



Research on Coding and Decoding Chengdu's New City Image by ZMET Metaphor Extraction Technique

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Abstract. This paper uses the ZMET metaphor extraction technique to conduct in-depth interviews with 10 interviewees, extracting the symbolic conceptions of Chengdu's new city image formed in their subconscious minds, to explore the richness and authenticity of the "local" communication image as well as the cultural identity and personality differences of the "other". The study explores the richness of the "local" communication image as well as the cultural identity and personality differences of the "others". This study focuses on the construction of a new urban image for the city and hopes to provide reference value for the construction of Chengdu's urban image, as well as for the city's future positioning of cultural tourism and cultural communication. By analyzing and sorting out the interview records of Chengdu's new city image, it can be summarized as: a young city with diversified integration, a vibrant urban aesthetic, an optimistic life with comfort and enjoyment, and a friendly society with its.

Keywords: metaphor extraction ZMET; encoding and decoding; Chengdu image

1 Introduction

The ZMET Metaphor Elicitation Technique was first patented by Professor Gerald Zaltman of Harvard Business School in his 1995 book "Seeing Consumer's Voice - A Metaphor-based Research Approach", which is a qualitative research methodology that can deeply probe the subconscious of the subject's brain by using imagery as a carrier, visual analysis theory and an in-depth interview method. [1] The metaphor extraction technique takes the subject as the main body, adopts the original human communication method, "image", as the medium, and makes use of the deep metaphorical function of visual symbols in the image to trigger the real thoughts and feelings in the heart of the respondent. Then, a mental map is created through the interview transcripts, combining non-textual language, i.e. pictures, and textual language, i.e. interviews with the subjects, to present the results of the final cognition of the current issue, which includes the connection between the conceptual elements of the cognition and the concepts extracted from the mental map.

2 Scope of Application of ZMET Technology

Originally used to explore consumer attitudes to marketing campaigns, ZMET is now used effectively in advertising, film and television, marketing, user psychology, product design and development, and is expanding as a research methodology into many other application areas. This is due to the unique advantages of ZMET: 1. good depth of exploration through the combination of visual metaphors and textual interviews; 2. a small sample of respondents can respond to overall perceptions and insights; and 3. freedom from the constraints of limited text, allowing respondents to express their views more freely.

Several scholars have conducted research on metaphor extraction technology. Lei Congying and others explore its application in tourism research. [2] Jiang J. et al. Designing Literature and Tourism Images with User Impression as Research Orientation, [3] Fan Minna et al. Taking the perceived image of Foshan city as the research object, [4] Tan Lelin takes Nanluoguxiang Historical and Cultural District as an example and uses ZMET to construct a consensus map to analyze residents' perception of tourism development. [5]

3 Chengdu's New City Image: Metaphor Extraction and Image Construction

The present study introduces the ZMET metaphor extraction technique as a means of investigating the research object. In this study, interview records from diverse groups of people were selected as research samples, and the current image of Chengdu was explored by analyzing the mental model composed of Chengdu's city image that was spontaneously shared by the interviewees' own understanding. The role of symbols is conveyed by pictures, and the metaphor extraction technique is used to explore the interviewees' deepest thoughts and feelings layer by layer, and finally construct the image of Chengdu.

3.1 Recruitment of Respondents

Ten respondents were recruited according to the ZMET (Metaphor Extraction Technique) method as the sample for this study. The selection of respondents was based on the principle of diversity, and they were broadly classified into the categories of "Chengdu residents", "new Chengdu residents", "people living in Chengdu", "Chengdu tourists", and "people who have never been to Chengdu".

3.2 Picture Selection and Storytelling

In accordance with the ZMET approach, the research process will be explained to the interviewees, and the research proposal will be delivered prior to the formal interviews. The interviewees will be allotted 5-7 days to collect pictures and select 10-20 pictures that best represent their conception of the image of Chengdu's new city. These pictures

will be selected by the interviewees themselves, considering external information and their own feelings. The author will not be involved in the process of choosing the pictures. Following the conclusion of the selection process, the interview will last approximately 60 minutes. During this time, the respondents will provide a rationale for their selection of images, and the author will inquire about the symbols and underlying meanings of Chengdu that are reflected in their choices using the ladder climbing method. Interviewee A briefly elucidates that she selected the image of a “folk pub” and states in the “storytelling” section, “This is a folk pub that I accidentally stumbled upon, and most of the patrons are middle-aged. There are a lot of such pubs in Chengdu”. Through the ladder-climbing method, “middle-aged people” means that Chengdu’s cozy life is all-ages, and the statement “not as confusing and chaotic as bars and discos” implies that Chengdu does not adhere to a “fast” culture, but rather a very “slow” one.

3.3 Conceptual Extraction

Idea extraction is the core step of the metaphor extraction technique, which is also the key to constructing the conceptual consensus map. By collating the interview records, we obtained the shallow concepts and deep concepts described by the interviewees as well as the connections between the concepts, which resulted in a total of 443 concepts, and after collating all the concepts and eliminating the duplicates, obtained 107 concepts without duplicates, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Concepts mentioned by respondents

Concept & Ordinal number		Concept & Ordinal number		Concept & Ordinal number	
Culture	11	Concerts	2	Environmental	1
Cuisine	8	Interest	2	Regional	1
Inclusion	8	Socializing	2	Fancy-dress	1
Life	8	Heritage	2	Digital Industry	1
Animals	7	Cityscape	2	Southwest Planning	1
Snowy Mountains	6	Statues	2	Three Kingdoms	1
Sun	6	Pressure	2	Loganathan	1
Friendship	6	Sichuan	2	Zhao Yun	1
Enjoyment	5	Convenience	2	Anime	1
Nightlife	5	Prosperity	2	Grounding	1
Consumption	5	Abundance	2	Individuality	1
Freedom	5	Openness	2	Stalls	1
Playfulness	5	Culture and Tourism	2	Factory	1
fashion	5	temple	2	light industry	1
Netflix	5	Humanization	2	Employment	1
Slow	5	Camping	2	Jiu Zhai Gou	1
Tourism	5	Tent	2	Natural Resources	1
ballad	4	spirituality	2	tourists	1

FreedomFests	4	Leisure	2	Pavilion	1
Street photography	4	Togetherness	2	Crowding	1
Internet	4	Bloggers	2	Hilarious	1
Hotpot	4	Mahjong	2	Mild	1
Lawn	3	Hip	2	Lazy	1
Warmth	3	Community	2	Low materialism	1
Technology	3	Punch Card	2	Public Interest	1
Secondary	3	Comfort	2	Spiritual Abundance	1
Relaxation	3	Contentment	2	Cozy	1
Science Fiction	3	Activity	2	Rehabilitation	1
Livable	3	Panda	2	Little Redbook	1
Contentment	3	Sports	2	Youth	1
Park	3	Romantic	2	Green	1
Spicy	3	Relaxing	2	Ginkgo	1
Rotten	2	Art	2	Tianfu Greenway	1
Niche Culture	2	Ancient Architecture	2		
Random	2	Big	1		
Optimistic	2	Tavern	1		
History	2	Alarming	1		

3.4 Analysis of the Internal Relationship Between Concepts

Through observing the concepts extracted in this study, some concepts are visualized by the pictures selected by the respondents, some are explored through the ladder-climbing interviews, and some are connecting concepts that link these two different concepts in a “communicative” way, thus forming the starting concept, connecting concept and final concept. Due to the operation of the metaphor extraction technique, many concepts that seem to be simple symbols in themselves relate to more and deeper concepts, and a more abstract and macroscopic construction of Chengdu's image has been created.

The starting idea, connecting idea and final idea also complete the three blocks of the consensus map. The starting conception is at the first and shallowest level of the conceptual relationship chain, which is often the intuitive impression of the picture chosen by the respondents, i.e., the subject of the picture, which is the objective existence of people or objects; the connecting conception is deeper than the first one, which is often the content of the association of the first conception or one's own experience, or perhaps the content that is not directly expressed in the picture, and it is the re-exploration of the shallow conception; lastly, the final conception is the highest level of the relationship chain, which provides a more abstract and macroscopic construction for the previous two levels of the relationship chain. The final structure is the highest level of the whole relationship chain, which is the landing point of the previous two layers of ideas, and the macro image of Chengdu sketched out through the whole metaphorical extraction interview method, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Three-layer conceptual table

level	Concept	number of individuals
Starting Idea	Animals, snowy mountains, sun, nightlife, netroots, folk music, street photography, internet, hotpot, lawn, park, spicy, rotten, concert, cityscape, statue, western Sichuan, temple, camping, tent, blogger, mahjong, community, punch card, event, panda, sports, ancient architecture, pub, fancy dress, digital industry, southwestern planning, three kingdoms culture, animation, stalls, large factory, light industry, JiuZhaiGou, Natural Resources, Tourists, Pavilion, Little Red Book, Ginkgo, Tianfu Greenway	44
Connect-ing Idea	Cuisine, Life, Enjoyment, Consumption, Fun-loving, Slow, Freedom of Dress, Technology, Sci-Fi, Livability, Niche Culture, Casual, Interest, Socializing, Stress, Convenience, Prosperity, Abundance, Culture and Tourism, Humanity, Spirituality, Togetherness, Knowing what's good for you, Romance, Art, Big, Downtown, Environmental Protection, Locality, Second Element, Roundedness, Individuality, Employment, Crowdedness, Hustle and Bustle, Slothfulness, Low Materialistic Desire, Public Welfare, Renovation, Youthfulness, green	41
Final Idea	Cultural, inclusive, friendly, free, stylish, tourist, warm, relaxed, restful, optimistic, historical, traditional, developed, relaxing, trendy, cozy, relaxing, gentle, spiritually rich, comfortable	20

4 Conclusion

A young city of diversity and fusion. In the picture selection and ladder-climbing interviews, many interviewees mentioned the concept of “fusion”. The first type of fusion is “history and modernity”, and most of the interviewees chose to describe Chengdu’s new city image in terms of groups of interrelated words, with Interviewee E describing the photo of “Dufu Caodang” by saying “In Chengdu, you can always feel the quiet during the bustle. The second type of integration is “humanities and nature”. Chengdu has a slogan “Park City under the Snowy Mountains”, and “park” has indeed become synonymous with Chengdu. The panda is mentioned twice, it is undeniable that the panda culture has been developing in Chengdu in recent years, especially in culture and tourism, and the panda, represented by Hehua, has a fan base. Representing the panda has a fan base, the giant panda has also become an important symbol of Chengdu’s culture.

Vibrant city aesthetics. The beauty of a city lies in its diversity. According to environmental aesthetics researcher Arnold Berlanda, urban aesthetics belongs to a branch of environmental aesthetics, from foundation cultivation and beautification to overall garden design, linking topography, vegetation and human activities, mountains and rivers, garden flowers, a clump of grass and a ray of sunshine all belong to the category of aesthetics. [6] Many interviewees cited “snowy mountains” as the concept of

Chengdu's new urban image, and although Chengdu does not have this type of terrain in its administrative division, under the right weather conditions Chengdu city center does have a view of the higher elevation snowy mountains in western Sichuan, and Chengdu is one of the most important cities in the world for tourists. The symbiosis between plants and buildings was also mentioned several times in the interview.

A comfortable, optimistic and enjoyable life. Concepts such as "comfort", "enjoyment", and "life" were repeatedly mentioned by the interviewees in the interviews, as Chengdu has been associated with an affluent life since ancient times due to its geographical advantage. Whether it's Interviewee B's "Drinking wine today" or Interviewee C's "Not being in Sichuan for a long time", the image of Chengdu remains the same, as it has been for thousands of years. Food-related concepts such as "hot pot" and "red oil" were also common in the interviews, and many interviewees felt that Chengdu is a city that is very particular about food. "The feeling of enjoyment".

A friendly society with its own sense of relaxation. Animal is a word that was frequently mentioned in the interviews, and the concepts associated with it include "stray animals", "stray cats and dogs", "pet dogs", "animal-friendly city", etc. Interviewees A, E, F, and G all mentioned the relevant content, and they all found that Chengdu is a city with a lot of animals. Interviewee B provides a photo of a night market stall: "Actually, the city police are very humane, as if they have an unwritten agreement with each other. To be honest, this kind of stall really gives a very happy feeling to those who return late." Many interviewees mentioned concepts such as "secondary yuan", "manga exhibition", "IP", "cosplay", "HanFu", "Lolita" and "subculture". On the streets of Chengdu, and no one will think it's very alternative or strange. To sum up, looseness, tolerance and friendliness have become the adjectives of Chengdu, which is a friendly society full of looseness with its unique urban charm and humanistic atmosphere. In the future, as the city develops and progresses, Chengdu's looseness and friendliness will continue to be its unique calling card, bringing more and more people a wonderful living experience and a sense of belonging.

Project

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