Lake Cultural Landscape, China Grand Canal (Hangzhou Section), the archaeological ruins of Liangzhu) and string them into a decentralized network-like “IP matrix” to realize “Passages from ancient times to modern use,” embedded in a roll of highly recognizable “bead curtains” accumulated from various fields in Hangzhou, creating a more systematic, comprehensive, and three-dimensional image” of the existing hardware brand image of Hangzhou It also has a joint international communication channel for Hangzhou’s cultural soft power.

3.2 Promoting Online Development of Cultural and Creative Industries

Promoting the online development of the cultural and creative industries can open a new path for Hangzhou’s international cultural and creative brands. The research team of the Hangzhou Municipal Committee of the Chinese Revolutionary Committee emphasized: “It is necessary to condense the cultural symbols of the city, activate the cultural genes, highlight the characteristics of the city, strengthen the empowerment of cultural creativity, and make Hangzhou culture more internationally friendly. (Hangzhou 2022 The 19th Asian Games official website, 2022)” The situation is further complicated by the novel coronavirus epidemic, which has partially affected the export rate of Chinese trade. With the help of digital construction, the move to the online cultural and creative industry is certainly a new way to spread Hangzhou’s international cultural and creative brand (Deng, 2018). Taking the Hangzhou IP cultural and creative game “Hundred Scenes of the South of the Yangtze River” as an example, combined with the holding of major international Asian games, develop games related to the path of the Asian games. Culture and Hangzhou poetic rhyme culture are integrated into the game, making domestic and foreign players resonate with each other artistically and emotionally, making exchanges between China and foreign countries more cordial, reducing cultural discounts, and allowing international players to experience the atmosphere of the Asian Games while staying at home. Hangzhou’s culture of innovation While creating the IP industry chain, it has also opened a new path for Hangzhou’s international brand communication lines.

3.3 Taking Advantage of Major Public Opinion Hotspots

Consider major public opinion events as a chance to boost the popularity of global “Hangzhou” public opinion. The municipal government should capture the interesting trend of international netizens, choose what they like, grasp the enthusiasm of the Asian Games, and use the international “Dongfeng” of the Asian Games to focus some overseas attention on Hangzhou’s unique scenic tourism and local cultural activities, and use them as an entry point

to communicate with the international community. The hot event resonates at the same frequency, and they are mutually coherent wave sources, which reinforces the vibrations in transmission frequency and intensity, directly targeting the pain points of netizens’ interests. We invite international friends in Hangzhou to participate in research activities related to “Asian Games + Song Rhyme” and paint Song porcelain. Interest points of international netizens, such as the Song Dynasty sports games, the Song Dynasty movable type printing and the Song Dynasty pastry making, have become international hot topics in Hangzhou, thereby influencing the popularity of international netizens’ opinions and promoting the city’s energy-level system, consumption volume and civilization building. To some extent, the popularity of Hangzhou’s international city brand will be raised, its international city brand will be promoted to go global, and Hangzhou’s own international city brand image will be promoted.

4. CONCLUSION

A good international urban brand represents a city’s international reputation. Building a good international city brand is conducive to triggering the “magnetic attraction” effect on international high-level talents, triggering the accumulation of talent chains, accelerating the inflow of overseas talents in manufacturing, emerging industries, information technology, artificial intelligence, etc., and driving urban education. It will also help increase support from the national and provincial governments for urban policies, accelerate the development of urban modern environment construction, municipal construction and urban infrastructure construction, optimize the living environment for residents, and improve the living happiness of urban residents. It is conducive to attracting investment from foreign-funded enterprises, focusing on the construction vision of entrepreneurs, investors and entrepreneurs, improving the utilization rate of local sustainable development resources, stimulating the construction of rural towns, accelerating the pace of urban economic construction and boosting urban development. The overall level reached a new level; It is conducive to strengthening the overall impression of the soft power of local urban culture, showcasing the cultural heritage of local cities, consolidating the cultural confidence of residents, and promoting urban civilization. Brand branding is a sub-system of national branding. As one of the organic elements of a country’s image, building an international brand for a city means a certain amount of self-cultivation for a Chinese brand. We will open the international communication pattern under the domain, enhance its popularity and credibility, and spread the country’s cultural soft power and the country’s economic hard power.

REFERENCES

- Deng, J. T. (2018). The impact and countermeasures of international cultural trade barriers on the “going out” of China’s cultural products. *Value Engineering*, 37(20), 286-288.
- Gao, J. G. (2016). The characteristic development road of famous cultural cities based on international communication—Taking Venice, Vienna and Nagoya as examples. *Journal of Suzhou University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition)*, 33(04), 97-101.
- http://www.hangzhou.gov.cn/art/2022/9/6/art_1229633756_59064827.html The 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou 2022.
- Liu, X., & He, Y. X. (2015). Research on the social media communication effect of Hangzhou’s international image. *Journal of Zhejiang Sci-Tech University*, 34(08), 318-324.
- Wang, L. H., & Wang, M. X. (2021). Research on the international communication of Hangzhou’s urban cultural image. *Tourism Overview*, (06), 105-107.
- Yin, Q. H., & Wei, H. T. (2003). Urban brand research. *Journal of Hunan Institute of Technology (Social Science Edition)*, (04), 5-8.
- Zeng, H. L., Peng, L. J., & Lu, S. Y. (2021). The current situation, problems and countermeasures of China’s export of cultural and creative products. *China Collective Economy*, (18), 13-14.
- Zhang, Y., & Zhang, R. (2006). City brand theory. *Journal of Management*, (04), 468-476.