

SPORTS EVENTS, INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS AND CITY VALUES INFLUENCING SPORTS CITY BRANDING OF CHENGDU, CHINA

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Abstract

As a central city in western China, Chengdu has been actively organizing various sports events in recent years to promote the development of the sports industry and enhance the city's brand image. Taking the residents of Chengdu as the survey object and the 31st World University Games held in Chengdu as the empirical research object, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods was used to study the impact of sports events, integrated marketing communications and urban values on Chengdu's sports city brand. SPSS and AMOS software were used to process and analyze the data from 487 questionnaires. This study has four research objectives: 1) to investigate the current situation of Chengdu sports city branding in China. 2) To analyze the relationship between the influence of factors sports events, integrated marketing communications, and urban values on the branding of Chengdu sports city in China. 3) To construct a model of the influence of sports events, integrated marketing communications, and urban values on the branding of Chengdu sports city in China. 4) To evaluate the model of sports events. The influence of integrated marketing communication and city values on Chengdu sports city branding. It was found that the quality of sports events has a significant effect on trust. Sports event quality has a significant effect on Chengdu sports city branding. Integrated marketing communication has a significant effect on stakeholder trust. Integrated marketing communication has a significant effect on Chengdu sports city branding. City value has a significant effect on stakeholder trust. City value has a significant effect on Chengdu sports city brand building. Stakeholder trust has a significant effect on Chengdu sports city brand building. Sports event quality has a significant impact on Chinese sports city Chengdu branding through stakeholder trust. Integrated marketing communication has an indirect effect on sports city branding through stakeholder trust. City value has an indirect effect on sports city branding through stakeholder trust. Finally, a model of the influence of sports events, integrated marketing communication, and city values on the sports city branding of Chengdu, China was constructed (Chi-square=3640.017,DF=2750, Chi/DF=1.324, GFI=0.841, RMSEA=0.026, NFI=0.836, and NNFI=0.952). Therefore, this study helps to understand the overall status quo, influencing factors and model promotion application of Chengdu's sports city branding, and lays a certain theoretical foundation for the research related to sports event city branding.

Keywords: Sports Events, Integrated Marketing Communication, City Values, Sports City Branding, Chengdu.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of sports events and city brand building is a mutually promoting relationship, aiming to enhance the visibility, image and attractiveness of the city by hosting sports events (Wei, 2019, P. 18). This trend has become increasingly evident in the past few decades, with many cities using major sporting events as one of their strategies to enhance local economic,

cultural and social development. In this context, there is a close relationship between sports events and city brand building, which influence each other and jointly promote the overall development of the city.

Nowadays, many cities in China are also keen to organize sports events and show regional competitive advantages that are characteristic of cities, such as, in recent years, Shanghai has basically held about 70 international and national events every year. Nanchang, a city in Jiangxi province, successfully held four Nanchang International Marathons from 2016 to 2019, and Chengdu has put forward the slogan of becoming a world event name.

As an important central city in western China, one of the top ten ancient capitals in the country, the first batch of national historical and cultural cities, and the birthplace of ancient Shu civilization, Chengdu's GDP has reached 1.99 trillion Yuan by 2021, and is listed as a "new first-tier city" in the ranking of Chinese cities mainly based on brand business data. Chengdu has also used sports events as an important means to promote the city's brand. In December 2021, Chengdu Sports Bureau announced the "14th Five-Year Plan for the Construction of World Event Cities in Chengdu", which clearly proposed that by 2025, Chengdu will be built into a world event city; More than 50 international and national events are held every year, and the driving effect of sports events on related industries exceeds 30 billion Yuan; The total scale of the sports industry exceeds 150 billion Yuan; The total scale of sports consumption exceeded 80 billion Yuan, and strive to build a high-quality national sports consumption center. Meanwhile, the 31st Universiade was held in Chengdu in July (originally scheduled for June 2022); The 12th World Games will also be held in Chengdu in 2025, and Chengdu is the first city in mainland China to bid for the event, which will also become another important milestone in Chengdu's process of accelerating the construction of a world sports city.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In their study, Wei and Yuan (2019) highlighted the positive impact of hosting large-scale sports events on city brands. This impact includes enhancing the development of city history and culture, strengthening city brand identity, improving city infrastructure, and boosting city brand building. Furthermore, it involves expanding city co-construction and sharing, emphasizing city brand affinity, promoting overall city development strategies, and increasing the cohesion of city brands.

Li (2022) emphasized that city competition extends beyond economic and political realms, with soft power and city brand image playing key roles in enhancing city competitiveness.

According to Ramadhani and Indradjati (2023), social media plays a crucial role in shaping successful city brand strategies. By integrating social media into the city branding process, cities can adopt bottom-up approaches that influence brand development, making city brands more appealing to diverse audiences and ensuring long-term success. Utilizing social media user-generated content, local government-created materials, peer interaction, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and engaging media can help assess stakeholder acceptance of city brands

across nine dimensions. In his research, Yu (2018) emphasized that shaping and promoting a city's brand image is a gradual process. However, leveraging large-scale sports events can expedite this process, enabling wider global recognition of a city's brand image in a shorter timeframe.

Ren (2020), city brand is a comprehensive concept that includes various elements of city politics, economy and culture, and is the brand equity of city image, among which city culture is an important factor affecting the development of city brand.

Lai (2021), a city brand is the symbolization and symbolization of the city image, the embodiment of the city's personality, and has the basic characteristics that can be recognized and recognized by city customers.

Bo (2019) believes that the sports city branding means that in order to maintain a dominant position in the city competition and have a certain influence on domestic and even world sports affairs, city managers take sports functions as the positioning of future city development and use the sports elements of the city to leverage multiple resources of the city.

Tzetzis and Tachis. (2014) pointed out that in the context of organizing sports events, the quality of organizing events is the ability of service providers to meet the minimum expectations of consumers for participating in events.

Ko et al. (2011) Ability to meet the needs of service recipients. Service quality is the most important, creating the difference of service recipients, surpassing competitors, providing service quality that meets the expectations of service recipients is the action that must be taken.

The concept of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) originated in the 1960s and 1970s. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is a theory pioneered and proposed by Don E. Schultz, a professor at the Meill Institute for Journalism at Northwestern University, who is known as "one of the most influential figures on marketing in the 20th century".

Kotler (1997) in his book *Marketing Management: In Analysis, Planning, Implementation, and Control*, 4th Edition, Kotler emphasized the importance of integrated marketing communication and the need to coordinate various means of communication to achieve more effective marketing results. Philip Kotler emphasizes the integration and coordination of marketing. Kotler highlighted the importance of IMC. He pointed out that traditional marketing communication methods are no longer suitable for the changing market environment at that time, and brands need to integrate various communication tools to establish a consistent image and message in order to communicate with consumers more effectively.

Jacobs (1961) is a renowned urbanist and city planner, whose book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* discusses the value of cities and the importance of city planning.

Glaeser (2001) explored the relationship between the value of cities and human capital in his study. He believes that highly developed cities are able to attract highly skilled and innovative talents, which brings economic growth and innovation to the city.

Mayer et al. (1995) pointed out that trust means that the trustor would rather give up his control when he has the ability to control the trustor, thus exposing himself to the possibility of being hurt.

Reichheld and Schefter (2000) proposed that enterprises can gain the real trust of consumers and ultimately win the long-term support and loyalty of customers.

Xing (2018) put forward specific implementation strategies. In the process of case implementation, by integrating a series of marketing strategies, such as advertising media strategy, theme activity strategy, product strategy, public relations strategy and sales channel strategy, advertising media strategy deeply integrates the essence of the brand with the Olympic spirit, so as to enhance consumer loyalty to the brand. The theme activity strategy increases the trust and favorability of the local people for the brand, which is conducive to establishing a good corporate brand image.

In conclusion, the main factors influencing sports city brand include sports events, integrated marketing communication and city values. Urban values also play an intermediary role in many literatures. These documents provide theoretical basis for the research hypothesis of this paper.

3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the research of other scholars, this paper proposes the following hypotheses:

- H1: Sports events quality has a significant effect on trust.
- H2: Sports events quality has a significant effect on sports city branding of Chengdu, China.
- H3: Integrated marketing communication has a significant effect on stakeholders trust.
- H4: Integrated marketing communication has a significant effect on sports city branding of Chengdu, China.
- H5: City value has a significant effect on stakeholders trust.
- H6: City value has a significant effect on sports city branding of Chengdu, China.
- H7: Stakeholders trust has a significant effect on sports city branding of Chengdu, China.
- H8: Sports events quality has a significant effect on sports city branding Chengdu in China through stakeholders trust.
- H9: Integrated marketing communication has an indirect impact on sports city branding through stakeholders trust.
- H10: City value has an indirect impact on sports city branding through stakeholders trust.

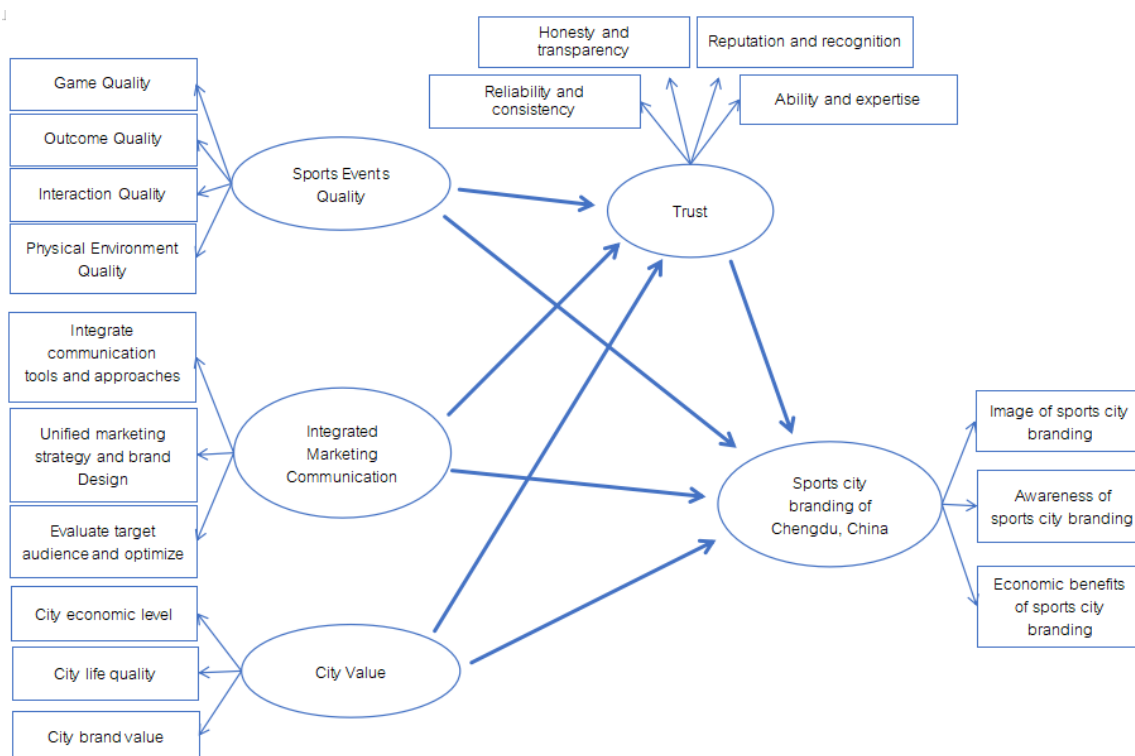


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to the above literature, the construction of sports city brand is influenced by the quality of sports events, comprehensive marketing communication and city values. This research is a mixed method research, that is, a combination of qualitative research and quantitative research. The author made relevant questionnaires. The first step is to investigate the current situation of China's sports city brand Chengdu through literature review, expert interviews and content analysis. The second step is to analyze the relationship between sports event factors, comprehensive marketing communication and city values on the influence of Chinese sports city brand Chengdu through questionnaire survey. The third step is to investigate the impact of sports event mode, integrated marketing communication and city values on Chinese sports city brand Chengdu through focus group and content analysis. After several on-site questionnaires and "questionnaire star" survey, a total of 500 questionnaires, 487 valid questionnaires were recovered. SPSS and AMOS software were used to sort out and analyze the questionnaire data, and the structural equation models of sports event quality, comprehensive marketing communication, and brand construction of sports city with city values were constructed respectively. Finally, structural equation models of sports event quality, comprehensive marketing communication, and brand construction of sports city with city values were constructed through verification factor analysis. Check the reliability and validity of structural equation model.

5. STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING

Based on the previous research hypothesis, the structural equation model was constructed, the correlation lines between the independent variables were drawn, and the data were substituted into AMOS to obtain the following results:

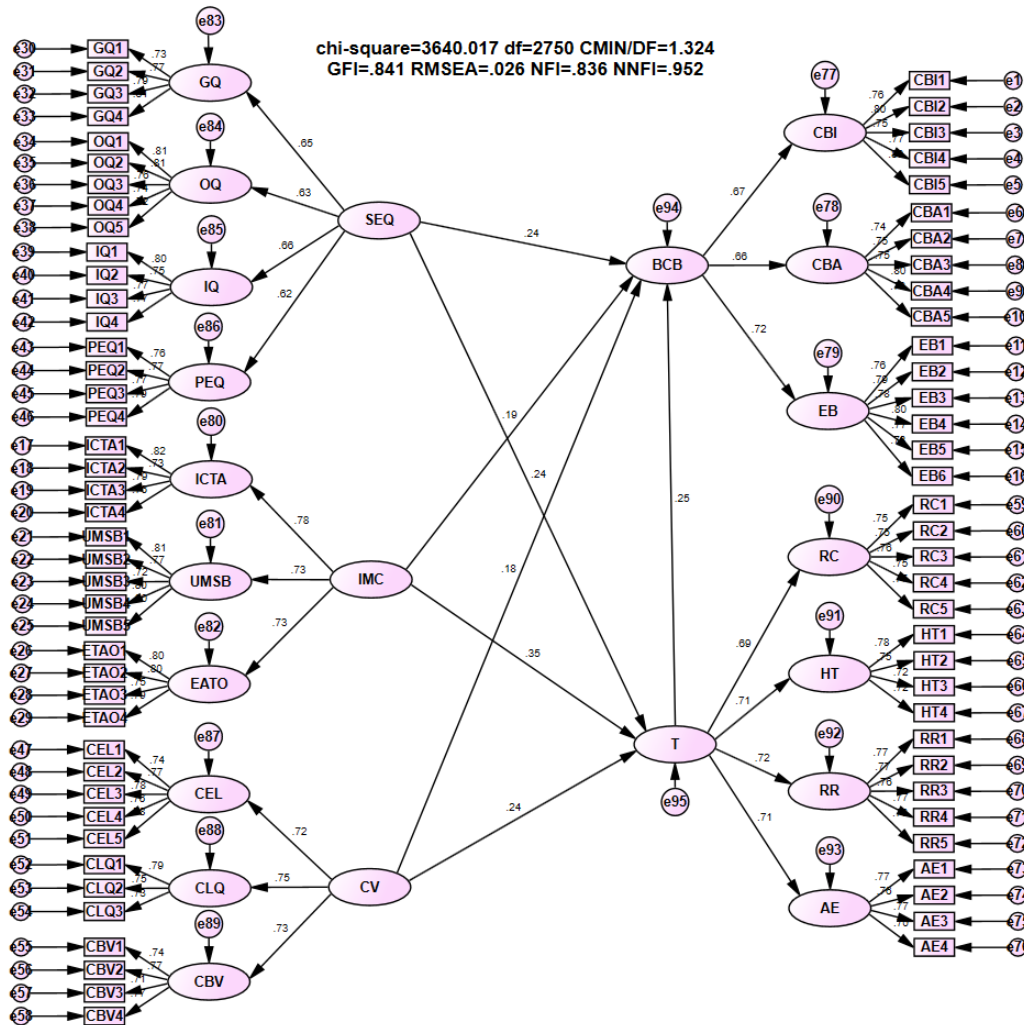


Figure 2: Structural Equation Modeling

In the process of structural equation modelling, the first thing to do is to conduct a fit test of the measurement model to test whether the model is able to describe the relationship between observed and latent variables. Evaluating the degree of fit of a model is a complex issue, and different fitting indexes have different emphasis when performing model evaluation. Therefore, it is generally accepted that the goodness of fit of a particular model should not be evaluated by one, but by a combination of multiple indicators. This study examines the degree of model fit with reference to three main indicators: absolute fit indicators, relative fit indicators, and parsimonious fit indicators.

The absolute fit indicators used are the chi-square degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), the square root of the proximity error (RMSEA), the goodness-of-fit indicator (GFI), and the canonical fit indicator (NFI), which is the NNFI, or the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI).

The non-standard model estimation residuals can be viewed through AMOS to be all positive, with no illegal estimation, and then switched to standardised estimation to produce the results in Figure2.

Table 1: Structural Equation Model Fitting Index

Index	Judging standard	Statistical value	Fit condition
CMIN	-	3640.017	-
DF	-	2750	-
CMIN/DF	<3	1.324	Good
GFI	>0.90	0.841	Acceptable
RMSEA	<0.08	0.026	Good
NFI	>0.90	0.836	Acceptable
NNFI	>0.90	0.952	Good

As can be seen from the above table, the value of χ^2/df is 1.324, which is less than 3; the RMSEA is 0.026, which is less than the standard level of 0.08, indicating that the fit is better; the value of the GFI is 0.841, the value of the NFI is 0.836, which does not reach the standard of greater than 0.9 but reaches the minimum standard of greater than 0.8, which is in the acceptable range, the value of the NNFI is 0.952, which reaches the excellent standard, and all the goodness-of-fit indicators meet the acceptable standard, and the model fits well.

Table 2: Hypotheses Testing Result of the Structural Model

Path	Non-standard load factor	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized load coefficient	Hypothesis
T <--- SEQ	0.243	0.066	3.675	***	0.238	H1
T <--- IMC	0.249	0.047	5.283	***	0.347	H3
T <--- CV	0.223	0.059	3.769	***	0.239	H5
BCB <--- SEQ	0.267	0.077	3.447	***	0.244	H2
BCB <--- IMC	0.149	0.053	2.803	0.005	0.193	H4
BCB <--- CV	0.177	0.067	2.64	0.008	0.176	H6
BCB <--- T	0.269	0.083	3.252	0.001	0.251	H7

When $P < 0.05$ then the path is significant, and when the path is significant, the coefficient is positive then the independent variable has a significant positive effect on the dependent variable.

From the above table, it can be seen that the independent variables Sports Events Quality, Integrated Marketing Communication, and City Value have a significant positive effect on the dependent variable Sports city branding.

6. INTERMEDIATE PATH CHECK

The mediator paths were examined using 5000 samples using the bootstrap sampling method of AMOS 24 and the results are shown in the table below:

Table 3: The Mediating Effect of Trust on Sports Events Quality and Sports City branding

Path	Type of effect	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P
Sports Events Quality=>Trust=>Sports city branding	direct effect	0.267	0.118	0.443	0.001
	indirect effect	0.065	0.024	0.133	0.001
	aggregate effect	0.332	0.189	0.511	0.000

The mediation path Sports Events Quality=>Trust=>Sports city branding holds true because its confidence interval does not contain the number 0.

This shows that Trust mediates between Sports Events Quality and Sports city branding. And the direct effect of the path is significant, the indirect effect is significant and the total effect is significant, which means that Trust plays a partial mediating role.

Table 4: The Mediating Effect of Trust on Integrated Marketing Communication and Sports City Branding

Path	Type of effect	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P
Integrated Marketing Communication=>Trust=>Sports city branding	direct effect	0.149	0.035	0.275	0.009
	indirect effect	0.067	0.03	0.121	0.000
	aggregate effect	0.216	0.105	0.34	0.001

The mediation path Integrated Marketing Communication=>Trust=>Sports city branding holds true because its confidence interval does not contain the number 0.

The mediation path of Integrated Marketing Communication=>Trust=>Sports city branding is valid. And the direct effect of the path is significant, the indirect effect is significant, and the total effect is significant, indicating that Trust plays a partial mediating role.

Table 5: The Mediating Effect of Trust on City Value and Sports City Branding

Path	Type of effect	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P
City Value=>Trust=>Sports city branding	direct effect	0.177	0.046	0.319	0.012
	indirect effect	0.06	0.022	0.127	0.000
	aggregate effect	0.237	0.113	0.378	0.000

The mediation path City Value=>Trust=>Sports city branding holds because its confidence interval does not contain the number 0.

This shows that Trust mediates between City Value and Sports city branding. And the direct effect of the path is significant, the indirect effect is significant and the total effect is significant, which means that Trust plays a partial mediating role.

7. CONCLUSION

This article takes Chengdu residents as the survey object, taking the 31st World University Games in Chengdu as an empirical study uses qualitative and quantitative research methods, and studies the impact of sports events, integrated marketing communications, and urban values on the brand of Chengdu Sports City.

Through qualitative research, information on the impact of factors such as sports events, integrated marketing communications, and urban values on the Chengdu Sports City brand was collected and presented through interviews, laying the foundation for future quantitative research. Quantitative research methods were used to conduct surveys and data collection. Descriptive statistics, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, correlation analysis were conducted from 487 valid questionnaires, and structural equations were constructed using Excel, SPSS, AMOS and other software to analyze the collected data. Modeling was conducted on the data to discover the impact of sports events, integrated marketing communications, and urban values on the Chengdu Sports City brand. Finally the following conclusions were reached:

Sports events quality has a significant effect on trust. Sports events quality has a significant effect on sports city branding of Chengdu, China. Integrated marketing communication has a significant effect on stakeholders trust. Integrated marketing communication has a significant effect on sports city branding of Chengdu, China. City value has a significant effect on stakeholders trust. City value has a significant effect on sports city branding of Chengdu, China. Stakeholders trust has a significant effect on sports city branding of Chengdu, China. Sports events quality has a significant effect on sports city branding Chengdu in China through stakeholders trust. Integrated marketing communication has an indirect impact on sports city branding through stakeholders trust. City value has an indirect impact on sports city branding through stakeholders trust.

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- 1) Adding a transdisciplinarity perspective: Building on existing research and incorporating more interdisciplinary perspectives such as psychology, sociology and cultural studies, in order to explore more comprehensive sports events, integrated marketing communication and urban values on the impact of Chengdu Sports City brand.
- 2) Long-term follow-up study: Through the long-term follow-up study of Chengdu Sports City brand, observation and analysis of sports events, integrated marketing communication and urban values in the brand building of the continuing role, and their influence degree and effect in different stages.
- 3) Comparative Study: Select Other Representative Sports Cities for comparative study, analysis of different cities in sports events, integrated marketing communication and urban values of the differences, as well as these differences to the city brand influence's reason and the effect.

- 4) Optimization of empirical research methods: On the basis of existing empirical research, optimization of research methods, such as the addition of big data analysis, in-depth interviews, etc., in order to improve the accuracy and reliability of research.
- 5) Focus on the perspective of stakeholders: Focus more on the role and role of stakeholders in the process of sports events, integrated marketing communication and the impact of urban values, and analyze their perceptions and attitudes towards urban brand construction.
- 6) Discusses the brand construction under the digital transformation: Combined with the current trend of digital transformation, this paper studies how sports events, integrated marketing communication and urban values affect the brand of Chengdu Sports City under the digital background, and how to use digital means to optimize brand building.
- 7) Research on sustainable development strategy of city brand: Based on the influence of sports events, integrated marketing communication and urban values, this paper discusses the sustainable development strategy of Chengdu Sports City brand, and provides more practical suggestions for urban brand construction.

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