

Chinese Celebrity Culture and Influencers in Live-streaming

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Abstract. China is a country with a long history. The earliest academic recognition of China's founding was in 221 B.C.E. when the Qin Dynasty was established. Therefore, China is proud of its long history and impressed with the current code of conduct because of its history and culture. The analysis of China's history and long-lasting celebrity culture will enable us to better understand the underlying logic of the spread of fame in the current live culture. This can also lead to a better understanding of the underlying logic of live fame transmission. This essay focuses on the relationship between modern live streaming and the history of Chinese celebrities in terms of the Chinese celebrity culture. Wang Zhuo in the Han Dynasty, Li Lili in modern times, and Li Jiaqi in modern times as representative figures to analyze how people from ancient times have turned their fame into wealth through means. And the ways and means of these three are strongly related to the modern means of live-stream and the strategies that influencers used. Therefore, this thesis aims to propose a new method of analyzing modern Chinese live-stream and tries to draw attention to the celebrity culture in China through these three examples. By analyzing the cultural characteristics of Chinese celebrities from the middle Ages to the present, we build a model that is applicable to today's Chinese live-streaming industry and influencers and deliver more effective ways to effectively increase the realization rate of fame.

Keywords: Celebrity culture; social media; influencers.

1. Introduction

Through the development of technology and the increase of smartphone users, the live-streaming mode on social media with goods has become increasingly popular. With today's strong connection between online shopping and people's lifestyles, it is important to use marketing wisely and study the influence of social media influencers on followers' purchasing behavior. There has been a great deal of research on market strategies applied to consumer behavior in the online shopping and live-streaming industries. For example, Xu and his companions investigated the effects of live commercial context on viewers' cognition, affective states, and subsequent reactions (hedonic consumption, impulse consumption, and social sharing) and environmental stimuli [1]. And Cai and Wohn by using "a use and gratification framework" to analyze the four motives of live media and the relationship between motives and behavioral intentions in three different scenarios [2]. The analysis of different perspectives makes clearer the operation mechanism and strategy application of the live broadcasting industry. However, there are only a few people who analyzed the live-streaming strategy from the perspective of celebrity culture.

In addition to analysis at the consumer level, the image of celebrities in the contemporary Chinese consumer industry is also well worth exploring. With the development of the Internet, the amount of information that the public can receive has exploded, which has led to the public and private spaces of the contemporary Chinese people's network being flooded with celebrity images. This dramatic increase in the exposure of celebrities reflects the maturation of the celebrity industry chain, which also feeds the advertising-oriented media system and the Internet business model [3]. Celebrity is often referred to as "a crafted and consolidated public projection of the real person, built in part out of film roles and other public appearances" [4]. Thus, celebrity is often portrayed through a person's packaging, products, and personal attributes.

Additionally, celebrity behaviour and culture under China's unique communist administration are closely related to the culture, history, and politics behind it. Therefore, this thesis will analyze social media influencers' impacts on their followers' purchasing behaviors from Celebrity Culture in Chinese

Societies and history. In the following, this dissertation will first investigate three more typical examples of celebrities from the Han Dynasty to the present, then analyze the strategies and structures behind their transformation of fame into benefit, and finally briefly present how three present-day internet celebrities influence consumer behavior and highlight some important research themes.

2. The Ability of Chinese Celebrity to Carry Goods in Different Periods

2.1 Sufficient Network Accumulation and Communication Circle Establishment

Since the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.-220 B.C.), it has been a time-honored practice to validate one's reputation through peer recognition because the bureaucracy of the time was based on assessing the character of candidates through local recommendations [5]. But that is also why the overly competitive civil service exams and corrupt political system made reputation a very powerful cultural and social force, and one that could quickly elevate one's social status.

During the Han Dynasty, there were literati who manipulated fame to promote their products and were using them to bring in more people to maintain their reputation. Wang Zhuo of the Han Dynasty was a Hangzhou writer who started from nothing [5]. Although he was unable to enter officialdom for medical reasons, he built his reputation early on through a large collection of books and a wide circle of friends [5]. Through his friends, he was fortunate to have a large number of peer supporters and was able to use their praise of his work to support his printing and publishing career in the middle and later years. At the same time, Wang Zhuo was able to establish a solid social position in literary circles through the printing and publication of his works [5]. From Wang Zhuo's experience, it is easy to see that integrating peer recognition of one's literary talent into one's published content is a good way to quickly market one's work. Wang Zhuo, for example, includes supporting material from their small circle in his foreword, waiting list, reviews, and annotations. His "Liuxia Lyrics" has three prefaces, three afterwords, and 184 annotations to highlight the praise of his work by his peers and thus the expectation of wider social recognition [5].

Accordingly, by creating a small circle from which one can gain the support of peers, and by expanding the number of people in the circle and synchronizing their praise, one can spread fame faster and faster and gain wider recognition. In addition, it is within one's power to attract people who share one's ideas and to spread them to create public awareness. Thus, for creative workers, putting their ideas into words and videos can accelerate the process of finding like-minded people and creating a personal circle of friends. The two together can go a long way in helping to promote individuals.

2.2 Create an Image that Fits the Popular Culture of the Time

For much of China's feudal history and under the influence of Confucianism, the virtues of Chinese women typically had to include "modesty, quietness, chastity, and submission to the male role in the home" [6]. Thus, unlike men, women in Chinese history usually had to spend more time at home and were responsible for maintaining domestic harmony. By the 1930s, however, the aesthetics of women changed dramatically, influenced by the women's liberation movement. In the 1930s, the concept of "robust beauty" (jianmei) permeated all areas of popular culture, including movie stars. For example, in the 1933 issue of *Lingerie* magazine, they considered beautiful faces, sickly bodies and brooding personalities to be the characteristics of a "gentle, sultry slut"; and such people wore sexy bathing suits, not to swim, but to show off their curves [7].

In this context, Li Lili (1915-2005), as a sports star in nationalist and communist films, demonstrated this beauty. And attracted a large enough fan base. Despite exposing his body in the film, Li showed his "sexual" innocence and strong anti-Japanese sentiment. She further demonstrated her nationalistic character and promoted national unity by using Mandarin in her films, plays and speeches [7]. In the context of the Japanese invasion of China at the time, it was rare for an actress to be strongly tied to politics. However, it was for this reason that Li Lili stood out from the crowd of actors and stars as a representative of the "feminine beauty" (healthy beauty) of the time. Li Lili is

dedicated to the beauty of sports. And in a photo with the hero of "Queen of sport", when the hero looks at her, she does not respond to "Mr. Yun's" eyes, but looks ahead very firmly, focusing on her career. And this also reflects her innocent image in terms of "sex".

By managing to conform to the political IP image and character of the time, she was able to gain more recognition from the public and shoot a lot of magazines and movies. She was also treated as a model able to improve China's international image as a nationalist advocate and promote patriotism among its citizens to gain greater exposure. Thus, building an image in line with the popular culture of the time to gain national recognition is extremely important for improving the realization rate of fame.

2.3 Personal Persona and Personal Branding

With the emergence of the internet and self-media, the influence of Chinese celebrities on the Chinese public is gradually expanding, and because of the rapid spread of news, celebrity culture has an increasing role in selling products. Therefore, Li Jiaqi, as a representative of beauty bloggers, is able to analyze the realization rate of fame from his outstanding performance as an influencer and the business value behind his IP.

As a male beauty blogger, Li Jiaqi has a huge fan base on social media platforms, especially Tiktok (China), and his ability to "bring in" products is even greater than that of celebrities [8]. With the emergence of the Internet and Internet users, the roles of both transmitters and receivers are interchangeable, and both are both transmitters and receivers. Therefore, as a communication subject, Li Jiaqi is not a solitary individual, from herself to the video content to the promotion means of the whole team, the three work closely together to create an influential communication source. First of all, in terms of persona, Li Jiaqi breaks the previous impression that cosmetics are exclusively for women, and through the titles of "Lipstick Top brother", "The first one who can apply Lipstick in 30 Seconds" and "World Guinness Record Holder", he has been noticed among many beauty bloggers [8]. He recommends lipstick numbers worth buying for the audience from the perspective of the opposite sex, provides professional beauty knowledge, and captures the audience's curiosity and difference-seeking mentality through his contrasting image, attracting the public's attention. Therefore, it is not difficult to find that in the era of self-media, the shaping of personal persona and image is very important. A successful personal brand image can not only accumulate more audiences and form a good communication effect, but also bring huge economic benefits.

From his past experience, Li Jiaqi graduated in art and design, which makes him have good aesthetic ability. He became a beauty consultant of L'Oreal counter in 2015 and became the sales champion, which also makes him understand user psychology better [8]. With his professional beauty knowledge, rich working experience and infectious phrases in the video, Li Jiaqi has become a humorous and trustworthy beauty blogger. Li Jiaqi's mantra "OMG!" has become one of the most popular words of 2019 [8]. In addition, Li Jiaqi's IP is not just the work of Li Jiaqi herself. Ltd, the team behind Li Jiaqi's work, needs to help Li Jiaqi complete a series of work from field control to customer service, from business liaison to product management, from optimizing live streaming skills to researching the logic of Taobao and Tiktok (China). Specifically, his interesting video clips from the live-stream of Taobao had to be edited and released to Tiktok (China) and other platforms [8]. The whole team of MeiOne is working for Li Jiaqi alone, constantly optimizing the quality of Li Jiaqi's videos. It can be said that Li Jiaqi and the team behind him have jointly created the personal IP of "Li Jiaqi", making Li Jiaqi steadily occupy the head market among the KOLs of various platforms.

In addition to his online profile, a search for "Li Jiaqi" on Chinese social media, such as Xiaohongshu, brought up many words such as "like", "trust" and "time saver". "trust" and "time saver" are what audiences appreciate most about him. For example, in the post "Do people still buy from Li Jiaqi after he lost his lowest price", many people admitted that it was because "he is serious about introducing products to the right people" and there were 6,999 likes in this one comment. Another user said, "I don't have to worry about fake products or bad quality, it's enough to save my mind"

with 1,425 likes. All of these comments indicate that price is not an important part of what makes Li Jiaqi stand out. Rather, it is his persona, his humanistic care and the after-sales work of the team behind him that makes consumers willing to pay for him.

Therefore, it is easy to see the importance of the team and the necessity of the persona shaping from Li Jiaqi, a modern netizen and marketing tool. Through the combination of the two and the blogger's own professionalism, a more mature IP can be created as well as laying the foundation for subsequent appeal to the audience.

3. The Model of Chinese Celebrity Culture Affects the Realization Rate of Fame



Figure 1. Fame increasing model

As shown in fig. 1, this model represented that the more effort the influencers put into “the network accumulation and communication circle establishing”, “image in line with current fashion trends establishing and personal image” and “personal branding with memorable points”, the increasing in the realization rate of fame. Indeed, Jiaqi Li's example also argues for the importance of a professional team to assist bloggers in spreading their fame. Having a professional team can save a lot of time in analyzing platform logic and promotion. Thus, allowing bloggers to maximize the speed of realizing their fame.

4. How Influencers Affects Consumers' Consumption behavior Nowadays

With the development of the national economy, people's consumption ability is gradually increasing, and the age of the group with consumption ability is getting younger and younger. Therefore, this section would like to summarize the 3 main characteristics of the current influencer's affects consumers' consumption behavior by synthesizing some existing literature in China.

4.1 Behavioral Characteristics of Teenagers

In the 21st century, due to the gradual increase of per capita wealth in China, teenagers, especially college students, already has some consumption ability and they are more likely to accept some new things from within [9]. Since teenagers generally pursue fashion but lack the necessary discriminatory ability, they usually spend a lot of time and money following the anchors to buy products. Therefore, impulse consumption, followers' purchase and the diversity of the types of products purchased are closely related to their consumption patterns and behaviors. In this situation, as an influencer, it is also necessary to give extra consideration to the main target group of modern online consumers and design the anchor's selling strategy in this regard, such as using online popular terms to arouse the interest of viewers, using emotions to drive young people to buy and communicating bigger business discounts. In this way, college students will be more easily attracted and induced to make consumption.

4.2 Fan Economy in the New Media Environment

Fans are the followers and beneficiaries of advanced media technology, and the e-commerce live-streaming platform provides a channel for fans to pursue influencers and generate consumption behavior [10]. Fans also try to personalize the use of media channels as a tool to follow influencers

[10]. More so, because the public's knowledge of their idols is only on the Internet and rarely in real life on a one-to-one basis, it is difficult for fans to know that their idols have some minor negative behaviors. Therefore, in such an environment, the public will make subjective assumptions about their idols on the Internet, often shaping them in a good way that they desire.

In this situation, the company can sway various irrational decisions of the audience by shaping the influencers in the network into their opinion leaders. For example, net celebrities can attract customers by running their social platforms and Taobao stores in parallel, using short videos and photos on social platforms to strengthen their persona and advantages in order to find their main selling group to sell more products.

4.3 Advantages of "influencer Economy" Operation

"Influencers economy" usually has the advantages of low promotion cost and product targeting. Live-streaming can be targeted by targeting the user's behavior and interest in the platform for a period of time, which can bring better live results. For example, there are two ways to charge advertising fees in live streaming, which are OCPM and CPC, and the general cost of the diversion is 0.3~0.5 yuan, through which the influencers may get huge attention [10]. Therefore, compared with offline commodity promotion, online live-streaming with goods running costs are relatively low, and the economic benefits brought are very high.

And because of the strong interactivity of live-streaming, the influencers can decide whether to produce, promote, and the amount of production according to the feedback from fans in order to achieve accurate marketing. Therefore, in the live-streaming, influencers to the goods in many aspects, multi-angle introduction, while for consumers in a timely manner to answer questions, eliminate doubts in the minds of buyers, increase mutual trust, and improve purchasing power. The anchor will also provide information about the goods when live-streaming, attracting consumers with coupons, limited-time specials, and the lowest price on the network, stimulating consumers to consume.

5. Conclusion

Analyzing the celebrity culture and celebrity culture from ancient times to the present, it is easy to see that China has a very unique cultural background and a long history. This has also created the peculiarity of the way China now relies on fame to bring goods. From Wang Zhuo's in the Han Dynasty to Li Jiaqi nowadays, they all have different characteristics in each era of bringing goods. The Han Dynasty's Wang Zhuo's idea of selling goods reflects the importance of the support of the circle of associates around him. When people build a long growing group of friends and use their resources and promotion wisely, their reputation will be spread faster and faster. From the history of Li Lili's fame as a sports star in the early days of reform and opening up, it is easy to see that the setting of a persona that fits the aesthetic and political perceptions of the times is very important. Having national recognition can make their products sell better and also enhance their popularity. From the modern example of Li Jiaqi, it is equally important to build a team and a persona. Therefore, building a mature IP and team can lay a solid foundation for attracting audiences subsequently.

In addition to the analysis of previous examples, this thesis also summarizes three features of modern influencers that influence consumer behavior. By combining all of the above, influencers are able to improve the efficiency of changing reputation into sales data and to complete the whole process of online sales more effectively, both in terms of shaping themselves and striking consumers with precision.

Collectively, the modern live bandwagon and the previous celebrity culture do have a lot in common. By analyzing the celebrity effect the study can practically discover the strategies and ways to attract audiences to live webcasts nowadays. Of course, all the points above will need more examples to be argued in the future as well. It is not yet clear whether many of the previous strategies will continue to be used, especially now that the Chinese government and industry actors are imposing strict controls. The state maintains control of the economy behind the media and cultural industries

by controlling them. Thus, in such industries with strong ties to the government, the economy behind them is necessarily inextricably linked to the overall political approach of the state. This also foreshadows that in addition to the economic factors behind in, political factors are also worth discussing in the future.

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