

Discussion on City Brand Image from the Perspective of Service Design

Take Brand Image of Xiamen City as an Example

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Abstract—The relationship between service design and city image is introduced. This paper further analyzes the driving effects of service design on city brand image of Xiamen under the background of economic globalization and information era and explores the guidance of service design thought on ecological and cultural experience. The development of service design promotes the establishment of city brand image, industry pattern transformation and path innovation, referring to the inexorable trend of urban development in the innovation era. Furthermore, new cognition and emerging design philosophy play a positive role in urban development.

Keywords—city image; service design

I. INTRODUCTION

City brand image means cities base on strategic positioning and convey accepted core concept, in order to popularize city image.¹ Brand image of city refers to the comprehensive assessment of urban residents and tourists on experience and service of this city, and the most intuitive feedback of city brand. Therefore, except for tourism products and facilities, service design in cities influences the experience and feelings of tourists on this city. As one of the four special economic zones, Xiamen develops continuously. It was military post and important trade town. The Anti-Japanese War and KMT-CPC civil war make economic recovery and development difficult. With the reform and opening up and the establishment of special economic zone, the appearance of Xiamen changes quickly with the soaring development of China. From an important military post to a modern port city, Xiamen becomes a tolerant city full of infinite possibilities with rich history and open platform. The city brand image also develops constantly with changing times. It connects our country with overseas Chinese and promotes high-tech information exchange. Meanwhile, it is a popular tourist attraction. With the globalization of economy, trade and information, the development of it will be opener and more diversified. The city brand image will be more systematic, comprehensive and sound. As a modern port city for tourism, Xiamen has clear positioning of city brand, and the tourism development is mature. We can understand the success of its brand image from

the perspective of service design that plays an important role in tourism experience and analyze the acceleration of it on future development of the city, in order to optimize the establishment and development of city brand image.

II. TANGIBLE BRAND IMAGE AND INTANGIBLE SERVICE DESIGN

A. Connotation of City Brand Image

General brand image is showed through visual forms such as name, package and pattern. The brand information is transformed into visual forms through visual elements like symbolized pattern and color through visual communication principle. Most city brand images show spirit and culture of city through visual design, give people visual impact and leave deep impressions on them through unique visual language and breaking the limitation of word language and region. However, unlike general brands, cities do not take tangible goods as “products”. They are economic, political, social and cultural centers in certain regions. The complicated and historical composition makes the connotation of city brand image diversified and complicated. Therefore, except for visual design, the design of city brand image also includes public service design and emotionalized design for people. The comprehensive design shows the connotation of city brand image is different from that of general brand image. We should break the limitation of regular visual design and consider providing better experience and feelings for urban residents and tourists.

B. Connotation of Service Design

“Service design” is a new word in the contemporary design field along with the transformation of world economy. More and more attentions are paid to it throughout the world. Some design powers in Europe carry out service design in economic field and public fields such as medical treatment, health, education and infrastructure construction.² International Design Research Association thinks service design means the service functions and forms are established from the perspective of clients, in order to let customers think the service interface is useful, available and attractive, let service

¹ Cai Wei. Research on Brand Image Design of Tourist City—Take Nanyang City as an Example [J], *Beauty Times* (city), 2016, (08): 98-99.

² Service Design: New Concept of Contemporary Design

provider think it is effective, efficient and identifiable.³ Besides, scholars give different understanding and definition of it. Obviously, at present, the design field hasn't given clear and accurate definition of "service design". It is undeniable that service design has important relationship with user experience. Therefore, instead of designing products traditionally, service design is more complicated and diversified.

As an emerging discipline in contemporary design field, service design involves behavioral study related to sociology and psychology, technology application, environmental planning and design, information interaction and product design. Because of the increasing demands for diversification of social and economic service and high quality service, service design with multi-disciplinary knowledge and multiple values improves the development and competitiveness of enterprises and cities. With the increasingly complicated and diversified human behavior, it will be applied nationally and internationally and play a vital role in the global sustainable development.

III. SERVICE DESIGN AND CITY BRAND IMAGE

A. Effects of Service Design on Establishment of Brand Image

At the early stage of national economic development, service industry is in the grey zone all the time. As the changes of the times, the tertiary industry springs up like mushroom and plays an important role in national economy rapidly. Our country is entering the era of experience economy. Market competition develops from product competition to service competition, and the commercial patterns will change accordingly. Service accompanies with the sales of products. Except for product design, the market competition should follow the pattern of "product plus service". International renowned brands have integrated service design in commercial competition of products. For example, we can see from the advertisement of ipod launched by Apple Inc that it focuses on user experience. The core is service instead of the design details of ipod. "Fig. 1"



Fig. 1. Ipod advertising.

On the advertising picture, the product only occupies a small part of it. It amplifies users and weakens irrelevant details and exaggerates body and poses of them, indicating the product values music instead of the product and brings consumers pleasure. This is a service system based on the product.⁴ The business model makes the Apple Inc led by Jobs successful, setting a good example for other enterprises in

³ Erlhoff Michael and Tim Marshall, *Design Dictionary: Perspectives on Design Terminology*, Boston, MA: Birkhauser, 2008, p. 355.

⁴ Case source: Kong Lingyan. *Research on Update Design of Old Brand Products Based on Service Design [D]*, East China University of Science and Technology, 2015.

transformation of business model. Therefore, service has important meaning in product design and brand image shaping. Brand image means the psychological experience of consumers on brand. Service plays the most direct role on users' psychological experience, even more important than brand name products. People have gradually realized the significance of service design. The research on service design will have drastic influence on the development of service industry even the design industry.

B. Service Design in City Brand Image

There is an old saying, "common people give consideration to etiquette and value honor and disgrace when they have ample food and clothing". Similarly, people consider spiritual and material enjoyment after the problem of food and clothing is solved. The improvement of economic level makes the public pursue more superior life style, high-end products and service. The cognition and pursuit of people for brand improves continuously with personal economic increase.

City brand represents city image. It positioning plays a distinctly important role in urban economic development. Different brands represent different styles and life styles, providing abundant services and good experience. The expression of city brand image can convey characteristics of city through visual design and cultural symbols like product design advertising. Different from product design, "brand products" not only include tangible or physical products that we can directly purchase in shops and e-commerce platforms, but also include intangible "products". These "products" have regional limitation. People hope to acquire spiritual enjoyment acquired in regions with the characteristics through "brand products". Therefore, service design guides the successful establishment of city brand image and accompanies with user experience.

Comprehensive psychological assessment of residents and tourists for cities bases on their experience, so good service design can strengthen user experience and optimize their psychological experience. As renowned livable city in China, Xiamen has clear positioning of city brand image. Except for the visual design that conveys its livability and cultural tourism, the good public service and infrastructure are optimized continuously with the development of the times. Convenient transportation contributes to improving regional accessibility and efficiency as well as reducing waste of time; perfect public design makes outdoor activities of urban residents and visitors more convenient and meets their requirements. Service design is optimized continuously, in order to make the lives of residents more convenient and make tourists feel more convenient and comfortable.

IV. FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESSFUL BRAND IMAGE OF XIAMEN CITY

Our country has vast territory and abundant resources including various environmental resources. With the development of times, we meet diversification of historic culture, cooking culture and art culture. Each place has its own way of supporting its own inhabitants. Natural, geographical and cultural differences make people at different places diversified. The improvement of living standard and the pursuit

of enjoyment with higher quality are important impetuses for development of tourism industry. The “diversification” is the premise and “hardware” of tourism development.

A. Geographical Location and Natural Environment

Located in southern region of Fujian province in China’s south-east coastal areas, Xiamen is a famous port city with superior geographical location and marine landscape resources, so it has diversified ecological landscape on mountains and at sea to attract tourists. The convenient transportation with land route and water route avails movement of people. With subtropical monsoon climate, Xiamen is mild and rainy with annual average temperature of around 21 °C , no chilliness in winter and intense heat in summer. It makes urban residents’ life more comfortable and attracts tourists throughout the year.

B. Historic and Cultural Connotation

Southern Fujian belongs to the marginal area of central plain culture. Besides, most of these areas have diverse culture. Therefore, culture of southern Fujian embodies the extension of central plain culture and variability of marginal forms and integrates regional culture of Fujian. Meanwhile, influenced by geographical and natural environment, it absorbs marine culture, finishes the transformation of central plain culture in geographical adaptability and forms unique marine culture of Fujian and spirit in southern Fujian through integration of central plain culture. ⁵Diverse cultures make Xiamen present multiple forms of art and culture.

The traditional historical background makes buildings in southern Fujian present unique style, such as the famous Zeng Cuo An with buildings constructed by red bricks in southern Fujian, Fanzai Buildings, the residential buildings with combination of Chinese and Western elements of marine immigrants and overseas Chinese, and Gulangyu Island, the product of invasion of western colonialists at early stage. As one of the leased territories of China in modern times, Gulangyu Island serves as the important base for western powers to invade China’s south-east coastal areas and influences the economy and urban construction of Xiamen. Furthermore, Gulangyu Island has become one of the most representative tourist attractions in Xiamen and one of the places that tourists must go. It makes the cultural forms of Xiamen diversified. Traditional history and culture are precious wealth of cities to make it unique and attract tourists.

C. Political and economic advantages

The State Council approved the establishment of Xiamen Special Economic Zone in October 1980. Xiamen has soaring economic development under the national support since that time. As the special economic zone, Xiamen has steady and high speed economic development and unprecedented urban construction scale. In 1987, the central government determined new strategy of economic development in coastal areas, in order to enter international economic cycle and further develop the strategic guideline of outward-looking economy. Xiamen Special Economic Zone will become an open and free port city

⁵ Zhang Jie, Xia Shengxue. Cultural Analysis on Evolution of Art Forms from Old-age House to Western-style Buildings—Take Famous Historical and Cultural Fuquan Village in Jinjiang City as an Example [J], Design Research, 2013, (02): 72-80

with scientific and technological and cultural development as well as perfect urban functions. Economic foundation determines superstructure which reacts upon economy. The national vigorous support plays a decisive role in economic development of Xiamen City. Good economy promotes the development of superstructure in Xiamen. The construction of cultural creative industry with characteristic of service design plays an important role in economic development of Xiamen City, referring to the foundation for successful brand image of Xiamen.

D. Efficient Information Transfer in Internet era

Tourism development occupies important proportion in GDP of urban economy. In the internet era, cities publicize through advertising videos and internet to make it more convenient for people to understand and attract the public and media "Fig. 2", "Fig. 3", "Fig. 4" and "Fig. 5". The contents include traditional history and culture, buildings, landscape architecture and modernization construction. It is an important part of a city and successful city brand image and important basis for service design to drive the development.



Fig. 2. Contents of advertising video of Xiamen City (Brand image positioning of modern tourist port city).



Fig. 3. Contents of advertising video of Xiamen City (Good ecological environment foundation).



Fig. 4. Contents of advertising video of Xiamen City (Traditional historical and cultural accumulation).



Fig. 5. Contents of advertising video of Xiamen City (Architectural culture and art)

With the development of internet, the information exchange and flow accelerates in the information era. The development of social media and we media draws the distance between people close and reduces the sense of distance in geographical location. Information exchange and sharing make us understand detailed information of cities without space limitation efficiently. Searching “Xiamen” on the internet, we can acquire keywords such as open, leisure tourism, livable, literature and art as well as freshness and aestheticism, which are intuitive feelings of people who experience in this city. With the information transfer on the internet, more people who want to acquire the special feelings and experience choose this destination after searching some information through the internet. Service design runs through the tourism system and interacts with information on the internet.

V. SERVICE DESIGN OPTIMIZES BRAND IMAGE OF XIAMEN CITY

A. Service Design Drives the Transformation and Innovation of Brand Image of Xiamen City

Service design bases on clients’ demand and determines ways and contents to provide services. We should not regard it separately but integrate it with service development, management, operation and marketing. ⁶From this perspective, service design means design according to services. In broader sense, service design is a way of thinking that makes us consider problems from the perspective of “service” in designing, create and improve service experience for the public. In the internet era, market model, business model and media model change greatly. Service-oriented technology and product integration is becoming the development tendency. Requirements of users have become the impetus and direction of enterprise research and development. It transforms the industrial structure, including cultural creative industry, which plays a key role in brand image of Xiamen City.

As an emerging industry with creativity under the background of economic globalization, cultural creative industry emphasizes host culture or cultural factors depend on individuals or groups to develop and market intellectual property through technology, creativity and industrialization. The contents include influence, visual art, environmental art, advertisement decoration and sculpture. ⁷ Under positive guidance of the government in industrial agglomeration development, Gulangyu Island and Zeng Cuo An of Xiamen City have formed mature cultural and creative industrial parks and become famous at home and abroad. Superior geographical location and natural conditions attract tourists all the year round. The government vigorously develops cultural creative industry, combines business with buildings of colonial style and Fanzai buildings with characteristics of southern Fujian and establishes stores with cultural creativity, coffee shops, private home cuisine restaurant and creative studio. The original elements of foreign-style houses and European architectures are maintained and old buildings are fully used. It

meets requirements of tourists and local residents and reasonably uses Fanzai buildings. "Fig. 6", "Fig. 7", "Fig. 8" and "Fig. 9" With tourism development, cultural and creative products with local characteristics emerge in endlessly for tourists to buy and keep it in memory. Tourists take the goods, memory and feelings away.



Fig. 6. Xiamen Cultural Creative Industry (Present (Zheng) Chenggong Doll).



Fig. 7. Xiamen Cultural Creative Industry (Inn in Gulangyu Island).



Fig. 8. Xiamen Cultural Creative Industry (Xiamen ShaPo Wei).



Fig. 9. Xiamen Cultural Creative Industry (Xiamen Cat Museum).

⁶ Discussion on Service Design Research, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Computer Integrated Manufacturing Institute, Shanghai 200240, E-mail: lidong @sjtu.edu.cn

⁷ Research on Update Design of Old Brand Products Based on Service Design, Kong Lingyan

The establishment of brand image of traditional tourism cities depends on ecological and natural landscape and cultural heritage. With the development of modern civilization, urban residents are increasingly eager to return to and enjoy nature. With the growth of new generation, people pursue unique environment to release pressure. Historic villages with unique traditional architectural style and cultural appeal are popular among modern people. The traditional cultural heritage with regional characteristics is embodied through creative industry parks, which promote local economic development, protect traditional dwellings and meet requirements of modern people. The requirements connect service design with user experience. In the last century, with the popularization of Bauhaus style, cultural and creative industrial parks represented by Beijing 798 and Guangzhou Redtory Art and Design Factory attract numerous tourists. The emerging cultural creative industry based on service design will become important in future design and market. People can experience the unique cultural environment and have special spiritual enjoyment.

B. Experience Guidance of Brand Image of Xiamen City under the Perspective of Service Design

We cannot treat service designs as the same because of the complicated and comprehensive forms. Basic design thoughts have different influence on society and present different guidance in ecology, society, products and people.

1) Ecological and harmonious cultural experience guidance

As a livable tourism city, Xiamen has beautiful sceneries and abundant plant resources, most of which are tropical and subtropical plants. The green area reaches 161.86ha⁸ “Fig. 10”. Ecological parks exist on the island, such as Bay Park, Haoyue Park, Bailuzhou Park, Railway Culture Park and Zhongshan Park. Ecological resources are abundant and open for residents and tourists to enjoy freely. Service design creates and improves service experience and values good design results. More importantly, it pays attention to people’s experience to develop further. In sharing of ecological resources and service design, except for the natural ecological concept that protects the initial conditions of nature, we should establish spiritual cultural and ecological outlook. At the meantime, the transformation of service design from “exclusive enjoyment” of ecological environment to “sharing” of service has more profound meaning.



Fig. 10. Xiamen City Ecological Park.

⁸ Lian Yuwu. Economic Development of Xiamen Special Zone and Urban Ecological Environment Construction [J], Fujian Environment, 1994, (03): 4-6

2) Experience guidance of diverse social culture

Deep understanding and feelings of culture are contained in cultural experience, which avails the preservation and “dynamic development” of diverse culture. People feel history, society and environment more profoundly and adjust the relationship among society, others and themselves more effectively through experiencing service design. For example, Zeng Cuo An with traditional buildings constructed by red bricks and Gulangyu Island with buildings of colonial style represent maritime civilization, historical civilization and traditional culture of Fujian in modern times, convey unique artistic style with combination of diverse culture and present it to the public through commercial and cultural combination. Deep-seated cultural deposits embody in details in residential and commercial behaviors as well as feelings, making the design art have higher sense of value and strong cultural appeal.

VI. CONCLUSION

Nowadays, the design thought in service design aims at bringing people good life experience, deepening and conveying it in service interaction. The design takes culture as internal basis and core value. Cities are carriers of multiple and complex culture. The development of its service design promotes transformation of industry model and path innovation and refers to the inevitable development tendency in the innovation era.

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