

Research on the Strategy of Anshan City's Cultural and Tourism Image Improvement under the Perspective of Digital Communication

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Abstract

In the context of digital technology reshaping the communication ecology, short videos and social media have become the core carriers of urban cultural tourism image construction. This paper takes Anshan city in Liaoning province as the research object, based on the theory of digital communication and visual communication design, analyzes the current situation and difficulties of the cultural tourism image communication, and puts forward the four-dimensional improvement strategy of "brand reshaping, content innovation, visual transformation and ecological construction". The study suggests that Anshan, as an old industrial city, should transform its image from an "industrial hub" to a "cultural tourism destination" through multiple approaches: establishing a "Steel Capital New Charm" brand visual identity system, creating a short video dissemination matrix, exploring visual symbols of industrial heritage, and building a public participation communication mechanism. This transformation would provide a replicable model for similar resource-based cities.

Keywords

Digital communication, urban cultural tourism image, visual identity system, industrial heritage, Anshan.

1. Introduction

The report of the 20th CPC National Congress clearly proposed to "promote the deep integration of culture and tourism by shaping tourism with culture and highlighting culture through tourism", which has pointed out the direction for the development of cultural and tourism industry in the new era. AI-generated content (AIGC) is now revolutionizing the media landscape, with short videos, live streaming, and social media platforms emerging as key drivers in shaping urban identities. During 2023-2024, cities like Harbin, Zibo, and Tianshui gained viral traction through short-video platforms, sparking a boom in offline cultural tourism consumption. This demonstrated the powerful impact of digital dissemination in promoting urban cultural tourism.

As an important old industrial base in Liaoning Province, Anshan City enjoys the reputation of "Steel Capital" and boasts high-quality tourism resources such as Qianshan Mountain, Jade Buddha Garden, and Tanggangzi Hot Springs[1]. In 2024, Anshan proposed the strategic goal of building a "demonstration area for high-quality integration of culture, sports, and tourism". The Municipal Bureau of Culture, Tourism, Radio, and Television conducted promotional activities through platforms such as CCTV's "China Cultural and Tourism Gala", resulting in a year-on-year increase of 43.03% in tourist arrivals and 47.20% in comprehensive tourism revenue in the first half of the year. However, compared to cities within the province such as Shenyang and Dalian, Anshan still has significant shortcomings in the field of new media communication: the official Tiktok account has only 15,000 followers, far lower than the more than 100,000

followers of Shenyang and Dalian; the topic viewership on short video platforms is low, lacking phenomenal content for dissemination. How to reconstruct Anshan's urban cultural and tourism image from the perspective of digital communication has become an urgent practical issue to address.

This paper, based on the perspective of visual communication design and digital communication theory, systematically analyzes the current situation and problems of Anshan's urban cultural tourism image communication, explores the effective path of digital media to enhance the city's image, and provides theoretical support and practical reference for the integrated development of cultural tourism in Anshan and other resource-based cities.

2. Analysis of the Current Situation of Cultural and Tourism Image Communication in Anshan City

2.1. Communication Subject and Channel Construction

Currently, the dissemination of Anshan's urban cultural and tourism image has formed a diversified subject pattern of "government leadership + media cooperation + social participation". At the government department level, the Municipal Bureau of Culture, Tourism, and Broadcasting operates platforms such as the "Voice of Anshan Culture and Tourism" WeChat official account and Tiktok official account. From October to December 2023, the WeChat official account published 295 posts, maintaining a high update frequency [2]. At the level of media cooperation, in 2024, the Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism issued an invitation to tourists nationwide on CCTV's "China Culture and Tourism Gala". CCTV programs such as "CCTV News" and "Three Meals and Four Seasons" have repeatedly broadcast Anshan's unique cultural and tourism resources.

However, Anshan still lags behind developed cities in new media operations. Data shows that the official TikTok account of Anshan's culture and tourism has about 15,000 followers, while the culture and tourism accounts in Shenyang, Dalian, and other places all have more than 100,000 followers. In terms of WeChat public accounts, although the posting frequency is relatively high, the reading and liking numbers are lower than those of similar accounts in Dalian. This indicates that the coverage of official communication channels in Anshan is limited, and the communication efficiency needs to be improved.

2.2. Content and Form Characteristics of Communication

Anshan's cultural tourism promotion currently focuses on three key areas: First, showcasing natural landscapes, with the Qianshan Scenic Area as the centerpiece, highlighting the "Thousand Lotus Mountains" scenery. Second, presenting industrial heritage through venues like the Ansteel Museum and Mengtai Memorial Hall. Third, organizing folk cultural events such as the Anshan·Qianshan Pear Blossom Festival and the National Style Grand Ceremony.

In terms of dissemination formats, traditional text-and-image push content still dominates, while short video content accounts for a relatively small proportion and lacks creativity. Current short videos predominantly offer basic introductions and promotional offers for tourist attractions, lacking narrative storytelling and emotional resonance. Compared to cities like Harbin and Luoyang that have gained widespread recognition through short videos, there remains a gap in content creativity, visual design, and interactive strategies.

2.3. Construction of Visual Image Recognition System

The construction of visual identity system of Anshan city is lagging behind. Despite its reputation as the 'Steel Capital,' the city lacks a unified visual identity and standardized application guidelines. In the visual transformation of industrial heritage, industrial elements such as Ansteel have not been effectively transformed into recognizable visual symbols. In

terms of tourism signage systems, the design of directional signs in various scenic areas lacks uniformity and cultural characteristics, failing to create a cohesive visual experience.

In contrast, cities like Shenzhen and Hangzhou have established distinctive urban identities through systematic visual identity design. With its pioneering spirit at the core, Shenzhen has created a series of visually striking works that blend technological sophistication with futuristic aesthetics. Meanwhile, Hangzhou has developed a distinctive urban visual identity by transforming traditional cultural elements into modern designs through visual IPs like 'Impression West Lake'.

3. Strategies for the Promotion of Anshan's Cultural and Tourism Image from the Perspective of Digital Communication

3.1. Construction of the Visual Identity System of the New Steel Capital

Capitalizing on Anshan's dual strengths as an 'old industrial base' and 'premium natural resources', the brand should be rebranded as 'Steel Capital's New Charm · Land of Natural Serenity'. This rebranding preserves the historical identity of 'Steel Capital' while introducing contemporary elements of 'New Charm', effectively blending industrial heritage with modern tourism. The core value proposition is "Industrial Memory · Natural Healing", highlighting Anshan's dual value as both an industrial heritage tourism destination and a hot spring wellness resort.

We entrust a professional design team to develop the Anshan City Cultural and Tourism Visual Identity System (VIS), which includes: firstly, logo design, integrating steel elements (such as steel rails, steel flowers) with natural elements (such as the outline of Qianshan Mountain, hot spring water droplets), to form a visual symbol that combines strength and gentleness, reflecting the coexistence of industrial civilization and ecological civilization; secondly, color system, using a combination of "Steel Capital Grey" (symbolizing industrial heritage), "Ecological Green" (representing the natural beauty of Qianshan Mountain), and "Hot Spring Blue" (embodying health and wellness characteristics) as the main colors, to form a unique color identity; thirdly, font design, developing an exclusive font with industrial aesthetic appeal for application in various promotional materials; fourthly, IP image design, creating cartoon IP images such as "Steel Xiaoxia" and "Mountain Spirit", representing industrial culture and natural ecology respectively, to enhance the brand's affinity and dissemination power.

The "Anshan City Cultural Tourism Visual Identity Application Manual" has been formulated to standardize the use of logos, colors, and fonts across various scenarios, including official new media account avatars and backgrounds, promotional posters and video openings, wayfinding systems, packaging of cultural and creative products, and urban public facilities, ensuring consistency and professionalism in visual identity.

3.2. Create a Short Video Communication Matrix to Achieve Viral Spread

Build a social media matrix with the official Anshan Culture and Tourism account as the core, supported by county-level, scenic area, and cultural tourism enterprise accounts. Official accounts are positioned as the "central gateway for urban cultural tourism," handling information dissemination, event coordination, and resource integration. District and county accounts highlight local characteristics—for example, "Xiuyan Cultural Tourism" focuses on jade culture and folk traditions, while "Qianshan Scenic Area" emphasizes natural landscapes. Cultural tourism enterprises, hotels, and restaurants are encouraged to establish accounts, fostering a community-driven communication ecosystem [3].

To establish a professional short video production team and set content creation standards: 1) Story-driven storytelling: Move beyond basic scenic spot descriptions to adopt a "character + narrative + setting" approach. Produce micro-documentaries like "A Day in the Life of Ansteel's

Master Craftsmen" and "Therapeutic Hot Spring Journey" to engage audiences through emotional resonance. 2) Visual aesthetics enhancement: Employ cinematic techniques emphasizing lighting, composition, and color presentation. Draw inspiration from the aesthetic style of "The Longest Day in Chang'an" to create the "Steel Capital's Twelve Hours" series, showcasing Anshan's dynamic day-night beauty. 3) Trend topic planning: Create trending topics like #VisitAnshanInHanfuToTravelThroughMountains# and #SteelCapitalGourmetGuide# by integrating festivals and sports events, aiming to secure platform traffic support.

The '100 Influencers Tour Anshan' initiative invites top-tier bloggers and internet celebrities in tourism, gastronomy, culture, and photography to create content in Anshan. Through the 'targeted incubation + traffic support' model, we cultivate a local influencer team covering vertical fields such as intangible cultural heritage inheritors, food exploration experts, and tour guides. Establish a content co-creation mechanism to encourage influencers to produce content through a 'local perspective + tourist experience' approach, thereby enhancing the authenticity and emotional resonance of the material.

3.3. Mining Cultural Symbols of Industrial Heritage to Create Differentiated IP

To fully explore the aesthetic value of Angang's industrial heritage, we transform industrial elements into visual symbols through two approaches: First, symbolic extraction-selecting industrial elements like rails, sparks, blast furnaces, and gears, then artistically processing them into decorative visual patterns. Second, scene creation-utilizing light and shadow art and installation art in venues such as the Angang Museum and industrial heritage parks to craft Instagram-worthy "industrial-style" hotspots. Thirdly, we can draw inspiration from the practices of Beijing's 798 Art District and Shanghai's Yangpu Riverside, transforming industrial relics into artistic spaces. Additionally, cultural and creative development can be pursued by designing the "Steel Capital Memory" series of cultural and creative products, such as steel bookmarks, decorative items, industrial-style clothing, and accessories, thereby enhancing their added value through visual design [4].

Anshan, home to revolutionary heritage sites like the Meng Tai Memorial Hall and Lei Feng Memorial Hall, should leverage digital technologies for innovative presentation. First, through digital exhibitions utilizing VR and AR technologies, develop immersive "Meng Tai Spirit" projects that let visitors experience the model worker ethos via virtual reality. Second, create short video series titled "Red Steel Capital" to share stories of figures like Meng Tai and Lei Feng through youth-oriented storytelling, thereby amplifying the reach of revolutionary culture.

By integrating regional cultural assets including storytelling art, Xiuyan jade culture, and hot spring heritage, we are developing a cultural IP strategy: 1) Storytelling Innovation: Inviting artists like Shan Tianfang and Liu Lanfang to create the "Anshan Stories" series, narrating the city's history in their signature styles for short-video platforms; 2) Jade Culture Promotion: Leveraging Xiuyan's "National Cultural Industry Demonstration Base" at Wankelai Jade Industry to produce short videos showcasing jade carving techniques and the allure of the "Jade Capital"; 3) Hot Spring Wellness: Highlighting Tanggangzi Hot Springs "Asia's Premier Mud" to craft a wellness tourism brand that attracts health-conscious travelers[5].

3.4. Establishing a Communication Mechanism for the Participation of the Whole People and Building a Communication Community

To foster UGC content creation, Anshan City has implemented three incentive mechanisms: 1) Short Video Competitions: The "Discovering Anshan's Beauty" contest, held regularly with generous prizes and traffic boosts, ignites public creativity. 2) Check-in Rewards: Key scenic spots feature designated check-in points where visitors earn points for location-based videos, redeemable for tickets and cultural products. 3) Citizen Guides: Local residents passionate

about their hometown are selected as "Cultural Tourism Ambassadors," trained to produce engaging content, forming a sustainable grassroots communication network.

Establish a regular interaction mechanism with netizens: First, promptly address concerns by assigning dedicated staff to monitor platform comments, respond to user inquiries, and swiftly handle negative feedback. Second, create interactive topics by leveraging trending events, such as "I Endorse Anshan" or "Old Photos of Steel Capital Memories," to enhance user engagement. Third, build a fan community by forming the "Anshan Culture and Tourism Fan Group" and organizing regular online and offline activities to cultivate a loyal fan base.

To build a communication pattern of "central media + local media + we-media", we should take the following measures: First, we should strive for support from superior media, continue to strengthen cooperation with central media such as CCTV and Xinhua News Agency, and seek exposure in important columns and prime time slots; second, we should deepen regional cooperation, establish a cultural tourism communication alliance with northeastern cities such as Shenyang, Dalian, and Harbin, and achieve mutual promotion of resources and sharing of traffic; third, we should collaborate across industries, cooperate with film and television crews and variety show producers, and strive to incorporate Anshan elements into film and television works to enhance the city's popularity.

3.5. Enhance the Level of Public Service and Consolidate the Foundation of Image Communication

The 'Smart Anshan Culture and Tourism' platform integrates scenic spot reservations, traffic navigation, accommodation bookings, and food recommendations to provide tourists with one-stop services. Using big data to analyze tourist behavior and deliver personalized content.

In compliance with visual identity system standards, a comprehensive upgrade of urban tourism signage will be implemented: 1) At transportation hubs, standardized tourism guidance signs will be installed at high-speed rail stations, railway stations, and highway exits; 2) Within tourist attractions, the design of guide maps, directional signs, and safety warnings will be enhanced by incorporating urban visual elements; 3) On city streets, industrial-themed street furniture such as steel benches and trash bins will be installed along major thoroughfares to strengthen the city's visual identity.

Conduct training for cultural and tourism practitioners to enhance their service awareness and professional skills. The new media literacy training of tour guides and interpreters should be strengthened, and they should be encouraged to become the compound talents who can explain, shoot and spread.

4. Conclusion and Prospects

The digital communication era provides unprecedented opportunities for the construction of urban cultural tourism image, but also brings new challenges. For the old industrial city of Anshan, digital communication is not only the innovation of propaganda and promotion tools, but also the strategic opportunity of reconstructing the city image and reshaping the brand value.

This study demonstrates that Anshan's urban cultural tourism enhancement requires coordinated efforts across three dimensions: Strategically, it should define the brand positioning as "Steel Capital's New Charm · Land of Natural Serenity" and establish a unified visual identity system. Communicatively, a short-video dissemination matrix should be developed, employing narrative-driven, visually engaging, and interactive content strategies to achieve viral spread. Resource-wise, the city must fully leverage the visual symbolism of its industrial heritage and regional culture to create distinctive IP assets. Meanwhile, a communication mechanism should be established with government guidance, market

dominance, and public participation, transforming online traffic into offline consumption and converting communication momentum into developmental momentum.

Future research could focus on three key areas: (1) the application of digital technologies (e.g., AIGC and metaverse) in urban image promotion; (2) visual design methodologies for digital presentation of industrial heritage; and (3) establishing a quantitative evaluation framework for the effectiveness of urban cultural tourism image dissemination. Through continuous theoretical and practical exploration, we will help Anshan achieve a splendid transformation from an 'industrial hub' to a 'cultural and tourism city', contributing to the new breakthroughs in Liaoning's comprehensive revitalization.

Acknowledgments

This paper presents the findings of the 2025 Liaoning Provincial Research Project on Economic and Social Development, titled 'Strategies for Promoting Deep Integration of Culture, Sports, and Tourism in Anshan' (2025lslybwzzwtk-019).

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