

# The Communication about Destination Projected Image on Short-form Video Platforms: A Systematic Literature Review

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## ABSTRACT

With the continuous innovation of Internet technology, the way of communication is evolving rapidly. Social media enables the creation and dissemination of forms of expression. In today's environment, short videos play a key role in the dissemination of destination image projection, and it is particularly important to build and maintain the virtual image of the destination. This paper systematically reviews the relevant literature and comprehensively analyzes the research on destination image projection in short videos. In the past decade, the relevant research results have steadily increased, covering multiple tourism destinations and platforms. This study includes articles from English peer-reviewed academic journals and discusses them by topic. Through the literature review, this paper explores the direction of current research and outlines future research trends.

## KEYWORDS

Projected Image; Short-form Video; Social Media; Digital Communication.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the development of the Internet, the existence of social media has led to significant changes in the way of communication. Content posted on social media platforms can connect with potential audiences, and through interactive options such as sharing, replying to comments or questions, a stronger relationship can be established with users. Short-form video platforms have become a hot topic in social media due to their large user base and broad communication channels, and have an important impact on the communication of destination projection image. Short-form video platforms provide a cost-effective and diverse way to communicate the image of a destination, which is of great significance to the development of a region. It can be said that short video applications now have a large number of loyal users, and have completely changed people's lifestyle, becoming an important form of social interaction (Yaqi et al., 2021). Although many articles have been published in disciplines such as tourism and communication, there is still a need for further research on the projected image of a destination on short-form video platforms. This study systematically reviews the literature, synthesizes the contributions of scholars in this field, and explores current research directions. In other words, this study is expected to answer the following research questions (RQ):

1) What are the key research themes in the literature on destination projection image and short-form video platforms?

2) What future research directions can be drawn from this research review?

Therefore, this study reviews and summarizes the relevant research literature topics on the dissemination of destination projection image on short-form video platforms during the five-year period from 2020 to 2024, and proposes future research directions through analysis.

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHOD**

To systematically explore the international literature on destination image projection communication in short-form video platforms, this study conducted a systematic review of the world's leading academic databases such as Google Scholar. The author conducted the last query in August 2024, searching for relevant subject areas such as communication and tourism management. First, we used the following terms for query to refer to different destinations: country, city, region and place. Second, we used the following terms for query short-form video platforms: short video, Douyin, Kuaishou, Bilibili, TikTok. In this article, abstract and keyword fields, keywords such as short video, social media, destination image projection, communication were searched. This article develops a review of the literature that includes articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals between 2020 and 2024, excluding non-English articles and non-peer-reviewed publications (such as books, chapters, conference proceedings). The search results were exported as RIS files and imported into Endnote software, and duplicate records were manually discarded to remove irrelevant records. Next, the full text of the articles was screened to confirm their suitability for this review; some publications that did not provide conclusions on the relationship between destination projected image and short video communication were removed, and the accuracy and objectivity of article classification were ensured. Finally, each article was assigned to a theme based on the title, abstract, keywords, and text.

## **3. RESULTS**

The analytical procedure in Section 2 allowed us to identify the research topic. This task focuses on the findings and contributions of the article. Three research topics on the communication of destination projected image in short-form video platforms are discussed throughout the literature.

### **3.1. Definition and Communication Development of Destination Projected Image**

#### **3.1.1. Composition of Destination Projected Image**

Destination image refers to an individual's overall cognitive and emotional impression of a tourist destination. Traditionally, destination image was mainly thought of as the outcome of marketing and branding strategies, centrally decided by Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), tourism stakeholders or policy makers (Arabadzhyan et al., 2021). This image is constructed through a variety of ways such as an individual's direct experience of the destination, information reception, and cultural communication. The academic community usually divides the destination image into cognitive image and emotional image. Cognitive image covers an individual's objective understanding and evaluation of the destination, including geographical location, natural scenery, cultural heritage, etc. Social media are acknowledged as an important information source that influences tourists' travel choices (X. Liu et al., 2020). Especially with the rapid development of mobile and internet technology, the open data and shared social knowledge provided by social media have not only laid a foundation for tourism innovations, but also influenced the communication between tourism organizations and tourists (W. Sun et al., 2021).

Emotional image is an individual's subjective feelings and emotional reactions to the destination, such as pleasure, security, excitement, etc. of the destination. These emotional reactions may be affected by personal experience, social influence, and cultural background. The destination projected image is presented through visual content such as pictures and videos, and personal experiences and feelings

are also spread through online interaction and sharing, which will affect the projected impression of the destination.

### 3.1.2. Development of the Communication of Destination Projected Image

With the popularization of Internet technology and social media, the way of projecting destination image has changed significantly. Local governments convey attractive features of their identity to current and potential stakeholders in their cities(De Jong & Lu, 2022). Traditional delivery methods mainly rely on advertisements, brochures and travel guides. However, the rise of the Internet, especially short-form video platforms, has made the projection of destination image more diversified and interactive. Social media platforms allow various participants to jointly shape the image of the destination, including official agencies, tourism service providers, media, and ordinary tourists. Current research shows that the trend of diversification of destination projected image is becoming more and more obvious. Different communication channels and participants may form different images of the same destination. For example, official promotion may emphasize the culture and history of the destination, while user-generated content may focus more on personalized travel experience and interactive experience. This diversified image communication makes the destination image more three-dimensional and complex. This multi-party projection makes the destination image more flexible and dynamic, but it also brings problems of image inconsistency and information overload. Future research will continue to explore how to balance the diversity and consistency of the image in this process, how to effectively use UGC, and how to deal with the challenges of information overload and negative information.

## 3.2. The Communication Characteristics of Short-form Video Platforms under Media Changes

### 3.2.1. The Development and Changes of Internet Media

The evolution of Internet media has gone through multiple stages, from the initial static web pages to dynamic content, and then to today's interactive media and mobile platforms. With the advent of Web 2.0, the Internet began to support user-generated content (UGC) and interactivity. The invention of Web 2.0 in 2004 has veered the Internet users' roles from passive readers to active creators and sharers of content and information(Lo & Yao, 2019).The rise of blogs, forums, and social networks enabled users to actively participate in the creation and dissemination of information, changing the one-way mode of information dissemination.

The popularity of smartphones and mobile Internet has brought about major changes in the way information is consumed and disseminated. At mobile terminals, short-form videos are gaining increasing popularity through social media(Wang, 2020).

The use of mobile applications has made it easier to obtain information, and user interaction and participation have become more frequent. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become the main channels for information dissemination. Multimedia content such as videos, pictures, and real-time updates have become the main forms of dissemination, and user-generated content has occupied an important position in information dissemination. The rise of short-form video platforms marks an important trend in the development of Internet media at present.

### 3.2.2. The Rise of Short-form Video Platforms

Short-form video platforms have quickly won the favor of users with their short, intuitive, and easy-to-share characteristics. Short-duration videos, powerful recommendation algorithms, and rich music and special effects options have quickly attracted a large number of users.

With the continuous development of internet technology and digital information, audiences are more inclined to access more intensive and quality information more simply and easily, and the short-form videos fit the aforementioned user needs(Han et al., 2022). The platform's algorithm can push

personalized content based on users' interests and interaction history, increasing user stickiness and activity. TikTok (Douyin in the Chinese market) is one of the most influential short-form video platforms at present. TikTok's high degree of freedom for creators and users encourages diverse content creation and interaction. Instagram Reels is a short video feature launched by Instagram to compete with TikTok. It allows users to create short videos of up to 60 seconds and provides a variety of editing tools and special effects. Reels is integrated into the Instagram ecosystem, allowing users to share pictures and create short videos on the same platform at the same time, increasing user usage frequency and platform stickiness. YouTube Shorts is a short video feature launched by YouTube, similar to TikTok and Instagram Reels. It allows users to create short videos of up to 60 seconds and is integrated into the main YouTube platform. The advantage of YouTube Shorts lies in its large user base and rich content resources. Kuaishou is another major short video platform in China, competing with Douyin. Kuaishou focuses on community interaction and user participation and encourages authentic content creation. Bilibili occupies a unique position in China's short video market, with two-dimensional culture and young user groups as its main features. The platform supports users to create various types of short videos, including animations, games, and life records. Apart from the trend for shorter video length, mobile videos on social media are also becoming increasingly overarching in content (Wang, 2020).

The development of Internet media has promoted the rise of short-form video platforms, making information dissemination richer and more diverse. Short-form video platforms have changed the traditional information dissemination model with their short duration, strong interactivity, and personalized recommendations. With the advancement of technology and changes in user needs, short-form video platforms will continue to develop and bring new challenges and opportunities.

### **3.3. Destination Projection Image Communication of Short-form Video Platforms**

#### **3.3.1. Communication Characteristics of Short-form Video Platforms**

With the continuous development of network economy, all kinds of short videos have gradually appeared in modern people's life, adding fun to the people's lifestyle and enriching the forms of people's life and entertainment (Jicheng, 2021). Short videos are usually between 15 and 60 seconds long and quickly convey information through concise and clear visual and auditory performances. The basic difference between short videos and mini-films or most YouTube videos is their duration. In general, short videos are 1 min or less, and many are even shorter than 30 s, which accommodates today's fast-paced life (Cao et al., 2021). Short-form video platforms provide a wealth of interactive functions, including comments, likes, sharing, challenges, etc. Active user interaction can accelerate the spread of content and increase content exposure. Short-form video platforms rely on recommendation algorithms to push personalized content based on user interests and behavior data. Short video platforms can improve the relevance of content through algorithm recommendations. And short-form video platforms usually provide a variety of creative tools, such as filters, special effects, background music, etc., to enable users to create attractive content.

#### **3.3.2. Destination Image Projection Communication in Short-form Video Platforms**

Common content forms on short-form video platforms include the display of major attractions and activities in the destination. These videos are vividly presented through high-quality visual effects and music. By documenting their own travel experiences through short videos of 15–60 s, travelers can present the food, drink, accommodation, and scenery of a destination to audiences in both real-time and real life, quickly capturing the attention of potential tourists (Du et al., 2022).

Tourists' real experiences and feedback are shared through short videos, making the destination image communication more authentic and credible. Compared to pictures and text, positive short-form travel videos can make viewers feel more immersed in the local destination (Han et al., 2022).

Creative challenges and activities on the platform encourage users to create short videos related to the destination, increasing the exposure of the destination. The immediacy and wide coverage of short-form video platforms allow the image of the destination to be quickly spread to a large number of users. The interaction in the comments has the opportunity to become premium experiential content and also has the advantage of trust in third-party recommendations, which can enhance the audience's understanding of the destination and increase the likelihood of a trip(Han et al., 2022).

As an important part of modern media, short-form video platforms play an important role in the dissemination of destination image projection. Future research can further explore how to optimize the destination image projection dissemination strategy of short-form video platforms.

## **4. DISCUSSION**

These simplified sub-topics help to systematically explore the role and influence of short-form video platforms in the communication of destination projection image, while pointing out the main trends and research directions of current research.

The directions of future research can focus on the following aspects to deepen the understanding and application of destination projection image communication in short-form video platforms:

### **4.1. Innovation of Destination Projection Image Communication in Short Videos under new Technological Innovation.**

Against the background of the rapid development of new media, mobile short-form videos featuring focus, fragmentation, and puzzles are an effective means of promoting tourist destinations(H. Liu & Yan, 2021). The growth of online video platforms in recent years has been driven by a multitude of factors, including advancements in technology and the increasing availability of high-speed internet(Christian & Wijaya, 2023). Emerging technologies have innovated the content creation and communication methods of short-form video platforms. Future innovative research on short video communication should focus on the application of emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and artificial intelligence (AI) in the creation and communication of short video content. For example, through AR technology, viewers can "see" the virtual scene reconstruction of the destination in the short video, and even interact with historical figures, thereby enhancing users' emotional connection and interest. These media technology innovations can provide a more immersive experience of the culture and history of the destination, and users can have a deeper understanding of the destination projection image. Future research should further explore how these technologies can enhance the communication effect of the destination image through short-form video platforms and how to create personalized experiences to attract a wider audience. This type of research can not only enrich the theoretical framework of tourism communication, but also provide a new practical path for destination image communication.

### **4.2. Short Videos with Both Fun and Depth Have a Greater Impact on the Communication of Destination Projection Image.**

The content analysis of destination projection image found that the content presentation form in short videos should not only be interesting, but also balance cultural depth to avoid content homogeneity. In the era of new media, short videos as an innovative means of communication have led to significant changes in the promotion strategies of tourist cities(Chen, 2024). Short video creators can use unique narrative methods and innovative visual expression techniques to deeply explore the cultural connotation of the destination. From the case content analysis of the literature reviewed in this study, it can be seen that those distinctive short video music and narration can enhance the appeal of the content. For example, by telling legendary stories about the destination, using local dialects or combining local characteristic music. In particular, different combinations of everyday objects can

be employed to represent a unique scene that is both interesting and understandable(L. Sun et al., 2020). In addition, the use of vivid visual effects in the production of short video images can enhance the user's immersion and viewing experience, such as dynamic illustrations and interesting editing methods. The presentation of interesting and in-depth content highlights the communication advantages of short video communication in terms of immediacy and interactivity, which can enhance the communication of destination projection image.

#### **4.3. Further Deepen the Research on the Behavior and Psychology of Short Video Users.**

Users are both consumers and producers of content on short-form video platforms. One of the distinguishing characteristics of Web 2.0 is the generation and sharing of user-generated content (UGC) through social media(Tomaž & Walanchalee, 2020). With the continuous development of platform technology and user needs, the role of short videos in the communication of destination image projection needs to be continuously deepened. Research on users will also be a key area of continuous attention. Through data analysis, we can find the motivations and expectations of different user groups when watching short videos. Through systematic research, we can better understand the viewing habits, participation methods and content preferences of short video users, which is conducive to the formation of appropriate destination image projection communication strategies. Future research should focus on how users participate in the communication of destination image through short-form video platforms, and study the motivations and methods of user-generated content (UGC) and its impact on the projected image of the destination. In addition, research should be conducted on how to enhance users' sense of participation and emotional connection, so as to make the communication content more attractive and interactive.

#### **4.4. Limitations**

Overall, this study has some limitations. First, due to the wide range of destinations, including countries, regions or other types of places, our limited literature is not enough to represent all the research on destination image projection. Second, only academic literature in English were collected online, and no academic literature in other languages were analyzed. In addition, time and resources were also limited. During the collection and analysis process, there was limited online data and limited time span of publication.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

Short-form video platforms have flexible communication characteristics and innovative communication strategies. Future research should further explore the optimization of communication strategies and the use of emerging technologies from multiple perspectives such as technology application, user behavior, content creation and cross-cultural communication to enhance the communication effect and international influence of destination projection image. This will provide more practical and forward-looking suggestions for practitioners of destination projection image communication, and enrich the research framework of destination projection image communication theory. Future research directions should further combine multidisciplinary methods, covering fields such as communication, cultural studies, marketing and social psychology, and comprehensively explore the potential and challenges of short-form video platforms in destination image communication. This will not only provide practitioners with more practical and forward-looking suggestions, but also enrich the research framework of destination projection image communication theory and promote the in-depth development of this field.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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