



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA
USAGE AND BRAND COMMUNICATION
IDENTIFICATION TOWARDS LOCAL
GOVERNMENT IMAGE OF HENAN
PROVINCE, CHINA**



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

ZHANG HEBIN

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS

2025



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND BRAND
COMMUNICATION IDENTIFICATION TOWARDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT
IMAGE OF HENAN PROVINCE, CHINA**

ZHANG HEBIN



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

THESIS PRESENTED TO QUALIFY FOR A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

**FACULTY OF ARTS, SUSTAINABILITY & INDUSTRY CREATIVE
UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS**

2025



05-4506832



pustaka.upsi.edu.my



Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



PustakaTBainun



ptbupsi

UPS/PS-3/BO 32
Pind : 00 m/s: 1/1



Please tick (✓)
Project Paper
Masters by Research
Master by Mixed Mode
PhD

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

This declaration is made on the ...15th....day of...April.. 2025.....

i. Student's Declaration:

I, ZHANG HEBIN,P20202001732,FACULTY OF ART, SUSTAINABILITY AND CREATIVE INDUSTRY (PLEASE INDICATE STUDENT'S NAME, MATRIC NO. AND FACULTY) hereby declare that the work entitled THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND BRAND COMMUNICATION IDENTIFICATION TOWARDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMAGE OF HENAN PROVINCE, CHINA is my original work. I have not copied from any other students' work or from any other sources except where due reference or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part been written for me by another person.

Signature of the student

ii. Supervisor's Declaration:

I Assoc. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Zaffwan Bin Idris(SUPERVISOR'S NAME) hereby certifies that the work entitled THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND BRAND COMMUNICATION IDENTIFICATION TOWARDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMAGE OF HENAN PROVINCE, CHINA (TITLE) was prepared by the above named student, and was submitted to the Institute of Graduate Studies as a ~~*partial~~/full fulfillment for the conferment of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PLEASE INDICATE THE DEGREE), and the aforementioned work, to the best of my knowledge, is the said student's work.

April 15, 2025

Date

PROF. DR. MUHAMMAD ZAFFWAN BIN IDRIS
Dekan
Fakulti Seni, Kejuruteraan Kreatif
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris
35900 Tanjong Malim, Perak



**INSTITUT PENGAJIAN SISWAZAH /
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**BORANG PENGESAHAN PENYERAHAN TESIS/DISERTASI/LAPORAN KERTAS PROJEK
DECLARATION OF THESIS/DISSERTATION/PROJECT PAPER FORM**

Tajuk / Title: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND BRAND
COMMUNICATION IDENTIFICATION TOWARDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT
IMAGE OF HENAN PROVINCE, CHINA

No. Matrik / Matric's No.:

P20202001732

Saya / I :

ZHANG HEBIN

(Nama pelajar / Student's Name)

mengaku membenarkan Tesis/Disertasi/Laporan Kertas Projek (Kedoktoran/Sarjana)* ini disimpan di Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun) dengan syarat-syarat kegunaan seperti berikut:-

acknowledged that Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (Tuanku Bainun Library) reserves the right as follows:-

1. Tesis/Disertasi/Laporan Kertas Projek ini adalah hak milik UPSI.
The thesis is the property of Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris
2. Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun dibenarkan membuat salinan untuk tujuan rujukan dan penyelidikan.
Tuanku Bainun Library has the right to make copies for the purpose of reference and research.
3. Perpustakaan dibenarkan membuat salinan Tesis/Disertasi ini sebagai bahan pertukaran antara Institusi Pengajian Tinggi.
The Library has the right to make copies of the thesis for academic exchange.
4. Sila tandakan (✓) bagi pilihan kategori di bawah / Please tick (✓) for category below:-

SULIT/CONFIDENTIAL

Mengandungi maklumat yang berdarjah keselamatan atau kepentingan Malaysia seperti yang termaktub dalam Akta Rahsia Rasmi 1972. / Contains confidential information under the Official Secret Act 1972

TERHAD/RESTRICTED

Mengandungi maklumat terhad yang telah ditentukan oleh organisasi/badan di mana penyelidikan ini dijalankan. / Contains restricted information as specified by the organization where research was done.

TIDAK TERHAD / OPEN ACCESS

Zhanghebin

(Tandatangan Pelajar/ Signature)

[Signature]

(Tandatangan Penyelia / Signature of Supervisor)
(Nama & Cop Rasmi / Name & Official Stamp)

Tarikh: April 15, 2025

Catatan: Jika Tesis/Disertasi ini **SULIT @ TERHAD**, sila lampirkan surat daripada pihak berkuasa/organisasi berkenaan dengan menyatakan sekali sebab dan tempoh laporan ini perlu dikelaskan sebagai **SULIT** dan **TERHAD**.

Notes: If the thesis is **CONFIDENTIAL** or **RESTRICTED**, please attach with the letter from the organization with period and reasons for confidentiality or restriction.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My PhD training has been a very important experience and a valuable asset in my whole life. This long and lonely journey all my aspirations for doctoral studies and enabled me to reach the academic summit. Many people inspired me along the way in the process of climbing to the. I am grateful to them for accompanying me through all the hard work and sweetness. Thanks to my dear supervisor: Prof. Dr. Muhammad Zaffwan Bin Idris often gave me a lot of academic and psychological help. Thanks to Pro. Dr. Nor Azah binti Abdul Aziz, Dr. Ahmad Azaini Abdul Manaf, Dr. Rahina Nugrahani, Dr. Noor Hidayah binti Azmi, Dr. Nur Safinas Albakry and Dr. Mohd Ekram AI hafis were there at every critical moment of my research to give me a bright light. Thanks to Dr. Nurul Fatimah binti Abdullah and Miss Nur Aini Zulkepli for warm-hearted and patient help. Thanks to all my teachers and classmates: every teacher who has taught me has been my guiding light, and every classmate who helped me is my research partner. Thanks to all the participants: the successful completion of my research depends on your active participation and efforts, as well as your pertinent suggestions. Thanks to my dear friends: many of my insights have emerged from lively discussions with you. Thanks to my family: my mom, dad, wife, and daughter. My infinite motivation to move forward is my family's unconditional understanding, tolerance, support, and dedication. Special thanks to social media: you've made it easy for me to communicate from miles away, and you've inspired me in my research. Thanks to myself: my desire for academics and the pursuit of scientific research.





ABSTRACT

The study aims to investigate the relationship between the public's social media usage (SMU) and identification of local government image (ILGI) in Henan Province, China, and explore appropriate strategies to optimize local government image brand communication (GIBC) based on brand equity (BE) using government social media (GSM). This study used an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Firstly, in quantitative research stage, based on conceptual framework, this study developed a model with independent variable as SMU, dependent variable as ILGI, and mediator variables as social trust (ST) and social participation (SP), adapted from existing literatures to form the questionnaire. Data were analysed using SPSS 26.0 and SmartPLS 4, and structural equation modelling was developed through PLS-SEM. Seven hypotheses were tested and supported. Quantitative results indicated that SMU had a significant positive effect on ST, SP, and ILGI, and ST and SP had significant positive effect on ILGI, and the mediating effect of ST and SP between SMU and ILGI were partial. It also demonstrated that the public mainly chose government WeChat public account in usage of GSM, and ST and SP can be strengthened by public information communication (PIC) and public service provision (PSP) through GSM. Subsequently, a qualitative stage was conducted. Data collected were analysed using the six-phase guide method with Nvivo 11 to form final thematic map. Based on interviewees' insights, findings demonstrated that GSM was an important instrument, and local government could conduct GIBC strategy on GSM based on BE. Meanwhile, guidelines for BE practice are proposed for GSM optimisation. Research results imply that ST and SP can enhance positive effect of SMU on ILGI, and GSM, as an important instrument of GIBC, subsequently PIC and PSP can be used to strengthen ST and SP. Based on BE, local government can benefit the use of GSM in order to optimise GIBC.





HUBUNGAN ANTARA PENGGUNAAN MEDIA SOSIAL DAN IDENTIFIKASI KOMUNIKASI JENAMA TERHADAP IMEJ KERAJAAN TEMPATAN WILAYAH HENAN DI CHINA

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat hubungan antara penggunaan media sosial (SMU) dan mengenal pasti imej kerajaan tempatan (ILGI) di wilayah Henan, China, dan penjelajah strategi yang sesuai untuk kerajaan tempatan untuk mengoptimumkan komunikasi jenama imej kerajaan (GIBC) berdasarkan Ekuiti Jenama (BE) Menggunakan Media Sosial Kerajaan (GSM). Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kaedah kajian gabungan jenis penjelasan berikutan. Pertama, dalam peringkat penyelidikan kuantitatif, berdasarkan rangka kerja konseptual, kajian ini membangunkan model dengan pembolehubah bebas sebagai SMU, pembolehubah bergantung sebagai ILGI, dan pembolehubah pengantara sebagai kepercayaan sosial (ST) dan penyertaan sosial (SP), hasil yang disesuaikan dengan para ulama untuk membentuk Soal selidik, dan juruterbang dan tinjauan rasmi telah dilakukan. Data dianalisis menggunakan SPSS 26.0 dan SmartPLS 4, dan pemodelan persamaan struktur telah dibangunkan melalui PLS-SEM. Tujuh hipotesis telah diuji dan disokong. Hasil kuantitatif menunjukkan bahawa SMU mempunyai kesan positif yang signifikan terhadap ST, SP, dan ILGI, dan ST dan SP mempunyai kesan positif yang signifikan terhadap ILGI, dan mengantarkan kesan ST, SP antara SMU dan ILGI adalah sebahagian. Ia juga menunjukkan bahawa orang awam terutamanya yang dilengkapi akaun awam WeChat dalam penggunaan GSM, dan ST dan SP dapat diperkuat oleh komunikasi maklumat awam (PIC) dan peruntukan perkhidmatan awam (PSP) melalui GSM. Seterusnya, peringkat kualitatif dijalankan. Data yang dikumpulkan dianalisis menggunakan kaedah panduan enam fasa dengan NVivo 11 untuk membentuk peta tematik akhir. Berdasarkan pandangan yang ditemuduga, penemuan menunjukkan bahawa GSM adalah instrumen penting untuk GIBC, dan kerajaan tempatan dapat menjalankan strategi GIBC pada GSM berdasarkan BE. Sementara itu, garis panduan untuk amalan dicadangkan untuk pengoptimuman GSM. Hasil penyelidikan menunjukkan bahawa ST dan SP dapat meningkatkan kesan positif SMU pada ILGI, dan GSM, sebagai instrumen penting GIBC, boleh menggunakan PIC dan PSP untuk menguatkan ST dan SP. Berdasarkan BE, kerajaan tempatan boleh menggunakan GSM untuk mengoptimumkan dan mengamalkan strategi GIBC.



**CONTENTS**

	Page
DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK	ii
DECLARATION OF THESIS	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ABSTRAK	vi
CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES	xvi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xviii
APPENDIX LIST	xx
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	7
1.3 Aims of the Study	12
1.4 Research Questions	13
1.5 Research Hypotheses	14
1.6 Conceptual Framework	16
1.7 Research Significance	17
1.8 Operational Definitions	18
1.9 Scope and Limitations	25



CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Historical Background	28
2.2	Mass Communication and Government and the Public	29
2.3	Basic Concepts of Government Image Communication	30
2.4	Internet Public Opinion and Government Image Maintenance	31
2.5	Shaping of Local Government Image by Different Media Forms	32
2.6	Social Media and Local Government Image Shaping	33
2.7	City Image and Government Image of Brand Communication	35
2.8	Regional Image and City Image and Government Image	38
2.9	Image of Henan and Henan local Governments	40
2.10	Social Trust and Social Media Usage and Government Image	44
2.11	Social Participation and Social Media Usage and Government Image	46
2.12	Theoretical Framework	48
2.13	Hypotheses Development	49
2.13.1	Development of SMU and ILGI Hypotheses	49
2.13.2	Development of SMU and ST Hypotheses	51
2.13.3	Development of SMU and SP Hypotheses	52
2.13.4	Development of ST and ILGI Hypotheses	53
2.13.5	Development of ST as Mediator between SMU and ILGI Hypotheses	54
2.13.6	Development of SP and ILGI Hypotheses	55
2.13.7	Development of ST as Mediator between SMU and ILGI Hypotheses	57

2.14	Summary and Implications	58
------	--------------------------	----

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	60
-----	--------------	----

3.2	Research Design	61
-----	-----------------	----

3.3	Population	69
-----	------------	----

3.4	Sampling and Sample Size for the Quantitative Part	70
-----	--	----

3.5	Sampling and Sample Size for the Qualitative Part	77
-----	---	----

3.5.1	Sampling	78
-------	----------	----

3.5.2	Sample Size	78
-------	-------------	----

3.6	Instrumentation	80
-----	-----------------	----

3.6.1	Questionnaire Design	81
-------	----------------------	----

3.6.2	Interview Protocol Design	86
-------	---------------------------	----

3.7	Content Validity Test	90
-----	-----------------------	----

3.8	Translation Trustworthiness	96
-----	-----------------------------	----

3.9	Data collection	98
-----	-----------------	----

3.9.1	Ethical Consideration	98
-------	-----------------------	----

3.9.2	Procedures of Data Collection	102
-------	-------------------------------	-----

3.9.2.1	Data Collection for the Quantitative Part	102
---------	---	-----

3.9.2.2	Data Collection for the Qualitative Part	104
---------	--	-----

3.10	Data Analysis Procedure	106
------	-------------------------	-----

3.10.1	Data Analysis Procedure for the Quantitative Part	106
--------	--	-----

3.10.2	Data Analysis Procedure for the Qualitative Part	107
--------	--	-----

3.11	Pilot Study	108
------	-------------	-----

3.11.1	Pilot Study of Quantitative Research	108
--------	--------------------------------------	-----

3.11.2	Implement and Data Collection	109
3.11.3	Descriptive Statistics	110
3.11.4	Reliability	119
3.11.5	Validity	121
3.11.6	Normality Analysis	125
3.12	Implementation of the Study	129
3.12.1	Implementation of Quantitative Research	130
3.12.2	Implementation of Qualitative Research	131
3.13	Summary	139

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

4.1	Introduction	140
4.2	Data Analysis and Finding for Quantitative Research	142
4.2.1	Data Analysis Methods for Quantitative Research	142
4.2.2	Demographic Profile of Respondents of Quantitative Research	143
4.2.3	Data Normality	157
4.2.4	Reliability	160
4.2.4.1	Reliability of Social media usage	161
4.2.4.2	Reliability of Social Trust	162
4.2.4.3	Reliability of Social Participation	164
4.2.4.4	Reliability of Identification of Local Government Image	165
4.2.4.5	Reliability of the Total	167
4.2.5	Validity	167

4.2.6	PLS-SEM Analysis	169
4.2.6.1	Comparison between CB-SEM and PLS-SEM	169
4.2.6.2	Software Used for PLS-SEM Analysis	169
4.2.6.3	Data Analysis Methods	170
4.2.6.4	Reliability and Validity	171
4.2.6.5	Structural Model Assessment	178
4.2.6.6	Hypothesis Testing and Mediation analysis	181
4.2.6.7	Analysis of the Degree of Mediation Effects	182
4.2.6.8	Analysis of Goodness of Fit of the Model	184
4.2.6.9	The Model Path and Path Coefficients	185
4.3	Data Analysis and Finding for Qualitative Research	187
4.3.1	The Data Analysis Methods for Qualitative Research	190
4.3.2	Software Used for Qualitative Data Analysis	192
4.3.3	Thematic Map	192
4.3.4	Finding of the Interviews	195
4.3.4.1	Perception of Local Government Image of Henan Province	196
4.3.4.2	Perception of Local Government Brand Communication of Henan Province	205
4.3.4.3	Government Social Media Account Management	210
4.3.4.4	Strategies based on Brand Equity Through Government Social Media	216
4.4	Summary	249

**CHAPTER5 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

5.1	Research Summary	251
5.2	Discussion	263
5.2.1	Relationship between SMU ST, SP and ILGI respectively	264
5.2.2	Mediating effects of ST and SP in Relationship Between SMU and ILGI	265
5.2.3	The Effect and value of Government Social Media on Government Image Brand Communication	266
5.2.4	Strategy for ILGI from Brand Equity Perspective	267
5.3	Implications	269
5.3.1	Theoretical Implications	269
5.3.2	Practical Implication	269
5.4	Limitations	271
5.5	Conclusion	273
5.6	Suggestion	274
	REFERENCES	275
	APPENDIX	301



LIST OF TABLES

Table No.		Page
1.1	Research Objectives, Research Questions and Research Hypotheses	15
3.1	Research Approach Design of This Research	66
3.2	Sample Size of Each Prefecture City	74
3.3	Sample Size of Age Range	75
3.4	Sample Size of Male and Female	75
3.5	Sample Size of Urban and Rural	75
3.6	Measurement Items of Constructs	82
3.7	Variable & Dimension & Question	83
3.8	Structure of the Semi-Structured Interview Protocol	88
3.9	Structure of Expert Content Validity Evaluation Form	92
3.10	The Relevance Ratings on the Item Scale by Six Experts	93
3.11	Feedback on Comments from Content Validity Experts and Revised Results	95
3.12	Expert Evaluation of Translation for Questionnaires and Interview Protocol	97
3.13	Feedback on Comments from Translation Review Experts and Revised Results	98
3.14	Gender of Quantitative Pilot Study	110
3.15	Age of Quantitative Pilot Study	111
3.16	Career of Quantitative Pilot Study	112
3.17	Education Background of Quantitative Pilot Study	113
3.18	Domicile of Quantitative Pilot Study	114
3.19	Years of Social Media Usage of Quantitative Pilot Study	115



3.20	Hours of Social Media Usage per Day of Quantitative Pilot Study	116
3.21	Prefecture Level City of Domicile of Quantitative Pilot Study	117
3.22	Government Social Media Selection Favourites of Quantitative Pilot Study	118
3.23	Reliability of The total of Quantitative Pilot Study	119
3.24	Reliability of Item-Total Statistics of Quantitative Pilot Study	120
3.25	Outerloadings- Mean, STDEV, T Values, P Values of Quantitative Pilot Study	122
3.26	Data Normality: Skewness and Kurtosis of Quantitative Pilot Study	126
3.27	Feedback on Pilot Study and Revised Results	129
3.28	Six Experts of Semi-Structured Interviews	134
3.29	Six Government Social Media Accounts' Officers of Semi-Structured Interviews	136
3.30	Expert Evaluation Form Translation Review Form for Interview Content	138
4.1	Gender of Quantitative Actual Study	144
4.2	Age of Quantitative Actual Study	145
4.3	Career of Quantitative Actual Study	147
4.4	Educational Background of Quantitative Actual Study	148
4.5	Domicile of Quantitative Actual Study	149
4.6	Years of Social Media Usage of Quantitative Actual Study	150
4.7	Hours of Social Media Usage per Day of Quantitative Actual Study	152
4.8	Prefecture Level City of Domicile of Quantitative Actual Study	153
4.9	Mean and Std. Deviation of Demographic Information Variable of Quantitative Actual Study	155
4.10	Government Social Media Selection Favorites of Quantitative Actual Study	156
4.11	Data Normality:Skewness and Kurtosis of Quantitative Actual Study	157
4.12	Reliability of Social Media Usage of Quantitative Actual Study	161





4.13	Reliability of Social Trust of Quantitative Actual Study	163
4.14	Reliability of Social Participation of Quantitative Actual Study	164
4.15	Reliability of Identification of Local Government Image of Quantitative Actual Study	166
4.16	Reliability of the Total of Quantitative Actual Study	167
4.17	Validity of the total of Quantitative Actual Study	168
4.18	Construct Reliability and Validity	172
4.19	Discriminant Validity-Outerloadings	172
4.20	Discriminant Validity - Fornell-Larcker Criterion	174
4.21	Discriminant Validity-Heterotrait-mono Trait Ratio [HTMT)	175
4.22	Discriminant Validity-Cross Loadings	176
4.23	Discriminant Validity-Cross Loadings	177
4.24	Path Coefficients	180
4.25	Path Coefficients -Total Effect	181
4.26	Mediating Effect- Specific Indirect Effects	182
4.27	Degree of Mediation Effects	183
4.28	AVE and R-square	185
4.29	The Numbering of Experts and Officers	189
4.30	Final Thematic Map	194



LIST OF FIGURES

No. Figure	Page
1.1 Screenshot of the Chinese Version of Zhengzhou Release's Government Wechat Account	3
1.2 Screenshot of the English Version of Zhengzhou Release's Government Wechat Account	4
1.3 Conceptual Framework	16
2.1 Theoretical Framework	48
3.1 Research Framework	63
3.2 Procedures of the Mixed Methods	68
3.3 Procedures of Data Collection	102
3.4 Gender of Quantitative Pilot Study	110
3.5 Age of quantitative pilot study	111
3.6 Career of Quantitative Pilot Study	112
3.7 Education Background of Quantitative Pilot Study	113
3.8 Domicile of Quantitative Pilot Study	114
3.9 Years of Social Media Usage of Quantitative Pilot Study	115
3.10 Hours of Social Media Usage per Day of Quantitative Pilot Study	116
3.11 Prefecture Level City of Domicile of Quantitative Pilot Study	117
4.1 Gender of Quantitative Actual Study	144
4.2 Age of Quantitative Actual Study	146
4.3 Career of Quantitative Actual Study	147
4.4 Educational Background of Quantitative Actual Study	148

4.5	Domicile of Quantitative Actual Study	149
4.6	Years of Social Media Usage of Quantitative Actual Study	151
4.7	Hours of Social Media Usage per Day of Quantitative Actual Study	152
4.8	Prefecture Level City of Domicile of Quantitative Actual Study	154
4.9	Structural Model	179
4.10	The Model Path and Path Coefficients	187
4.11	Social Participation and Public Services Provided by Government Social Media	225
4.12	Goodnight Poster of Zhengzhou Release's Wechat Account Featured Section	228
4.13	Nickname of Zhengzhou Release's Wechat Account Editor	236
4.14	Government WeChat Public Account of Longmen Grottoes	238
4.15	Government WeChat Public Account of Shaolin Temple	239
4.16	Government WeChat Public Account of Millennium City Park	240
4.17	Zhengzhou Municipal Government Social Media Matrix	244
4.18	ZhengHaoBan Government APP	247
4.19	Government Social Media of Henan International Communication Center	248
5.1	Conceptual Framework and Supported Hypotheses	253
5.2	Social Trust and Social Participation and Brand Equity Practices in Government Social Media	257
5.3	Appropriate Strategies of Local Government Image Communication	261
5.4	Research Results	262
5.5	Ranking of Top 10 Party and Government Releasing Weibo of China in 2022	268

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BE	Brand Equity
CAC	Cyberspace Administration of China
CNNIC	China Internet Network Information Center
GIBC	Government Image Brand Communication
GSM	Government Social Media
HCA	Henan Provincial Communication Administration
HenanGov	General Office of Henan Provincial Government
HPBS	Henan Province Bureau of Statistics
ILGI	Identification of Local Government Image-
ILGIpi	Identification of Local Government Image-Public Interests
ILGIps	Identification of Local Government Image-Public Services
ILGIpv	Identification of Local Government Image-Public Values
PDPODC	People's Daily Online Public Opinion Data Center
SMU	Social Media Usage
SMud	Social Media Usage of dependencies
SMup	Social Media Usage Patterns
SP	Social Participation
SPcp	Social Participation-Collective projects
SPgc	Social Participation-Social interactions within a group context

SPpic	Social Participation-Social interactions within an individual context
SPspia	Social Participation-Socio political involvement and action
SPvis	Social Participation-Volunteering and informal support
ST	Social Trust
STit	Social Trust- Institutional Trust
STosc	Social Trust- The order of stratified closeness
STpt	Social Trust- Interpersonal Trust
PIC	Public Information Communication
PSP	Public Service Provision

APPENDIX LIST

- 1 Six Experts Content Validity Evaluation Form
- 2 Trustworthiness of translation of three experts evaluation form
- 3 Certificate of Human Research Ethics Online Workshop (Rmic)
- 4 Human Research Ethics Committee Approval (Rmic)
- 5 Actual study Questionnaire
- 6 Actual Semi-Structured Interview Protocol
- 7 Expert evaluation form Translation review form for interview content
- 8 The Profiles of Six Experts in Semi-Structured Interviews
- 9 The Profiles of Six Government Social Media Accounts in Semi-Structured Interviews
- 10 Informed Consents for Interviewees
- 11 List of Publications



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



This chapter outlined the background context of the research and its purpose. Section 1.4, 1.5 and Section 1.6 were about research questions, research hypotheses, and theoretical frameworks. Sections 1.7 and 1.8 described the significance of this study and provide definitions of operational terms. Finally, Section 1.9 was the scope and limitations of this study.

1.1 Background

Social media usage relies mainly on the increase in the scale of the Internet and the formation of the communication environment. Up to June 2023, according to China Internet Network Information Centre (CNNIC)'s 52nd Statistical Report on Internet





Development in China, China had 1.079 billion netizens, up by 11.09 million over December 2022, and its Internet penetration had reached 76.4% (CNNIC, 2023b). By June 30, 2023, WeXin and WeChat had 1.327 billion combined monthly live accounts (Tencent, 2023). By June 2023, Sina Weibo had 599 million monthly active users (Sina, 2023).

E-government is the initial stage for Chinese governments to use the Internet as a means of communication to shape government image. In China, according to the data of the 48th Statistical Report on Internet Development released by China Internet Network Information Centre on February 3, 2021, as of December 2020, the number of Internet government service users in China reached 844 million, compared with 2020 In March, it increased by 150 million, accounting for 85.3% of the public (CNNIC, 2021). According to the "2020 United Nations E-Government Survey Report (Chinese Version)", released on July 26, 2020, China's E-Government Development Index has increased from 0.6811 in 2018 to 0.7948 in 2020, and its ranking has increased to 45th in the world, reaching a "Very high" level, especially the online service index, which is a core indicator of the national e-government development level, rose to 0.9059, and the index ranking greatly rosed to 9th place globally, placing it in the top ten (UN, 2020). On July 3, 2021, the National Internet Information Office of China released the "Digital China Development Report (2020)" (CAC, 2020). The central government portal website and its new government media covered more than 768 million users in more than 200 countries and regions around the world, with annual dissemination of 138 billion times. Government new media refers to government accounts or applications that administrative institutions at all levels, institutions with administrative functions and their internal organizations have established on third-party platforms such as Weibo



and WeChat, as well as mobile application developed and constructed on their own, and so on (CHINASC, 2018). In the Chinese context, government new media is actually government social media in the international communication context. As of June 2019, in terms of the development of government social media, the governments of 297 prefectural-level administrative districts in China had established n government social media accounts, such as "Sina Weibo public account & WeChat public account & APP", with an overall coverage rate of 88.9 percent (CNNIC, 2019).

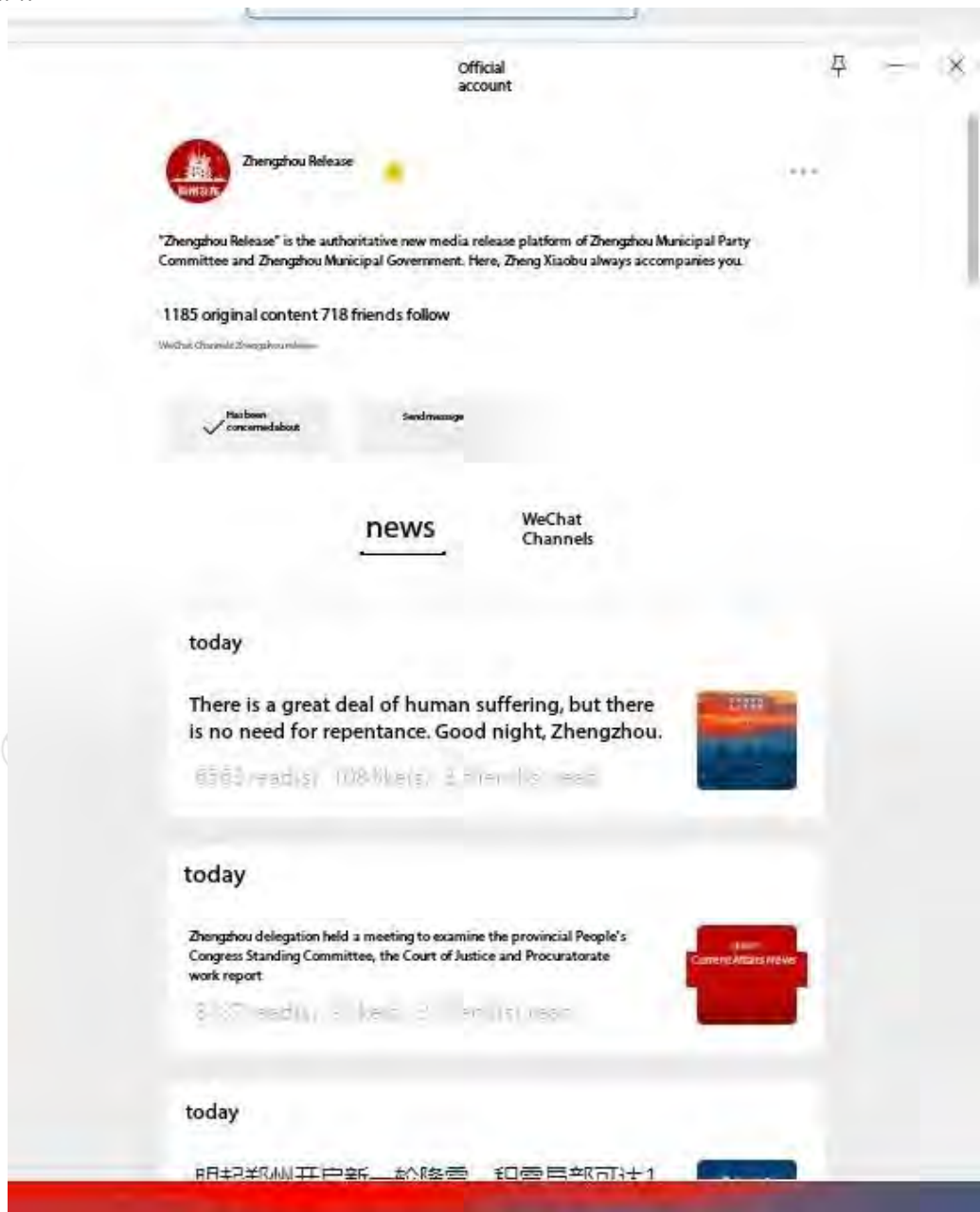
Figure 1.1

Screenshot of the Chinese Version of Zhengzhou Release's Government WeChat Account



Figure 1.2

Screenshot of the English Version of Zhengzhou Release's Government WeChat Account



As shown in Figures 1.1 and 1.2, Zhengzhou Release government WeChat account is one of the accounts in government social media matrix owned by the Zhengzhou Municipal Government. And Zhengzhou Municipal Government's governmental social media accounts also include Sina Weibo government account, Douyin government account, and Tiktok government account, and so on. The



governments of 17 other prefecture-level cities in Henan Province have established government social media accounts, like Zhengzhou City. Governments in other provinces in China have also established governmental social media accounts, much like in Henan Province.

Local government image in the context of social media usage has become more and more important in China. Particularly, research on the relationship between social media usage of the public and local government image communication effectiveness has also attracted attention.

In China, as a national symbol, the national government's image formation process is the most complicated (Zhang, 2007). The international, domestic, historical, and realistic factors involved in image self-shaping and other shaping are also more complicated (Liu, 2003). While prefecture-level and county-level governments is the middle and lower level of the Chinese government, it has very limited control of official media resources (Zhang, 2013). Its government image is often embodied in the image of the local government in the province where it is located (Zhang, 2018). This is also a situation formed by China's long-term political and cultural traditions. Therefore, in the thesis, the provincial local government image is selected as the example. The provincial government has sufficient official media resources, and each province has a large degree of cultural distinction. In the process of historical development, the image of each province has more cultural stereotypes. In media communication, they are often accustomed to distinguishing the content of communication on the topic of provinces and the dissemination content is very rich (Ren, 2012). In recent years, the local





governments of many provinces have paid more attentions to their image and regarded it as an important soft power.

Henan Province, a significant origin of Chinese civilization, was historically a central hub in China's political, economic, and cultural development (Ding, 2011). After the Northern Song Dynasty, due to the shift of China's economic centre from east to south, Henan no longer enjoys this central position, especially in due to social turmoil between 1840 and 1949 (Yang, 2005). Henan Province, located in central China, has been affected by continuous wars, and its economic, social and cultural development has been relatively slow (Yang, 2005). It has almost become a symbol of backwardness and decline in all provinces in China. Between 1949 and 2000, Henan remained behind other provinces in the wave of industrialization and marketization and was still a symbol of backwardness (Deng, 1996).



Since 2000, Henan has experienced rapid growth and is now among the leading provinces in economic indicators (Guo,2012). Generally speaking, provincial-level local governments are an important driving force for the development of the provincial economy, society, and culture. The image of the province and the image of the provincial government are given equal meanings by the public. Therefore, more research on the image of the provincial-level local government should be focused on image of the province, and the image of the local government in Henan Province is selected as the research object (Zhang, 2013).

The image of the local government of Henan Province was ever one of the worst among all provinces in China, which had an inestimable negative impact on the





economic and social development of Henan Province and even the foreign exchange and cooperation (Deng, 1996).

After entering the 21st century, Henan's economic development level has been continuously promoted (Xu, 2008). However, the gap between the image management level of local government and the economic development level is too far, which is not conducive to the overall improvement of its appearance.

As far as Henan is concerned, on May 17, 2021, the Henan Provincial Communications Administration issued the "2020 Henan Internet Development Report" (HCA, 2021). The report shows that the number of Internet users in Henan Province reached 88.365 million by the end of 2020, an increase of 385,000 from 2019. The Internet penetration rate reached 91.7%, an increase of 0.4% from 2019.



For the improvement of local government image in Henan Province, the emergence of social media not only has the risk of enlarging the negative stereotype on the Internet in the past, but also has the great opportunity of reshaping the image to get rid of the Tacitus trap (Zhao, 2014). Therefore, to formulate a local government image management and maintenance system, is not only necessary but also feasible for Henan.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A good government image can generate great cohesion. It not only gathers social forces and improves the level of public services, but also breeds people's sense of identity and trust in the government, and becomes the legitimacy foundation for the authority of the





government. With the promotion and implementation of the government image strategy, the government image is constantly developing towards a good direction. There are also some negative factors affecting the improvement of the government image, so it is still a long way to go (BainaiFan, 2016).

In China, the social media usage is very complex and diverse, mainly composed of official new media, government new media, commercial social media organizations, and WeMedia (Liu & Ma, 2019; Lu, 2015; Fanchang Kong et al., 2019).

Government image is a component of the local government's soft power, clever power, and brand equity (Zhang, 2013). It is mainly characterized by the public's recognition and recognition of local government. The main form of its representation is media communication, that is, the main body of government.

The early research results on government image mainly appeared in the wonderful conclusions of American communication scholars on the study of the relationship between public media and government and the public (McQuail, 2010). Laswell analysed the political propaganda role of the media (Zhang, 2015).

The so-called government image is actually a mixture of the objective reality of the government and the subjective perception of the public (Li, 1999). Thus, Liu (2003) pointed out that the government itself is the medium, and the process of government administration is the process of the government spreading its own image. Local governments of many provinces neglect social media applications has led to a communication dilemma in China (Liu, 2005a). In 2005, Ma (2006) comprehensively





and deeply discussed the relationship between the government and the media, and expounded on the challenges of globalization, informatization, democratization, and marketization in government image communication.

Today's era is a risk society, and social media has amplified the possibility of risk, which poses a huge challenge to social management and government image building (Zhang, 2013). The Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau's microblog, @Peaceful Beijing, responded quickly to the "7.21 Beijing rainstorm" incident in 2012 as a government microblog, integrating resources, focusing on information arrangement, channelling public opinion, and mitigating public opinion to shape the image of Beijing's local government. Hang (2014) believed that the public's evaluation of the government's actions was mostly negative, and the whole crowd triggered the crowd.

The government image is a secondary crisis, and the application of government image restoration strategies is unsuccessful. The convenient dissemination and extensive participation of social media sharply increased the local government's image crisis (Zhang, 2007). Furthermore, social media also accelerated the local government's image stereotype (Li, 2013). These achievements are instructive for the study of the dilemma and self-shaping of local government image in the new era, but the actual direction of local government image is not limited to the party and government organizations themselves (Hong, 2019). The shaping of local government image is not just a matter of optimizing the means of active dissemination and improving the effect (Cao, 2012).

From the perspective of brand communication, government image, as a brand equity of local government, has great value. Brand communication theory and practice





have more enlightening value for government image construction (Xiu, 2020). According to the connotation and characteristics of the brand, the government image brand refers to the governance and management model with regional characteristics formed by the government in the process of governance, based on the innovation of governance concepts, governance content, governance mechanisms, governance behaviours, and governance methods (Zou, 2017). The public products or services provided by the model are recognized, supported and supported by the general public, and eventually become a sign that can identify the government's image (Li, 2021). There was an impact of government campaign commercials on government's brand equity in India (E.Schultz, 2005). This study not only reveals the perception of the public to the government but also establishes the relevance of campaign advertisements by government (E.Schultz, 2013).



Communication scholars have proposed the 'message exposure theory', which argues that message exposure not only facilitates individuals' daily communication (West & Turner, 2009), but also influences values through message choice (Koch-Baumgarten & Voltmer, 2010), and scholars have demonstrated through numerous studies that media and political parties can influence individuals' perceptions and attitudes through 'message framing' (Turner & Hullett, 2005). Some scholars have used empirical research methods to investigate the relationship between media use and individual environmental behavior and political participation (Bucy & Holbert, 2014). It was found that traditional media use significantly increased individuals' willingness to discuss environmental issues and environmental awareness (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017), and new media use strengthened individuals' environmental participation behaviour (Jin & Yu, 2017). The impact of traditional media and new media on rural





residents' willingness to participate in public affairs differs, with traditional media contributing significantly to rural residents' participation in public affairs, while new media do not (Zhang, 2017). The content of media use and the intensity of media use have significant effects on college students' perceptions of the country's image (Liao &, Yang, 2011). New media online and offline interactive expression can positively influence youth's willingness to participate in politics (Lu, 2018) . Social media usage of new urban migrants can indeed influence their subjective well-being (Lu, 2015). Media use can also enhance the public's social cohesion and national identity (Lu, 2010).

It is very easy to understand that enterprises are forming and building brands, because there are many factors such as enterprises, brands, products, markets, and consumers that can be explained. As a typical social public institution, the local government and the related departments under it take the public services provided to the public as their products and obtain the public recognition to form the brand of government image. Therefore, government image is an intangible brand equity of local government, and government image communication is the preservation and value-added of brand equity.

The previous research mainly focuses on mass communication and practical skills (Rubin et al., 2020), and is lacking in-depth effectiveness identification analysis of the public's use of social media when receiving information about the local government image.



Above all, there are more studies on the concept of local government from a news communication perspective, more studies on the means from the perspective of public opinion and crisis communication, less studies from the perspective of branding, and almost no studies on the image of local government as a brand equity. There are more stereotype causes of the local government image in Henan Province from the perspective of cultural communication for reflection, more work studies from the perspective of administration, more image marketing communication from the perspective of advertising, more new media means innovation from the application of government new media, and fewer studies on the local government image in Henan Province from the perspective of branding, and the local government image in Henan Province as a brand equity, and there is almost no comprehensive research on the public social media usage on local governments brand communication. Therefore, the gap of the thesis will be the effectiveness identification of local government image brand communication from the perspective of the public social media usage.

So the dependent variable is identification of local government image communication. Independent variable is social media usage.

1.3 Aims of the Study

This research focuses on relationship between social media usage and identification of local government image brand communication Identification.

The above research aims develop its objectives, and they are as follows:



1. To investigate how the public's social media usage affects their identification with the image of local government in Henan Province of China.
2. To reveal social trust in the use of social media, and to understand how it affects the public's identification with the image of local government in Henan Province of China.
3. To examine social participation in social media usage and how it affects public identification with the image of local government in Henan Province of China.
4. To explore branding strategies for local governments to use social media for government image branding communication under the perspective of brand equity in Henan Province of China.

1.4 Research Questions



To achieve the research goals, the research will begin with finding the answers to the research questions. The research questions were formulated to achieve the research objectives. The research questions are as follows:

1. Does the public's social media usage influence their identification with the local government's image?
2. Is there a mediating effect between social trust in the public's social media usage and the public's identification with local government image communication?
3. Is there a mediating effect between social participation in the public's social media usage and the public's identification with local government image communication?
4. What are the appropriate strategies for local government image brand communication from the perspective of brand equity?





1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested:

H1. The public's social media usage positively affects their identification with local government image.

H2a. The public's social media usage positively affects their social trust.

H3a. The public's social media usage positively affects their social participation.

H2. Social trust positively mediates the relationship between the public's social media usage and their identification with the image of local government.

H3. Social participation positively mediates the relationship between the public's social media usage and their identification with the image of local government.

H2b. The public's social trust positively affects their identification with the image of local government.

H3b. The public's social participation positively affects their identification with the image of local government.

The counterpart relationship between the research objectives, research questions and research hypotheses, as shown in Table 1.1.



Table 1.1

Research Objectives, Research Questions and Research Hypotheses

Research Title	Research Objectives	Research Questions	Research Hypotheses
<p>The Relationship between Social Media Usage and Local Government Image Communication Identification of Henan Province, China</p>	<p>1. To investigate how the public’s social media usage affects their identification with the image of local government in Henan Province of China.</p> <p>2. To reveal social trust in the usage of social media, and to understand how it affects the public's identification with the image of local government in Henan Province of China.</p> <p>3. To examine social participation in social media usage and how it affects public identification with the image of local government in Henan Province of China.</p>	<p>1. What are the appropriate strategies for local government image brand communication from the perspective of brand equity?</p>	<p>H1. The public’s social media usage positively affects their identification with local government image.</p> <p>H2. Social trust positively mediates the relationship between the public’s social media usage and their identification with the image of local government.</p> <p>H3. Social participation positively mediates the relationship between the public’s social media usage and their identification with the image of local government.</p>

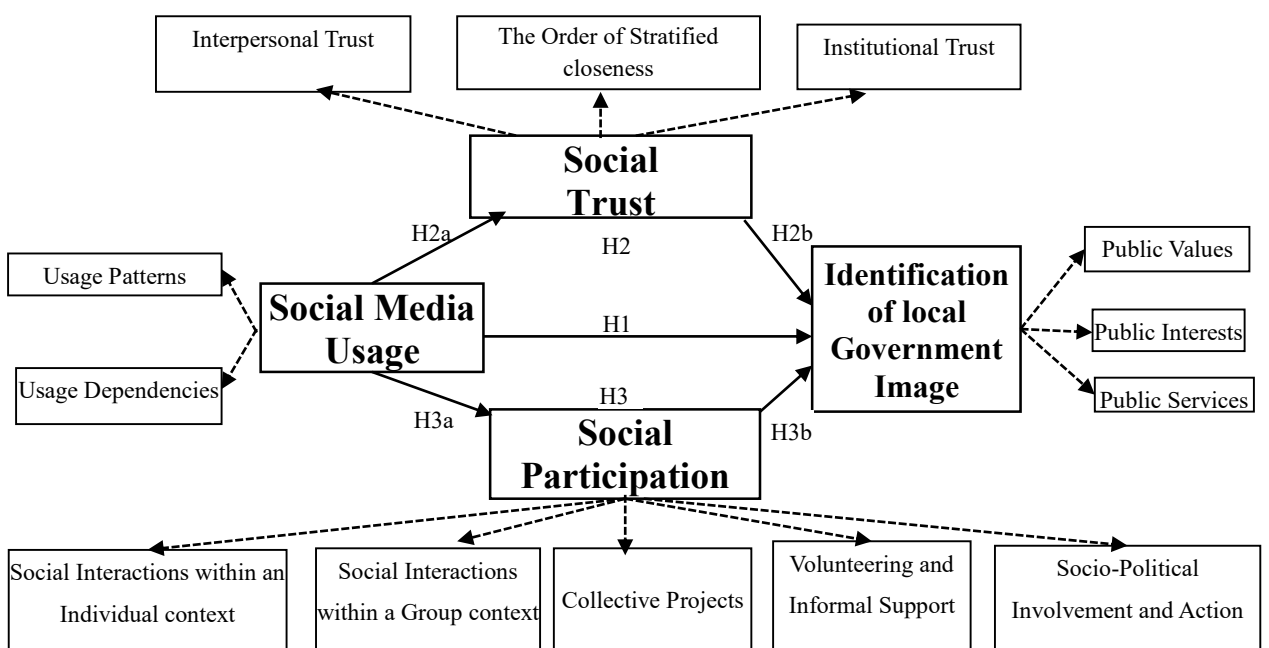
1.6 Conceptual Framework

According to research objectives, research questions and research hypotheses, there could be relationship between the social media usage and the effect identification of local government image brand communication. And social trust and social participation could have a mediating effect on the relationship between the public's social media usage and local government image brand communication effectiveness identification. Therefore, the researcher constructed the conceptual framework.

As shown in Figure 1.3, based on conceptual framework Independent Variable is the social media usage by the public. Dependent Variable is the effect identification of local government image brand communication. Mediating variables are social trust and social participation.

Figure 1.3

Conceptual Framework





Meanwhile, Social Media Usage contains two dimensions, usage patterns and usage dependencies. Social trust contains three dimensions, interpersonal trust, the order of stratified closeness, institutional trust respectively. Social Participation contains five dimensions, social interactions within an individual context, social interactions within a group context, collective projects, volunteering and informal support, socio-political involvement and action respectively. Identification of local Government Image contains three dimensions, public values, public interests, public services respectively.

1.7 Research Significance



The study will benefit the following in different ways:

For the improvement of local government image in Henan Province, the emergence of social media not only has the risk of enlarging the negative stereotype on the Internet in the past but also has the great opportunity of reshaping the image to get rid of the Tacitus trap.

Theoretical significance: it helps to broaden the research field of social media usage and government image brand communication. It is helpful to explore the theoretical depth of the government image communication theory by analysing the mediating effect of social trust and social participation on the relationship between the public's social media usage and local government image brand communication effectiveness identification.



Practical significance: it is helpful to improve the brand communication of local government image from a brand equity perspective, and to explore appropriate strategies of local government image using local government social media account.

Furthermore, it is not only necessary but also feasible for Henan, which has made breakthroughs in various undertakings, to construct a local image management and maintenance system with a global perspective and feelings of the Central Plains under the context of social media, to improve the image and communication power of Henan in the whole country and the world.

1.8 Operational Definitions

To understand the content of the thesis, the following terms are defined operationally:

Social media: At present, there is no authoritative definition of the concept of Social media in the world, and researchers interpret and define the concept of Social media from different perspectives (Mayfield, 2008). Social media refers to new forms of media based on the ideas and technologies of Web 2.0, which allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Ronzhy et al., 2022). Social media covered in this study are mainly represented by Sina Weibo, WeChat, TouTiao and Tiktok, as these four types of government social media accounts are currently the main government social media with the largest number of users and the highest level of activity in China, and are also the most widely recognized social media (CNNIC, 2023b). Social media



usage is measured in terms of both intensity of usage (social media usage pattern and social media usage dependence (Lu, 2015).

Image: Image refers to "the specific shape or posture that can cause people's thoughts or emotional activities" (Berger & Luckmann, 2023), which contains two meanings: first, image is a specific form of material, which refers to the form, appearance, and appearance of people and things; Secondly, the configuration of this kind of material can produce a certain effect to the person, make public objects to produce some kind of psychological activities or psychological response to the objective material, in other words, in this case, the image is people collected all the sensory organs of certain objective things, the total amount of information, the brain to form a general impression after comprehensive processing.



Local government image: Local government image refers to the local government through their behaviour and activity, built on the government in public is a subjective impression, is a mixture of government objective reality and the subjective cognition, refers to the government as an administrative subject in administrative object organic reflect citizens in mind, is the product of subjective and objective unity (Liu, 2003). In this study, the image of local government is the media image of local government and its related institutions through the daily publicity of governmental information, the performance of governmental services, and the usage of various types of media to self-shape, and the combination of the above factors affects the public's perception, so that the public can form their cognition of the image of local government.





Social trust refers to the perception of trust and confidence that people have in other people or organizations in the course of social interactions (Barrera Jr, 1986). It is an important feature and foundation in social relations and is of great significance for social harmony, stability and development (House et al., 1988). Social trust is a complex concept, which has different definitions and understandings in different disciplines. Social trust is characterized as mutual, risk-based, experience-based and dynamic. Social trust can extend from trust between close relationships, family and friends to trust between a wider range of groups and institutions, such as government, business, and the media and so on. In this study social trust refers to the public's exposure to the content of local government public communication on social media resulting in trust towards local government. The public's trust in local government can be improved by more exposure to government-related information in media exposure, and the public's trust in local government can be improved by accessing public services. The public's social trust towards the government can be improved through media exposure and usage, which in turn can improve the public's identification with the government.

Social participation: a significant topic in sociology, often discussed alongside social capital and social support theories (Fraser, 2008). Social participation refers to a series of behaviors in which individuals or groups participate in the public affairs based on common interests, beliefs or goals, such as voluntary activities, public construction, public welfare services, and public cultural and sports activities (House et al., 1988). These participatory behaviours could help to assemble strength and to establish positive social goals and attitudes towards life, and play an important role in promoting society development (Lemert, 2014). In this study, social participation refers to the public's





participation in various social affairs individually or collectively. In this study Social participation refers to the public's participation in public communications through social media (e.g., reading, liking, favoriting, retweeting, commenting, online and offline participation) and the access to public services. Increased public participation enhances government perception and engagement, and the more the public is exposed to government-related information in the media, the more social participation is enhanced, which in turn can increase the public's identification with the government.

Identification with Local Government Image: In this study, public identification with local government image refers to the comprehensive and systematic assessment of local government by the public through the experience of using actual government services and media exposure (Pratama, 2017). The public can form the image perception of local government through the direct access to the government services of the local government and related bureaus (Oliveira & Welch, 2013), and at the same time, the public can form the image perception of local government by reading the government propaganda information and the information about the government departments in various media, and finally, the public can form the image perception of local government under the influence of various factors, and the public can form the image identification of local government by strengthening the perception continuously. However, when one of the factors changes, it will cause the public to change the identification of the local government image. Government services, government propaganda, and public media exposure are important factors that affect the public's identification with the image of local government.





Brand refers to the degree of consumer awareness of a certain type of product and product series (Keller, 1998). The essence of a brand is that the brand owner's products, services or other advantages over competitors can bring equal or higher value to the target audience. The value includes: functional benefits, emotional benefits. In a broad sense, "brand" is an intangible asset with economic value. It uses abstract, unique, and recognizable mental concepts to express its differences, and thus occupy a certain position in people's consciousness. A brand is a sign that distinguishes itself from other competitors. It links its own characteristics with unique signs, and is constantly recognized and accepted by the public. It is a symbol with distinctive characteristics. The core value of the brand also has a strong appeal, can resonate, and is inspiring. At the same time, the connotation of the brand can last for a hundred years and is malleable. In addition, the brand is the strategy, and the core value of the brand should be consistent with the core competitiveness and long-term development goals.



Local government image brand refers to a complex symbol formed after the media image of governments at all levels is self-shaped through long-term government propaganda and government public services, which is the embodiment of local government's trustworthiness and identification in public perception, and affects the public's satisfaction and loyalty to the local government (Yang, 2010). Similar to commercial brands, local government image brand is an intangible asset of local government, which reflects the concept of public service and the quality of public service of local government, and has uniqueness (Guo, 2017). Although the local government image brand has unity in external signs, such as national emblem as the logo of all levels of government in China, and also has a unified visual identification system (Luo, 2003). Local government can provide different public communication and





public services to form their own unique local government image brand, can be shaped through the expansion of local government image sub-branding with local characteristics, and can be used to shape local government image brand by using various types of media.

Local government image brand communication: The concept of image originates from the field of psychology and communication, which emphasizes that the subject, through shaping the inner and outer unity, can comprehensively present a certain statuses, conform to the role and public expectations, and then obtain public recognition (Liu, 2006). The concept of brand derives from the field of management and marketing, emphasizing that the subject follows a certain procedure to improve public awareness and identification through self-modelling, thus generating a value superior to that of competitors (Guo, 2017). For the government, government brand is the government as the subject of the government shaped different from other governments, in public administration and public services to show the uniqueness of mind identity, behavioural identity, and visual identity (Luo, 2003). Government image is the synthesis of many aspects of the image presented by the government as a subject in the process of public administration and public service, including political image, economic image, cultural image, educational image, environmental image, tourism image, educational image and so on (Hong, 2019). The two aims of government image shaping and government branding are to achieve public endorsement, both of which require the optimization of one's own administrative behavior, the provision of high-quality public services, the usage of media communication, and the attention given to public feedback. Government image is mainly related to the practice and effect of presenting government brand in the field of behavioural and visual identity (Zou, 2017).





Therefore, government image is part of government brand, and government image brand communication is an important part of government branding (Tian, 2018). From the branding perspective, government can take government image as part of government brand equity, and take government image shaping as part of government brand communication, and government image shaping practice is also the government image brand communication.

Brand Equity is an important concept that emerged in the field of marketing research and practice in the 1980s. After the 1990s, Aaker (1991), Keller (1998) and others gradually proposed and perfected the concept of Customer-Based-Brand-Equity. Brand Equity is a series of assets and liabilities that are linked to brands, brand names and logos that can increase or decrease the value of products or services sold by a company. It mainly includes five aspects, namely brand perception, brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand associations, and other proprietary assets (such as trademarks, patents, channel relationships, etc.). These assets are presented to the public, enterprises, and society in a variety of ways. In this study, government brand and government image are government intangible assets. The public products and services provided by government, public communication information on government affairs provided by government media, administrative concepts conveyed in government's activities, and government image presented at all levels are all government brand equity.





1.9 Scope and Limitations

The local government image is the recognition and evaluation of the overall quality, comprehensive ability, and administrative performance of the government from the public at home and abroad. This recognition and evaluation are specifically reflected in the awareness and satisfaction degree of the government among the public at home and abroad.

This study has some limitations.

First of all, although local government social media can play a certain role in improving the image of local government, it is not the whole story. Therefore, improving the local government's image requires more than social media. The government should also proceed from reality and do more work conducive to the public, to essentially improve the image of local government.

Second, the public, comprising active individuals, forms judgments on government image influenced by subjective factors, everyone to the government image understanding and judgment will each have to emphasize particularly on, different interest groups and countries are likely to perceive the government image differently.

Third, the content analysis method is used to study the actual situation of research on Henan government image in the context of social media, and there will be deviations between the pre-set of the research plan and its specific implementation.





Finally, in the brand equity perspective of public services as products, governments are still very different from firms, and local governments in China in particular have more distinctive characteristics. The image construction of local government is a systematic project viewing government image as a brand equity, and using typical cases to describe the overall image of the Henan government has limitations.

