

# Research on the Shaping and Dissemination of “International Shenyang” City IP

## -- From the Perspective of Empowerment by “Liaoning Stories” Culture

Wei Zheng<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Digital Media, Liaoning Communication University, Shenyang 110136, China

\*Corresponding author: 87013050@qq.com

### Abstract

Against the backdrop of Shenyang’s booming cultural-tourism industry, this study relies on the five-city (Shenyang, Huludao, etc.) study-tour route-mapping project, focuses on the empowerment of animation technology, and explores the mechanism by which the “animation + study tour” model promotes deep integration of culture, sports and tourism and helps build a city IP. Research finds that animation technology, with its unique advantages, can significantly enhance the cultural penetration and dissemination efficiency of study-tour activities. A study-tour route that takes Shenyang as the core and links characteristic resources across Liaoning effectively integrates the three core IP elements—“industrial civilization,” “historical culture” and “ecological resources”—shaping a distinct differential competitiveness for “International Shenyang.” Based on the above, the study proposes a government–university–industry collaborative promotion strategy, aiming to convert short-term cultural-tourism traffic into long-term brand influence, thereby providing effective support for urban cultural inheritance and innovative development.

### Keywords

“International Shenyang” IP; animation technology; study tour; cultural empowerment; industry–education integration.

### 1. Introduction

In 2025, Shenyang became a phenomenal “internet-famous city” thanks to its industrial heritage, bathhouse culture and Qing-dynasty resources. During the May-Day holiday, visitor numbers and tourism revenue rose sharply; cultural venues saw surging footfall, and the topic “Shenyang cultural tourism” exceeded 3 billion online views. This phenomenon fully demonstrates Shenyang’s huge potential, yet also highlights the challenge of converting short-term traffic into long-lasting brand value. Study tours, as an important vehicle integrating culture, education and tourism, have been placed on the priority list of Shenyang’s cultural-tourism development plan. This study takes Shenyang as the core and relies on the 2024–2025 completed project “Telling Liaoning Stories Well—Animated Roadmap of Study Tours in Five Liaoning Cities.” Teachers and students used animation technology—animated maps, AR scenes and virtual IPs—to build a “visualized, storified and gamified” study corridor, exploring innovative paths of empowering cultural-tourism development through animation and offering a systematic solution for shaping “International Shenyang” city IP and promoting sustainable industrial growth.[1]

## **2. Theoretical Framework: Deep Integration of Animation, Study Tours and City IP in the Digital Age**

Study tours are “moving classrooms”; their core value lies in promoting knowledge internalisation and cultural cognition through first-hand experience. Shenyang possesses national-level study bases such as the Shenyang Imperial Palace, China Industrial Museum and 9.18 Historical Museum, offering high-quality carriers for deep cultural experience and effectively strengthening cultural identity. These bases are important platforms where historical culture and modern education merge, helping students perceive the charm of history and culture in real scenes and realise the integration of theory and practice.

The deep application of animation technology has revolutionised cultural-tourism storytelling. Shenyang Imperial Palace uses 3-D modelling and animation to present ancient architecture and its historical connotations dynamically and stereoscopically; Dalian Shipyard employs MG animation to show complex industrial manufacturing processes; the virtual IP “Shengjing Dragon Kid” establishes an emotional bond between tourists and city culture. Through visual narratives and immersive experiences, animation technology provides tourists with new ways of cultural perception, enhances emotional connection and makes cultural inheritance more vibrant.

Building the “International Shenyang” city IP needs to break through the limitations of traditional symbols and forge a deep emotional community. Its core elements include “industrial backbone,” “multiculturalism” and “hub status.” As the “equipment department of the PRC,” Shenyang’s industrial development and resilient, innovative spirit form the spiritual core; as the birthplace of Manchu culture and a melting pot of multiple cultures, it has forged a unique cultural landscape; as the geographical and economic hub of Northeast Asia, its location advantage helps integrate regional cultural-tourism resources and enhance synergistic leadership.

By deeply integrating industry, culture and location advantages, Shenyang can comprehensively raise the visibility and influence of “International Shenyang,” strengthen cultural attractiveness and competitiveness, and promote sustainable urban economic development. In fierce international competition, Shenyang can display a unique city image; its experience can be a reference for similar cities.

## **3. Practical Exploration of Animation-Empowered Study-Tour Roadmaps**

Driven by the digital wave, the integrated application of animation technology in education and cultural-tourism industries is deepening. Based on the study-tour roadmap project covering Shenyang, Huludao, Dandong, Dalian and Chaoyang, this study explores innovative paths of animation-empowered cultural-tourism development through concrete cases.

### **3.1. Dynamic Map Navigation System**

The research team developed an interactive animated map by integrating GIS data with the Unity engine, achieving deep fusion of geographic information and animated content. When users click the “Tiexi 1905” area in Shenyang, an animation about the transformation of the industrial heritage site is triggered, offering convenient and personalised study guidance while significantly enhancing the fun and knowledge of study-tour activities. Scene-modelling works created by animation-majoring students have won several prizes in competitions organised by the Liaoning Provincial Department of Education, demonstrating the effectiveness of industry-education integration. The project reveals the application potential of animation technology in education, provides a practical platform for students, and promotes the alignment of talent cultivation with industrial needs.

### **3.2. AR Scene Revitalisation**

“AR Imperial Lecture Hall” at Shenyang Imperial Palace triggers a Kangxi emperor animation explaining dougong (bracket system) structure via QR scanning, breathing new life into ancient architecture culture. Chaoyang Fossil Park’s “Fossil Revival” filter lets visitors take photos with 3-D ancient birds, sparking interest in palaeontology and significantly enhancing site appeal. These AR applications enable visitors to gain deeper understanding of cultural sites’ historical and scientific value, improve the quality of the travel experience, and open new avenues for cultural inheritance and education.

### **3.3. Virtual IP Matrix: A Cross-Regional Cultural Narrative Chain**

The project innovatively designed a family of virtual IP characters representing the cultural identity of each city (e.g., Shenyang’s “Shengjing Dragon Kid,” Dalian’s “Binbin,” Dandong’s “River Xiaodan”), creating a highly recognisable and emotionally sticky digital business card for Liaoning cultural tourism. The core breakthrough is a cross-regional cultural linkage mechanism carried by IP characters. Taking “Shengjing Dragon Kid” as an example, it acts as a dynamic narrative thread, travelling through and integrating into cultural scenes in multiple key cities: in Dandong it becomes a “little soldier” telling the story of the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea; in Anshan it is closely tied to the spirit of the iron-and-steel industry. This design, in which a single character links diverse geographical and cultural nodes, effectively constructs an organic narrative matrix of the province’s cultural-tourism resources, strengthens the overall coherence of study-tour activities and visitors’ emotional engagement, and enables visitors to understand Liaoning’s rich and diverse cultural spectrum under the systematic guidance of the IP character.[2]

## **4. Value Analysis of Study-Tour Animation Empowering “International Shenyang” IP Construction**

### **4.1. Value of the “Shenyang Sample” of Deep Integration of Culture, Sports and Tourism**

In cultural revitalisation, animation vividly reproduces the architectural craftsmanship of Shenyang Imperial Palace and the stories of industrial model workers, successfully achieving “living inheritance” of culture, bringing industrial spirit out of museums and into public awareness, and widely disseminating industrial culture, thus enhancing public identification with and pride in local culture. In experience upgrading, an AR treasure-hunt game is integrated into Shenyang’s Fangcheng pedestrian route, offering tourists brand-new interactive travel experiences and significantly increasing fun and participation. While appreciating historical architecture, tourists enjoy interactive fun, enhancing satisfaction, extending stays and boosting local consumption. In resource integration, the animated study-tour roadmap links resources in Shenyang, Dalian, Dandong, Chaoyang and Huludao, forming characteristic travel routes and enriching product supply. This integration promotes synergistic development of cultural tourism in the Shenyang metropolitan circle, enhances regional competitiveness, provides diversified and personalised choices for tourists, and helps build an influential regional destination brand. Acknowledgements

### **4.2. Building Emotional Narrative Value**

The virtual IP “Shengjing Dragon Kid,” integrating Shenyang icons such as dragon patterns, gears and snowflakes, becomes a symbolic carrier of the city’s spirit. It carries multicultural connotations, strengthens citizens’ sense of identity and belonging; its vivid image helps attract global attention, enhances the brand influence of “International Shenyang,” and provides strong support for shaping the city’s unique cultural image.

## 5. New Opportunities for Coordinated Regional Development: Synergy of Shenyang, Liaoyang and Chaoyang (“Three Yangs”)

In Liaoning, the three cities whose names contain the character “Yang”—Shenyang, Liaoyang and Chaoyang—have become an important force driving coordinated regional cultural-tourism development thanks to their profound historical heritage and unique cultural charm. The official establishment of the three-city cultural-tourism alliance in January 2025 marks a new phase of coordinated regional development and brings fresh opportunities for shaping and disseminating the “International Shenyang” city IP.

Shenyang’s “Yang” is passionate and vigorous: as the “birthplace of one dynasty and imperial capital of two dynasties,” it boasts rich historical and cultural resources such as the Imperial Palace and the Industrial Museum, along with the charm and vitality of a modern metropolis. Liaoyang’s “Yang” is rich and unique: as one of Northeast China’s earliest established cities, “half of Northeast history lies in Liaoyang,” and its hot-spring culture and historical relics are highly distinctive. Chaoyang’s “Yang” is profound and mysterious: as the “cradle of civilisation” and the “fossil kingdom,” its abundant fossil resources and Hongshan cultural sites demonstrate unique historical and scientific value.

The alliance leverages geographical proximity, shared cultural roots and commercial ties. It promotes resource sharing, route co-construction and brand co-creation. By integrating cultural-tourism resources across the three cities, distinctive travel routes and products can be created, complementary advantages realised and overall regional competitiveness enhanced. Meanwhile, the “animation + study tour” model can deeply tap the cultural connotations of the three cities and develop creative cultural-tourism products to attract more visitors. For example, an animated study-tour route themed on the history and culture of the three cities can allow visitors to gain in-depth understanding of Liaoning’s history and culture through fun experiences, strengthening recognition of and identification with the “International Shenyang” city IP. This model of coordinated regional development will inject new momentum into the sustainable development of Shenyang and even Liaoning’s cultural-tourism industry, turning Shenyang, Liaoyang and Chaoyang—the “Three Yangs”—into a brilliant cultural-tourism brand east of the Shanhai Pass.[3]

## 6. Conclusions and Outlook

This study confirms that animation technology, acting as a “decoder” of urban cultural DNA, and study tours, as “sowers” of the value of the “International Shenyang” IP, have played a key role in the development of Shenyang’s cultural-tourism industry. Through the innovative integration of “technology + content + emotion,” the Liaoning five-city animated study-tour roadmap project realised multi-dimensional core values: deepening visitor experience, promoting the conversion of “traffic” to “retention,” and injecting impetus into sustainable industrial development; consolidating the core value of the “International Shenyang” IP and enhancing urban cultural influence; strengthening Shenyang’s cultural soft power and advancing its internationalisation.

In the future, government, university and enterprise resources should be further integrated to make “animated study tours” a shining name card of the Shenyang city IP. At the same time, led by Shenyang, cultural-tourism cooperation with neighbouring cities such as Liaoyang and Chaoyang should be strengthened. Relying on the synergy of Shenyang, Liaoyang and Chaoyang (the “Three Yangs”), regional cultural-tourism resources should be shared, routes co-constructed and brands co-created to realise complementary advantages and enhance overall regional competitiveness. This will help Shenyang transform from an “internet-famous city”

into a “long-popular city,” continuously elevate its international influence, and promote the sustainable development of Liaoning’s cultural-tourism industry.

## **Acknowledgements**

Fund Project: Project outcome of the 2025 Liaoning Province Non-Government Education Association Approved Research Grant No. LMJX2025162: “A Study on the Co-education Mechanism of Civic Education Courses and Course-based Civic Education in Private Higher Education Institutions.

## **References**

- [1] Li Wenjuan. “A Brief Analysis of Urban Cultural Brand Building and Communication Strategy.” *Art Science & Technology*, 2018, 31(10): 123–125.
- [2] Wang Yuqiang & Li Xue. “Research on the Application of Virtual IP Images in Urban Brand Communication.” *Proc. China Computational Linguistics Conference*. Beijing: China Computer Federation, 2021: 456–461.
- [3] Liu Deqiang. *Urban Image Shaping and Communication Strategy in the New Media Era*. Chengdu: Southwest Jiaotong University Press, 2017: 87–95.