

## Article

# Urban communication and information adoption: quantitative evidence from Chengdu-related Douyin short videos among young users

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**Abstract:** The short platforms have become important channels for young users to obtain city-related information. This kind of urban narrative spread through the platform has an increasing impact on employer brand, talent attraction and the happiness of potential employees. This study takes Chengdu-related Douyin short videos as the research context. Based on the Information Adoption Model and Social Exchange Theory, the study conceptualizes information adoption as an early social exchange behavior, through which young users form preliminary evaluations of a city as a potential place to live and work. A questionnaire survey was administered to young Chinese users aged 18–35 who were not Chengdu residents and had watched relevant Douyin videos. Using SPSS and AMOS, data from 584 valid responses were analyzed through confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling, and bootstrap mediation tests. Results show that information quality and credibility significantly enhance perceived information usefulness, which in turn positively predicts information adoption behavior and partially mediates the effects of quality and credibility on adoption. From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory, the findings suggest that high-quality and credible urban content plays an important signaling role in pre-employment information exchange, helping to reduce uncertainty and enhance young users' perceptions of a city as a desirable destination for future work and life. These research results provide human resources practitioners and policymakers with practical insights into the use of digital platforms for strategic talent attraction, recruitment communication, and city-based employer branding.

**Keywords:** Douyin; short video platform; talent attraction; adoption behaviour; information quality; information credibility; perceived usefulness; employer branding.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Urban communication, talent attraction, and short video platform

Urban communication has long received attention in communication studies and urban research. The “communicative city” concept, developed by Drucker and Gumpert, raises several key questions: who speaks for the city, how cities communicate, what messages and channels are used, and whether technology can communicate individually. Under the influence of rapid digitalisation and technology, the city image is swiftly influencing public life through social media, short video platforms, and algorithmic recommendation mechanisms. Urban image is increasingly becoming a key component of employer brand and organizational attractiveness. This may affect young people's initial views on their future residence and workplace. (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Social media, in this way, influences lifestyles and routines as they connect people to many services, changing how they search for and consume information (Suhaimi

& Ahmad Tajuddin, 2024). Better public-employee communication, local career support, and larger collaborations are also associated with employee well-being (Wang, 2025). In fact, the attractiveness of a city as a workplace has become a key factor in talent recruitment and retention, making urban communication an increasingly important concern in human resources management. However, in this study, urban communication is mainly regarded as an early information environment, rather than direct evidence of recruitment, relocation or retention of results.

Short video platforms have become a popular information dissemination channel around the world (Kaye et al., 2021). In China, the short video platform represented by Douyin has penetrated into people's daily life and has become an important tool for social interaction, information dissemination, commercial marketing, and cultural expression (Wang & Wu, 2021). Short videos can communicate information through vision, hearing, and text in a short time, breaking through the time and space constraints of traditional television, radio, and text publishing and accelerating information dissemination. The platform may also offer personalised suggestions based on user preferences, behavioural data, and interaction modes to boost content reach, user stickiness, and information dissemination (Ren et al., 2021).

Short videos are no longer only for entertainment purposes. Its role in information distribution, social interaction, commercial marketing, and cultural communication has transformed social communication (Su, 2023). For instance, short videos can quickly transmit cultural phenomena, social events, popular trends, and spark discussion. As such, short videos are crucial platforms for cultural expression and social engagement since they speed up information flow and facilitate cultural interchange and collision (Sandel & Ju, 2019). From the perspective of social issues, short video platforms not only affect how individuals receive information, but also how social meaning is visualized, emotionalized, algorithmized, and re-disseminated. For organizations that want to attract talents, these platforms have become indispensable channels to convey organizational culture, working environment and career opportunities to potential employees. This kind of communication helps potential employees to carry out preliminary information search and evaluation.

## **1.2. Chengdu-related Douyin short videos as the research context**

In the dissemination of city image, short video platforms show obvious potential. With the widespread popularity of short videos, more and more cities have begun to use platforms to display their cultural resources, tourist attractions, and modern development. Through short video content, cities can not only improve visibility but also attract tourists, capital, and society. More importantly, this kind of communication can also promote the attraction of human capital by shaping the early perception of potential talents of urban life and working environment. Take Chengdu as an example, the city displays its history and culture, natural scenery, urban development, and lifestyle through the Douyin platform and continues to form a city image with a high degree of dissemination. The short video platform has significantly enhanced the communication effect of city image through content production and platform distribution mechanism, and helped local governments and cultural tourism institutions to shape an attractive city brand (Li et al., 2020).

As a national central city and the core city of the Chengdu-Chongqing Twin-City Economic Circle, Chengdu has long formed a differentiated city image, such as "leisure capital" and "food capital", and has strong communication potential on short video platforms. According to relevant data, topics related to "Chengdu" have a high viewing volume, and cultural tourism labels such as

Chengdu food, giant panda base, and urban lifestyle occupy an important position in platform communication (Zhiwei Data, 2023). The visibility of the Douyin platform shows that Chengdu is not only a city in the geographical sense, but also gradually becomes an attractive destination that is watched, imagined, and felt through short videos. For potential employees, the image of such a city may affect their initial impression of Chengdu as a place of life and work. These impressions may affect subsequent employment-related assessments, although this study does not directly examine relocation decision-making or career choice. Therefore, Chengdu provides a suitable background for the early stage of the broader talent attraction process of surveying information adoption.

### **1.3. Young users, information adoption, and the social exchange perspective**

Although Chengdu has gained significant visibility as an “Internet celebrity city” through short video platforms, there is still a lack of systematic research on how such media affect the perception and information adoption behavior of young people, especially for young users who live in China but do not live in Chengdu. Studies have focused more on how cities are presented, how visual symbols are organized, or how city brands are shaped, but there is still insufficient explanation for why users believe, accept, adopt, and disseminate this urban information. Therefore, this study takes Chengdu-related Douyin short videos as a research field, focusing on how young users evaluate the city information in the short videos, and how to further form information adoption behavior. This study draws on the theory of social exchange (SET) to conceptualize the adoption of information from young users as an early-stage information response that may precede potential talents’ later evaluations of a city as a place to live and work.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is one of the most influential conceptual paradigms for understanding workplace behavior (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The theory believes that interpersonal relationships develop through a series of interactions that generate obligations, and individuals return positive treatment with positive attitudes and behaviors (Blau, 1964). In organizational situations, the theory of social exchange has been widely used to explain the relationship between employees and organizations, including perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, trust, commitment and job satisfaction (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Liu et al, 2025). As Madison et al. (2025) discussed in a reflective review of his problems, the theory of social exchange initially emphasized that exchange is a dynamic, emerging and uncertain process, which is influenced by individual identity, consults through social interaction, and is constructed by organizational and cultural background. From this perspective, young users may evaluate whether city-related information can provide valuable insights for career opportunities, quality of life and cultural experiences.

Young users are the key group in this process. According to the relevant data of the platform, users aged 18 to 35 account for an important proportion of the Douyin user base, and its “check-in-create-share” behavior chain covers tourism decision-making, urban cognition, and social interaction process. Young users are not only content consumers (Mohamad, et al., 2025), but also content communicators and reproducers of urban meaning. Likes, comments, shares, collections, follows, and further searches not only reflect personal attitudes but also affect the platform algorithm to judge which content is more visible, which in turn affects whether a certain city image continues to enter the public eye. These behaviors may represent early signals of interest in relevant information in the broader process of attracting talents.

Classical framing theory emphasizes that the media shape social reality through selection, emphasis, and exclusion (Entman, 1993). Visual information can also guide users’ cognition, attitudes, and behavior through its content and

presentation (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011; Powell et al., 2015). However, in the dissemination of platform short videos, the problem is not only how the city is presented, but also how users evaluate and adopt these presentations. Douyin's image-text collaborative structure and recommendation algorithm make urban communication gradually move towards visual-first and entertainment expression. While enhancing sensory attractiveness, it may also simplify the complexity of the city image (Sun, 2022). Some visual frames may continue to be pushed to the mainstream by the platform mechanism and be naturalized and emotionalized into daily life and identity symbols (Thomson et al., 2024). In this process, young users' imagination, sense of belonging, and consumption motivation of the city may be embedded in the daily visual experience (Zeng et al., 2021). However, the mechanism of how these visual experiences can be transformed into practical information adoption behaviors has not been fully explored.

#### **1.4. Theoretical basis and hypothesis development**

Sussman and Siegal (2003) proposed the Information Adoption Model (IAM) to explain how individuals and organizations accept, adopt, and use new information. The model integrates the Technology Acceptance Model and the Elaboration Likelihood Model and emphasizes the key roles of information quality, information credibility, and perceived information usefulness in the process of information adoption. When viewing short videos, people evaluate whether the content is clear, complete, authentic, reliable, and valuable before liking, commenting, saving, sharing, searching, or taking further action. The IAM explains the cognitive process of how information is processed and accepted, while Social Exchange Theory explains why users respond positively to valuable and trustworthy information resources from the perspective of relationships. The quality and credibility of information represent the user's evaluation of information resources, the perceived usefulness of the information reflects the user's evaluation of its value, and the information adoption behavior represents the user's early reaction to this perceived value. Therefore, IAM explains the cognitive assessment process, while SET helps to explain the relationship significance of users' continuous participation in city-related information. As observed by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), social exchange involves a series of interactions that generate obligations, and these interdependent transactions have the potential to build high-quality relationships. In employment research, when individuals perceive that the organization provides valuable resources, they may show positive attitudes and behaviors, including trust, commitment and commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Liu et al., 2025). In this study, short video content related to the city is regarded as an information resource, not evidence that an employment relationship has been established. Madison et al. (2025) further emphasized that social exchange is not just transactional, but a dynamic and emerging process that is embedded in the broader social structure. In this study, as an important information resource, short video content about Chengdu enables young users to evaluate the value of city-related information and form preliminary impressions of Chengdu's living and working environment. The quality and credibility of this information reduce uncertainty, while its perceived usefulness helps to assess potential returns, thereby promoting the adoption of representatives' early commitments to exchange relationships.

Based on the above background, this study focuses on three information evaluation factors in the information adoption model: information quality, information credibility and perceived information usefulness, and examines how they affect the adoption of Chengdu city image information by young users. By combining the information adoption model with the theory of social exchange, this study not only examines the cognitive mechanism of information processing, but also interprets information adoption behavior as an early relational response to

valuable information. Users' adoption of city information shows their willingness to continue to participate in and use this information, which may help to evaluate the city as a potential residence and workplace in the future. The integration expands IAM and links users' cognitive evaluation of information with the early relationship and motivational significance of their subsequent participation.

#### **1.4.1. Information quality and perceived information usefulness**

Information quality is an important factor affecting the adoption of information, including the accuracy, integrity, comprehensibility, and timeliness of information (Bueno & Gallego, 2021; Erkan & Evans, 2018). The visual frame can improve users' subjective perception of information quality in many ways. Professional visual design can reduce information noise, highlight the core content, and enable users to quickly understand the key points of information (Gani et al., 2023). Dynamic visual presentations, such as video playback, lens conversion, and interactive effects, can provide users with richer context information and enhance the vividness and information credibility (Erkan & Evans, 2018).

Chengdu-related Douyin short videos' ability to show metropolitan space, transit infrastructure, commercial sceneries, local culture, food traditions, and living atmosphere indicates information quality. Users are more likely to grasp Chengdu if the video shows its metropolitan characteristics through good photos, logical storylines, detailed details, and relevant explanations. High-quality information plays a reliable signal role in communication relationships: when users believe that the video content provides a clear, complete and accurate urban picture, they can better evaluate the potential return of establishing social communication relationships with Chengdu and its employers. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis: H1: Perceived information quality in Douyin short videos positively affects the usefulness of users' perceived information about Chengdu's city image.

#### **1.4.2. Information credibility and perceived information usefulness**

Information credibility refers to the user's subjective judgment of the accuracy, authenticity, and reliability of the information received (Erkan & Evans, 2018). Visual elements play an important role in improving the credibility of the information. High-quality visual materials, such as high-definition pictures and professional video clips, can present professionalism and authenticity in appearance, thus reducing the cognitive risk of users (Zhuang et al., 2024). At the same time, visual symbol designs that meet specific cultural backgrounds or interests, such as scenes with regional characteristics and the use of colors that meet the aesthetics of the target audience, can also enhance users' trust in information sources (Bueno & Gallego, 2021).

When visual elements can display information vividly and intuitively, it is easier for users to understand and verify the accuracy of information (Gani et al., 2023). In the context of electronic word of mouth on social media, photos or short videos taken by real users often make the information look more credible (Erkan & Evans, 2018). In Chengdu city, image short videos, real street scenes, natural life scenes, appropriate cultural symbols, and not exaggerated emotional expressions may improve users' credible judgment of information. According to the theory of social exchange, credibility can reduce the perceived risk inherent in any exchange relationship (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). When users believe that the city's information is true and reliable, they are more likely to trust the city as a potential exchange partner, thus enhancing their assessment of the practicality of information in career-related decision-making. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypotheses: H2: Perceived information credibility in Douyin short videos positively affects the usefulness of users' perceived information about

Chengdu's city image.

#### **1.4.3. Perceived information usefulness and information adoption behavior**

Perceived information usefulness refers to the user's subjective judgment of which information can help them understand, make decisions, or take action (Erkan & Evans, 2018). Existing studies generally believe that visual frames can enhance users' perception of the usefulness of information by improving the readability and interactivity of information (Gani et al., 2023). Visual presentation methods such as clear layout, easy-to-recognize symbols, subtitle instructions, or multilingual support can make users more intuitive to obtain information focus, reduce the difficulty of understanding, and improve the perceived value (Erkan & Evans, 2018).

In adoption research, perceived usefulness is considered to be the fundamental factor affecting adoption intentions and information adoption behavior (Davis, 1989), and recent digital situational studies continue to support its direct impact on information adoption behavior (Mican & Sitar-Taut, 2024). In Chengdu-related short videos, if users think that the video can help them understand Chengdu's urban development, local culture, lifestyle, and possible tourism experience, they are more likely to adopt relevant information. Under the framework of the theory of social exchange, perceived usefulness represents the user's evaluation of the value of information as a resource. When city-related information helps users make a preliminary assessment of Chengdu's career opportunities, living conditions and cultural fit, they may be more willing to adopt and further use this information (Liu et al., 2025). Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses: H3: Perceived information usefulness in Douyin short videos has a positive impact on users' adoption of Chengdu city image information.

#### **1.4.4. Direct effects of information quality and information credibility**

In addition to affecting the information adoption behavior through perception of usefulness, the information quality may also directly affect adoption. High-quality information can support better judgment and reduce uncertainty, thus increasing users' willingness to adopt and rely on the information. In the successful research of information systems, information quality has been proven to significantly affect the long-term adoption and use by users (Al-Shargabi et al., 2021). High-quality information not only helps to improve decision-making but also enhances user trust and continuous adoption (Jiang et al., 2021). Therefore, when users think that Chengdu-related short videos on Douyin can provide accurate, complete, and timely information, they are more likely to accept the image of the city conveyed by the video. From the perspective of social exchange, high-quality information can directly reduce uncertainty and enhance trust, thereby encouraging users' early engagement with and adoption of city-related information (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Madison et al., 2025). This study puts forward the hypothesis: H4: Perceived information quality in Douyin short videos has a positive impact on users' adoption of Chengdu city image information.

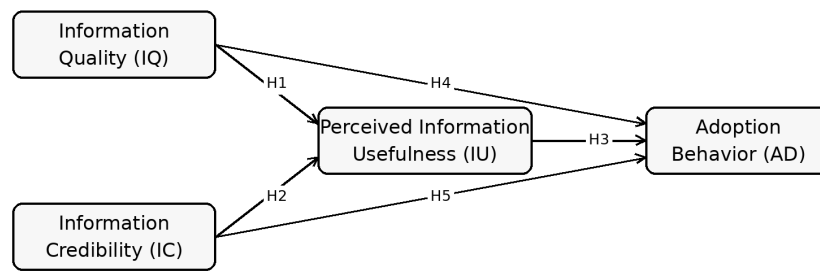
The information credibility may also directly affect the information adoption behavior. Studies have shown that information credibility can significantly affect users' information adoption behavior, especially in online and social media contexts (Khan et al., 2024). Users tend to be more willing to accept and disseminate information from credible sources or seemingly credible (Majerczak & Strzelecki, 2022). In the digital marketing context, credibility has also been proven to play an important role in consumer decision-making (Tseng, 2023). Therefore, users who think that Chengdu-related short video information is credible are more likely to accept and further engage with the image of the city

presented by the video. As Liu et al. (2025) showed in the study of sports referees, trust plays a crucial intermediary role in the relationship between social exchange and work results. This finding emphasizes the importance of credibility in any exchange relationship. This study puts forward the hypothesis: H5: Perceived information credibility in Douyin short videos has a positive impact on users' adoption of Chengdu city image information.

#### **1.4.5. Mediating role of perceived information usefulness**

The information adoption model believes that information credibility and information quality can not only directly shape adoption decision-making, but also play an indirect role by influencing users' evaluation of usefulness. Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011) pointed out that the visual frame operates at multiple levels, such as denotative content, presentation style, performative function, and ideological representation. This multi-layered structure may present credibility and quality clues in different ways, further shaping the user's perceived usefulness and ultimately promoting information adoption behavior.

Therefore, this study argues that perceived information usefulness is an important mediating mechanism connecting information quality, information credibility, and users' information adoption behavior. In such an event, users no longer rely only on the availability of information but also actively evaluate its trustworthiness and practicality before adopting it (Ahmad Tajuddin et al., 2023). Only when high-quality and credible Chengdu short video information is perceived as "useful" by users can it be more likely to be transformed into liking, commenting, saving, sharing, searching, or travel-related reference behavior. Combining the information adoption model with the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), perceived usefulness can be understood as the user's assessment of the value of information exchange, that is, the guiding role of information in career-related decision-making, and the potential return that it can foreshadow the establishment of social exchange relations with cities. As Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) pointed out, when one party "cares" the other party, social exchange relationships will develop, resulting in beneficial consequences. In this study, high-quality and credible urban information constitutes a kind of "care" or investment for the city (and its employers), and users return this care or investment by adopting behavior. This process is affected by the user's perception of the usefulness of information. Madison et al. (2025) further pointed out that social exchange is a dynamic and emerging process, not a static transaction. Therefore, the adoption of urban information can be regarded as an early response in the process of potential relationships, in which perceived usefulness is the key bridge between information evaluation and subsequent information participation. Based on this, this study proposes the following hypotheses: H6: Perceived information usefulness mediates the relationship between perceived information quality and users' adoption of Chengdu's city image information. H7: Perceived information usefulness mediates the relationship between perceived information credibility and users' adoption of Chengdu's city image information. The research model is displayed in **Figure 1**.



H6/H7: Perceived information usefulness mediates the effects of IQ and IC on AD.

**Figure 1.** Research model showing perceived information usefulness serves as a mediator between information quality and information credibility towards adoption behaviour.

## 2. Materials and methods

### 2.1. Research design

This study employs a quantitative research design, using a questionnaire survey to examine the evaluation and adoption mechanisms of Chengdu-related city image information in short videos on Douyin. Based on an information adoption model, the study sets perceived information quality and perceived information credibility as antecedent variables, perceived information usefulness as a mediating variable, and information adoption behavior as an outcome variable. The study focuses on examining how young users' judgments of the quality, credibility, and usefulness of short video information influence their information adoption behaviors, including liking, commenting, sharing, saving, further searching, and referencing related information.

### 2.2. Participants and sampling criteria

The respondents who have taken part in this study were young Chinese users who are not residents of Chengdu, but they have used the Douyin platform and watched short videos related to Chengdu. The age range of these young users is 18 to 35 years old. The rationale for the selection of the age was due to the description of young people and accounts for respondents over 18 who are relatively independent social behaviour and media use autonomy. This age group is also a significant user group of short video platforms, which shape urban image, travel willingness, social engagement, and content diffusion (Jenkins, 2006; CNNIC, 2022).

### 2.3. Data collection and sample screening

The study obtained samples through a combination of online and offline methods. Online surveys publish questionnaire links on Chinese social media platforms such as Douyin, Xiaohongshu, Weibo, and Kuaishou, and use relevant tags such as "Douyin City Short Video", "Chengdu City Image" and "Tourism" to attract potential respondents. Offline surveys are distributed as interceptive questionnaires in many popular tourist attractions in Chengdu, including Wuhou Temple, Panda Base, Taikoo Li, and other representative urban landmarks with large tourist flows. At the beginning of the questionnaire, there is a screening question to confirm that the interviewee is not a resident of Chengdu and has already watched Douyin short videos related to Chengdu.

After screening, 164 invalid online questionnaires were eliminated, and 545 valid online samples were left. Combined with online and offline data, a total of 584 valid samples were obtained in this study. The sample size exceeds the standard usually recommended for structural equation model research and meets the basic requirements of medium-complexity model path estimation, model

fitting test, and intermediary effect analysis (MacCallum et al., 1999; Hair et al., 2012; Kline, 2023).

#### **2.4. Questionnaire design and measurement**

The variables in the questionnaire are designed based on the Information Adoption Model, covering information quality, information credibility, information usefulness, and user information adoption behavior. The specific questions refer to existing mature scales and have been adjusted according to the context of relevant Douyin short videos in Chengdu. The questionnaire uses the Likert five-point scale, requiring respondents to evaluate their experience of watching Douyin short videos related to Chengdu.

The questionnaire design adhered to the principles of scientificity, applicability and simplicity. Scientificity required that the scales used should have high reliability and validity; applicability required that the scales cited should be compatible with the research context in terms of concepts, culture, and sample characteristics; simplicity required that the statements of the items should avoid ambiguity and obvious bias to reduce the respondents' understanding errors and improve data quality (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021). Before the formal survey, a pre-test was conducted with 105 samples, and the items were revised through expert review, item analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis.

The measurement of information credibility refers to the scales used by Flanagan and Metzger (2000), Appelman and Sundar (2016), and Sussman and Siegal (2003), focusing on measuring the user's perception of the authenticity, reliability, accuracy, and non-exaggeration of the relevant short video content. The measurement of information quality refers to the research of DeLone and McLean (2003) and Sussman and Siegal (2003), and mainly raises questions from the dimensions of clarity, accuracy, completeness, relevance, logic, and comprehensibility. The measurement of information usefulness refers to the concept of "perceiving usefulness" proposed by Davis (1989), focusing on whether short video information can help users understand Chengdu, evaluate Chengdu's urban image, plan Chengdu's cultural and life experience, and support subsequent travel or information search. The measurement of information adoption behavior adopts the scales of Davis (1989) and Venkatesh and Davis (2000), focusing on the actual behavior of users after contacting Chengdu-related short videos, including likes, comments, sharing, favorites, searching for more information, and following relevant accounts, reference video recommendations, and the behavioral tendency to go to Chengdu, as shown in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Measurement variables and sources

| Variable                     | Operational definition                                                                                                                                                                | Item range | Main sources                                                                 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Information Credibility (IC) | Users' perception of the authenticity, reliability, and accuracy of Chengdu-related short video information.                                                                          | Q10-Q17    | Flanagin & Metzger (2000); Appelman & Sundar (2016); Sussman & Siegal (2003) |
| Information Quality (IQ)     | Users' perception of the clarity, accuracy, completeness, and relevance of city-related short video content.                                                                          | Q18-Q24    | Sussman & Siegal (2003); DeLone & McLean (2003)                              |
| Information Usefulness (IU)  | Users' evaluation of the practical value of Chengdu-related short video information and the extent to which it helps understanding, judgment, and planning.                           | Q25-Q31    | Davis (1989)                                                                 |
| Adoption Behavior (AD)       | Users' behavioral responses after exposure to Chengdu-related short videos, including liking, commenting, sharing, saving, searching, and using the information as travel references. | Q32-Q40    | Davis (1989); Venkatesh & Davis (2000)                                       |

## 2.5. Data analysis procedure

Data analysis was performed using SPSS and AMOS. First, the formal data was cleaned, checking for missing values, normality, common method bias, descriptive statistics, and internal consistency reliability. Second, confirmatory factor analysis was used to test the measurement model, including model fit, standardized factor loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted. Finally, after the measurement model reached an acceptable level, structural equation modeling was used to test the hypothetical paths, and the bootstrap method was used to test the mediating role of perceived information usefulness. Model fit was mainly assessed using indicators such as  $\chi^2/df$ , GFI, RMSEA, NFI, CFI, IFI, TLI, PGFI, and PNFI (Byrne, 2016).

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Preliminary data screening and common method bias

Before conducting confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling, this study first performed systematic data cleaning and preliminary testing on the formal questionnaire data to ensure data quality and the reliability of the results. Since the questionnaire data came from the same source, the study used Harman's single-factor test to examine common method bias. After all measurement items were included in the confirmatory factor analysis, the total variance explained by the first factor was 34.8%, which is below the critical threshold of 40%, indicating that common method bias does not pose a serious threat.

### 3.2. Sample characteristics and reliability testing

The demographic characteristics of the study sample and their usage of short video platforms are shown in **Table 2**, and a detailed analysis is provided in this section. Regarding age, 310 respondents were aged 18–29 (53.1%), and 274 were aged 30–35 (46.9%). The age structure of the sample is consistent with the age range criteria for respondents in this study. In terms of gender, there were

289 males (49.5%) and 295 females (50.5%), resulting in a relatively balanced gender ratio overall. As for educational attainment, bachelor's degrees accounted for the largest proportion (178 people, 30.5%), followed by associate degrees (151 people, 25.9%), master's degrees and above (130 people, 22.3%), and high school or below (125 people, 21.4%). Overall, the educational background distribution was quite diverse.

**Table 2.** Demographic information of respondents

| Variable        | Category                                              | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Age             | 18-29 years old                                       | 310       | 53.1        |
|                 | 30-35 years old                                       | 274       | 46.9        |
| Gender          | Male                                                  | 289       | 49.5        |
|                 | Female                                                | 295       | 50.5        |
| Platforms Used  | Douyin                                                | 584       | 100         |
|                 | Bilibili                                              | 232       | 39.7        |
|                 | Xiaohongshu                                           | 219       | 37.5        |
|                 | Kuaishou                                              | 212       | 36.3        |
|                 | WeChat                                                | 171       | 29.3        |
| Education Level | High school or below                                  | 125       | 21.4        |
|                 | Associate degree                                      | 151       | 25.9        |
|                 | Bachelor's degree                                     | 178       | 30.5        |
|                 | Master's degree or above                              | 130       | 22.3        |
|                 | Self-employed/Freelancer/<br>Business Owner           | 313       | 53.6        |
| Occupation      | Public sector (Government, State-owned organizations) | 205       | 35.1        |
|                 | Other                                                 | 16        | 2.7         |
|                 | Student                                               | 50        | 8.6         |
|                 | No personal income                                    | 8         | 1.4         |
| Monthly Income  | Less than 3,000 yuan                                  | 151       | 25.9        |
|                 | 3,001 - 5,000 yuan                                    | 102       | 17.5        |
|                 | 5,001 - 8,000 yuan                                    | 121       | 20.7        |
|                 | 8,001 - 12,000 yuan                                   | 112       | 19.2        |
|                 | More than 12,000 yuan                                 | 90        | 15.4        |
| Marital Status  | Single                                                | 219       | 37.5        |
|                 | Married                                               | 266       | 45.5        |
|                 | Divorced                                              | 90        | 15.4        |
|                 | Widowed                                               | 9         | 1.5         |

In terms of occupation, self-employed individuals/freelancers/business owners accounted for the largest proportion (313 people, 53.6%), followed by those in the public sector (government, state-owned organizations) with 205 people (35.1%), students with 50 people (8.6%), and other occupations with 16 people (2.7%). Regarding monthly income, 25.9% (151 people) earned less than 3000 yuan, 20.7% (121 people) earned 5001–8000 yuan, 19.2% (112 people) earned 8001–12000 yuan, 17.5% (102 people) earned 3001–5000 yuan, 15.4% (90 people) earned more than 12000 yuan, and 1.4% (8 people) had no personal income. Overall, the sample income distribution covers multiple levels.

Regarding marital status, married individuals accounted for the largest proportion (266 people, 45.5%), followed by single individuals (219 people, 37.5%), divorced individuals (90 people, 15.4%), and widowed individuals (9 people, 1.5%). Regarding short video platform usage characteristics, all respondents used Douyin (584 people, 100%). Additionally, some respondents also used Bilibili (232 people, 39.7%), Xiaohongshu (219 people, 37.5%), Kuaishou (212 people, 36.3%), and WeChat (171 people, 29.3%). It should be

noted that this question was a multiple-choice question; therefore, the sum of the percentages for each platform may exceed 100%, reflecting the characteristic of respondents using multiple platforms.

Overall, the sample in this study had a relatively balanced gender ratio, and the age structure was consistent with the participant selection criteria. The distribution of education, occupation, and income reflected a certain degree of socioeconomic diversity. Platform usage was primarily centered around Douyin, and showed a clear pattern of multi-platform engagement and usage.

This study employed Cronbach's alpha coefficient to test the internal consistency reliability. The overall scale's Cronbach's alpha was 0.946, indicating high internal consistency. The alpha values for each subscale were: information credibility 0.871, information quality 0.846, information usefulness 0.854, and information adoption behavior 0.878, all higher than the commonly used standard of 0.70, indicating that all four variables had good reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

### 3.3. Measurement model assessment

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to evaluate the measurement model. The results showed that the measurement model fit well:  $\chi^2 = 484.623$ ,  $df = 428$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.132$ ,  $GFI = 0.950$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.015$ ,  $NFI = 0.939$ ,  $CFI = 0.992$ ,  $IFI = 0.992$ ,  $TLI = 0.992$ ,  $PGFI = 0.820$ ,  $PNFI = 0.864$ . Overall, all major fit indices met or were close to the recommended criteria, indicating that the four-variable measurement model can reflect the data structure well.

At the construct level, the composite reliability values for the four latent variables were  $IC = 0.871$ ,  $IQ = 0.846$ ,  $IU = 0.854$ , and  $AD = 0.879$ , all higher than the commonly used standard of 0.70 as demonstrated in **Table 3**. The average variance extracted values were  $IC = 0.460$ ,  $IQ = 0.439$ ,  $IU = 0.456$ , and  $AD = 0.446$ . Although the AVE value was slightly lower than 0.50, considering that the composite reliability and factor structure were both at acceptable levels, the measurement model still had acceptable convergent validity. Discriminant validity was tested using the HTMT. Compared with the traditional Fornell-Larcker criterion, HTMT is considered to be more sensitive and reliable in evaluating the discriminant validity of latent variables. The results show that all HTMT values are below 0.90, indicating that there is sufficient discriminant validity among the various constructs.

**Table 3.** Reliability and validity summary

| Variable                     | Item range | Cronbach's alpha | CR    | AVE   | HTMT        |
|------------------------------|------------|------------------|-------|-------|-------------|
| Information Credibility (IC) | Q10-Q17    | 0.871            | 0.871 | 0.460 | 0.677-0.821 |
| Information Quality (IQ)     | Q18-Q24    | 0.846            | 0.846 | 0.439 | 0.677-0.821 |
| Information Usefulness (IU)  | Q25-Q31    | 0.854            | 0.854 | 0.456 | 0.677-0.821 |
| Adoption Behavior (AD)       | Q32-Q40    | 0.878            | 0.879 | 0.446 | 0.677-0.821 |

### 3.4. Structural model assessment

After validating the measurement model, this study further used structural equation modeling to test the hypothetical paths and mediation mechanisms. The structural model used information quality and credibility as exogenous variables,

perceived information usefulness as a mediating variable, and information adoption behavior as an outcome variable, while preserving the direct paths from information quality and credibility to information adoption behavior. The structural model fitting results showed that  $\chi^2 = 885.070$ ,  $df = 429$ , and  $\chi^2/df = 2.063$ , below the commonly used standard of 3; RMSEA = 0.043, within a relatively ideal range; GFI = 0.923, CFI = 0.939, IFI = 0.940, and TLI = 0.934, all reaching good levels. NFI = 0.889, slightly below 0.90 but close to the recommended threshold; PGFI = 0.798 and PNFI = 0.820, indicating that the model has an acceptable parsimony fit (refer to **Table 4**).

**Table 4.** Structural model fit indices

| Fit index   | Reference value | Model value |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| $\chi^2/df$ | $\leq 3$        | 2.063       |
| GFI         | $>0.90$         | 0.923       |
| RMSEA       | $<0.05$         | 0.043       |
| NFI         | $>0.90$         | 0.889       |
| CFI         | $>0.90$         | 0.939       |
| IFI         | $>0.90$         | 0.940       |
| TLI         | $>0.90$         | 0.934       |
| PGFI        | $>0.50$         | 0.798       |
| PNFI        | $>0.50$         | 0.820       |

### 3.5. Direct effects and hypothesis testing

The direct effects results show that information quality has a significant positive direct impact on information adoption behavior (IQ→AD:  $B = 0.139$ ,  $SE = 0.047$ ,  $CR = 2.956$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ,  $\beta = 0.166$ ), and information credibility also has a significant positive direct impact on information adoption behavior (IC→AD:  $B = 0.153$ ,  $SE = 0.045$ ,  $CR = 3.376$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\beta = 0.150$ ). This indicates that when users believe that short video content related to Chengdu is clear, complete, reliable, and authentic, they are more likely to directly adopt relevant city information.

Information quality has a significant positive impact on perceived information usefulness (IQ→IU:  $B = 0.432$ ,  $SE = 0.042$ ,  $CR = 10.374$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\beta = 0.613$ ), and information credibility also has a significant positive impact on perceived information usefulness (IC→IU:  $B = 0.318$ ,  $SE = 0.041$ ,  $CR = 7.722$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\beta = 0.373$ ). This indicates that both information quality and credibility can improve users' judgment of the value of short video information. Among them, information quality has a stronger impact on perceived usefulness than information credibility, indicating that in the dissemination of city image in short videos, the clarity, completeness, and comprehensibility of content play an important role in users' judgment of usefulness.

Perceived information usefulness has a significant positive impact on information adoption behavior (IU→AD:  $B = 0.726$ ,  $SE = 0.093$ ,  $CR = 7.782$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\beta = 0.610$ ), and this path has the highest standardized coefficient among all direct paths as portrayed in **Table 5**. This indicates that whether users believe that short video information related to Chengdu is helpful for understanding, evaluating, and planning is a key proximal factor in whether they further adopt this information.

**Table 5.** Direct effects and hypothesis testing results

| Hypothesis | Path                | B         | SE    | CR     | p     | $\beta$ | Conclusion |
|------------|---------------------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|---------|------------|
| H1         | IQ $\rightarrow$ IU | 0.43<br>2 | 0.042 | 10.374 | <.001 | 0.613   | Supported  |
| H2         | IC $\rightarrow$ IU | 0.31<br>8 | 0.041 | 7.722  | <.001 | 0.373   | Supported  |
| H3         | IU $\rightarrow$ AD | 0.72<br>6 | 0.093 | 7.782  | <.001 | 0.610   | Supported  |
| H4         | IQ $\rightarrow$ AD | 0.13<br>9 | 0.047 | 2.956  | 0.003 | 0.166   | Supported  |
| H5         | IC $\rightarrow$ AD | 0.15<br>3 | 0.045 | 3.376  | <.001 | 0.150   | Supported  |

### 3.6. Mediation analysis

To examine the mediating role of perceived information usefulness, this study conducted 5000 bootstrap samplings in AMOS and constructed 95% confidence intervals. The results showed that information quality significantly influenced information adoption behavior through information usefulness (IQ  $\rightarrow$  IU  $\rightarrow$  AD: indirect B = 0.283, SE = 0.056), with a 95% CI of [0.188, 0.406] and a bias-corrected 95% CI of [0.190, 0.412], neither of which included 0, thus supporting H6.

The indirect effect of information credibility on information adoption behavior through information usefulness is also significant (IC  $\rightarrow$  IU  $\rightarrow$  AD: indirect B = 0.209, SE = 0.045), with a percentile of 95% CI of [0.131, 0.303] and a bias-corrected 95% CI of [0.133, 0.308], both of which do not include 0, thus supporting H7 as shown in **Table 6**. Since the direct paths of information quality and information credibility on information adoption behavior remain significant, it indicates that perceived information usefulness plays a partial, rather than a complete, mediating role.

**Table 6.** Bootstrap mediation effect results

| Hypothesis | Indirect path                           | Indirect B | SE    | PC 95% CI         | BC 95% CI         | Conclusion |
|------------|-----------------------------------------|------------|-------|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| H6         | IQ $\rightarrow$ IU<br>$\rightarrow$ AD | 0.283      | 0.056 | [0.188,<br>0.406] | [0.190,<br>0.412] | Supported  |
| H7         | IC $\rightarrow$ IU<br>$\rightarrow$ AD | 0.209      | 0.045 | [0.131,<br>0.303] | [0.133,<br>0.308] | Supported  |

### 3.7. Explanatory power of the model

The model's explanatory power further supports the above conclusions. Referring to **Table 7**, information quality and information credibility together explain 51.4% of the variance in perceived information usefulness ( $R^2 = 0.514$ ), indicating that users' evaluations of short video information quality and credibility can effectively predict their usefulness judgments. Information quality, information credibility, and perceived information usefulness together explain 61.5% of the variance in information adoption behavior ( $R^2 = 0.615$ ), indicating that the model has strong explanatory power for young users' information adoption behavior of city image information.

**Table 7.** Explanatory power ( $R^2$ )

| Endogenous Variable | $R^2$ | Note                                                        |
|---------------------|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| IU                  | 0.514 | IC and IQ jointly explain 51.4% of the variance in IU.      |
| AD                  | 0.615 | IC, IQ, and IU jointly explain 61.5% of the variance in AD. |

#### 4. Discussion

##### 4.1. Information quality, credibility, and usefulness in youth information adoption

The research results indicate that the adoption of Chengdu's urban image information in Douyin short videos follows the mechanisms emphasized by the information adoption model; that is, the quality and credibility of the information enhance the perceived usefulness of the information, thereby promoting the information adoption behavior. It also demonstrates the direct impact of information quality and credibility on information adoption behavior. In other words, young users do not simply accept the city image presented in short videos; rather, they form their judgments based on whether the video content is clear, complete, authentic, reliable, and useful (Sussman & Siegal, 2003; Davis, 1989). This finding shows that people use city-related short videos not only because they are visually attractive, but also because users think they are meaningful information resources to understand the city.

Perceived information usefulness was the strongest proximal factor influencing information adoption behavior, indicating that whether users believe video information has practical reference value is key to their willingness to like, comment, share, save, search for more information, or form travel intentions. Short videos cannot rely solely on visual appeal or emotional mood to convey urban information; they also need proper content arrangement and particular information presentation to assist consumers in understanding the city. High-quality and reliable information can be regarded as an intangible information resource. When young users think that city-related information is reliable and useful, it can reduce their uncertainty and encourage them to participate more deeply in urban life. In this sense, the adoption of information can be regarded as an early response to the value of the city to promote further tourism relocation or employment.

##### 4.2. Direct adoption effects and platform immediacy

However, the direct effects of information quality (IQ) → information adoption behavior (AD) and information credibility (IC) → information adoption behavior is still significant. This suggests that some users may directly adopt urban image information based on high-quality and credible information clues without fully evaluating its usefulness. This result is closely related to the immediacy and interactivity of short video platform. Users tend to make judgments and interact quickly within the information flow; when the video content is clear, real, and reliable, users may like, save, or share without extensive deliberation (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Sussman & Siegal, 2003). This direct adoption effect also has potential relevance to the early stages of talent attraction. In a short video environment, young users can form a preliminary impression of a city by quickly processing visual, narrative, and emotional clues. These impressions may not necessarily prompt them to apply for jobs or move immediately, but they may shape their early perceptions of the city as a place for future life, work, and career development. Therefore, the quality and credibility of information are not only crucial to urban communication, but also to building a city to attract potential young talents.

#### **4.3. Platform-based information adoption as a social process**

The data should be interpreted beyond individual cognitive consequences. Social platforms use short videos. Through likes, comments, shares, and collections, audience adoption of city image information affects algorithmic recommendations and content exposure (van Dijck et al., 2018). Therefore, some urban narratives may become more prominent and constantly reinforced. The quality, credibility and usefulness of information not only depend on personal perception, but also on the conditions that affect the wider dissemination of urban-related information.

This platform-based process does not mean that users directly exchange labor with the city, but that users evaluate and disseminate information that may contribute to the perceived value of the city. Social exchange is not just a fixed transaction. It can be gradually formed through repeated interaction, interpretation, and the establishment of trust. In the context of Douyin, users' information adoption behavior helps to improve the visibility of some urban images, which may affect the evaluation of cities by a wider audience, including young potential talents.

User comments, interactions, and algorithm feedback make urban material on the Douyin short-video platform visible. When young users perceive certain types of urban information as high-quality, trustworthy, and useful, they are more likely to promote its further dissemination through actions such as liking, commenting, saving, sharing, and further searching. Therefore, certain urban narratives that are easier to understand, believe, and adopt may gain sustained advantages within the platform ecosystem and gradually influence the public's perception and judgment of cities (Entman, 1993; Nieborg & Poell, 2018; van Dijck et al., 2018). Digital urban narratives may become part of the information environment, and young people can form an early understanding of urban lifestyle, development opportunities and job attractiveness through this information environment.

#### **4.4. Social implications of platform-based city narratives**

This mechanism can enhance the efficiency of urban information dissemination, making it easier for young users from outside the city to come into contact with and understand the urban culture, lifestyle, and development image. However, it may also lead to the homogenization of the city image. When the platform tends to amplify highly interactive, emotional, and visually attractive content, the city is likely to be stably associated with a few easily disseminated symbols, such as leisure life, food culture, night scenes, landmark buildings, panda symbols and emotional comfort, while the complex aspects of internal social differences, ordinary labor, public governance and spatial inequality within the city are less likely to come into the users' view (Zeng et al., 2021). This tendency also has implications for talent attraction and city-based employer branding. If the digital image of a city is limited to a few lifestyle symbols, young potential talents may only have an attractive but incomplete impression of the city. This impression may help stimulate their interest, but it is not enough for them to assess career opportunities, work environment, public services, or long-term living conditions.

When certain narratives have long occupied the dominant perspective, they gradually become the default reference for understanding the city and are repeatedly invoked in user practices. Urry's (2002) discussion on "tourist gaze" takes on a more everyday and frequent form in the context of short videos. Before users actually arrive in a city, the platform has already provided an expectation framework for that city. For young people who may consider studying, working, or living in cities in the future, this pre-arrival expectation framework will also affect their imagination of urban life and career prospects. Therefore, urban

publicity should not only create emotional attraction, but also provide more comprehensive and substantive information about cities as living and working environments.

Furthermore, local cultures are often presented in short videos in a way that is easy to recognize, display, and replicate, thereby becoming a set of readily disseminated cultural labels and lists of experiences. Just as Hobsbawm and Ranger (2012) pointed out when discussing “the invention of traditions”, traditions are not self-evident; rather, they are constantly selected, named, and solidified within specific power and narrative mechanisms. For the dissemination of a city’s image, local culture may be detached from its historical tensions, social conditions, and life practices, and reorganized into a set of consumable symbols (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2012). Public discussion about cities may also shift from questions such as “how to live in a city,” “how to govern a city,” and “how culture is inherited and transformed” to consumerist topics such as “where is better for taking photos,” “where is more worthwhile to visit,” and “which lifestyle is more desirable” (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2012; Thomson et al., 2024). This change may affect young users’ evaluation of the city. If people understand the city mainly through the symbols of leisure and consumption, the image of the city as a place for career development, employment, innovation and long-term residence may still be imperfect in the public.

When visibility and interactivity become critical survival conditions for creation, content production gradually becomes metric-driven (Takala, 2023). Creators need to constantly adjust content formats based on likes, completion rates, comments, and shares (Nieborg & Poell, 2018; van Dijck et al., 2018). A direct consequence is that creative differences are more easily compressed. Empirical studies often imply greater uncertainty, and in an environment driven by indicators, uncertainty is more likely to be penalized. Therefore, mature, safe, and easily disseminated content templates are more likely to appear on the platform (Nieborg & Poell, 2018; Takala, 2023).

Finally, urban identity is essentially a long-term process intertwined with local life, social interaction and collective memory (Couldry & Hepp, 2018). However, as the image of the city is increasingly dependent on the dissemination of short videos, external users’ understanding of the city may prioritize the visible content on the platform over the city itself (Couldry & Hepp, 2018; van Dijck et al., 2018). For local residents, this may create a subtle pressure to force them to express themselves in a specific way. They may gradually describe their city according to the mainstream image on the platform, emphasizing leisure, cultural charm, and emotional comfort, while downplaying the pressure, contradictions, and daily complexity in urban development.

The quantitative results of this study show that information quality, information credibility, and perceived usefulness are not only psychological evaluation variables, but also channels for some urban narratives to be adopted, interacted with, disseminated, and ultimately gain social influence. When users think that urban information is of high quality, credible, and useful, they are more likely to promote it to a wider audience through platform behavior. Therefore, the behavior of information adoption is not only a communication effect, but also a part of the production process of social significance.

#### **4.5. Practical implications for urban communication**

In addition, the research results also provide practical inspiration. Urban communication should not only focus on sensory enjoyment or traffic flow growth. Urban publicity agencies and content creators should improve the quality of information through clear, complete, and easy-to-understand content and present information in a true, natural, and non-exaggerated way to enhance the credibility

of information. The platform should give priority to displaying high-quality and reliable information, rather than using factors such as dwell time, interactive data, or business conversion rate as recommendation criteria (van Dijck et al., 2018; Wang & Li, 2025). Especially in terms of urban image promotion, cultural tourism promotion, and public information release, the platform is not only a content distribution tool, but also an important infrastructure for shaping young users' preliminary perceptions of the city as a potential environment for living, working, and career development. Research results show that urban images may influence each other in young people's actions on future opportunities. Businesses located in cities can benefit from combining employer brands with broader urban narratives, especially when communicating with young people through digital platforms. However, this kind of communication should not only emphasize attractive lifestyle symbols, but also provide reliable and useful information about industrial clusters, career development, workplace culture, public services, and work-life balance. This information can help potential young people make a clearer assessment of cities and their employment environment. For human resource professionals, platform behaviors such as monitoring, preserving, sharing, and further searching can serve as early indicators of information interest when evaluating recruitment communication strategies.

#### **4.6. The social and cultural impact of platform-oriented urban images**

On the one hand, platform-based urban narratives can enhance urban visibility, strengthen cultural identification, and create emotional connections (Manan et al., 2025); on the other hand, they may also simplify urban complexity, transforming the city into a set of consumable, replicable, and algorithmically disseminated symbolic representations. The results of this paper suggest that the adoption of short video information is not only about whether users accept a particular message but also about what kind of urban meaning can enter the public eye and be continuously reinforced.

### **5. Conclusion**

This paper examines how young users adopt information about Chengdu's image from short videos on Douyin. Based on an information adoption model, the study examines the direct and indirect effects of information quality, information credibility, and perceived information usefulness on information adoption behavior. The results show that information quality and information credibility both significantly and positively influence perceived information usefulness, which in turn significantly and positively influences information adoption behavior and is the strongest proximal predictor in the model. At the same time, the quality and credibility of information still have a significant and direct impact on the information adoption behavior, which shows that the perception of the usefulness of information plays a partial mediating role. By disseminating reliable information about the quality of life, cultural vitality, public services and career opportunities in the city, these platforms can influence potential talents' initial assessment of Chengdu as a place for living and working, thereby supporting the early stages of talent attraction.

Research results show that in the short video environment, users' adoption of urban image information is not only based on exposure or visual appeal but also on a structured evaluation process. Quality and credibility clues are transformed into practical judgments, which encourage users to adopt, interact, and forward. From a broader social perspective, information adoption is also part of the process through which platform-based city images gain social visibility and cultural influence. The adoption and interaction of young users enable the continuation of specific urban narratives and further promote the construction of public imagination, urban identity, and social identity. For cities

and organizations, this means that digital urban narratives are no longer only related to tourism promotion or cultural dissemination; they may also affect how young potential talents imagine the lifestyle, employment environment, career possibilities, and long-term attractiveness of a city. Therefore, urban communication should not only emphasize the symbolic lifestyle image, but also provide clear, credible, and useful information about public services, industrial development, work-life balance, and career opportunities. According to the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), this kind of communication can be regarded as an information resource, which can reduce uncertainty and encourage positive early participation. When young users perceive clear and reliable information about career opportunities, public services, and living conditions, they may form a more positive initial evaluation of the city. These evaluations may have subsequent impacts on talent attraction, but they should not be interpreted as direct evidence of employee relocation, retention, organizational commitment, place attachment, or employee well-being. Therefore, urban communication may contribute to pre-recruitment communication and the building of the city's employer brand, but its impact on employee retention and well-being still requires further research.

This research still has some limitations. First of all, the sample is limited to young users aged 18 to 35 who have watched Douyin videos related to Chengdu but are not from Chengdu. Future research can compare the differences in information adoption of users of different ages, regions, and cultural backgrounds. Secondly, this article only takes Chengdu as the case city. Future research can carry out multi-city comparative research. Third, this article mainly uses cross-sectional questionnaire data. Although it can test the structural relationship between variables, it still cannot fully reveal the causal process. Future research can combine experimental methods, longitudinal tracking, or platform behavior data to further explain how the quality, credibility, and usefulness of short video information affect users' subsequent information adoption behavior and their social consequences.

Finally, the information adoption behaviors examined in this study mainly include platform-based and information-related responses, such as likes, comments, sharing, collection, following relevant accounts, and searching for more information. These indicators represent the early and indirect stages of the talent attraction process, rather than actual job applications, relocation decisions, employee retention, or organizational commitment. Future research should investigate whether these early information adoption behaviors can predict subsequent actual employment and relocation-related outcomes.

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**Ethical statement:** This study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee under reference number 2025-0915-01. The approval period was from 31 October 2025 to 30 October 2026. The study used an anonymous questionnaire survey. Before participating, all respondents were informed of the research purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw from the survey. No directly identifiable personal information was collected. All questionnaire data were used only for academic research purposes and were kept confidential.

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