

How to Stand Out from We Media with Cultural Communication as Medium: Take Li Ziqi as an Example

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Abstract. We Media is a way for the general public to disseminate their facts and news to the outside world through Internet or other means. It is a way for the general public to provide and share their information after being connected to the global knowledge system. This study is to explore the communicators, the content and effect of the dissemination of We Media. The dissemination of traditional culture not only provides the audience with rich cultural knowledge but also has great importance in shaping their values. From the cases of Li Ziqi and Dianxi Xiaoge, we can find that this strategy requires the vloggers to master a combination of skills, not only in filming and editing but also in cultural understanding and learning ability.

Keywords: We Media; Cultural Communication; Li Ziqi.

1. Introduction

As a new means of communication, We Media has set off a global communication boom that continues till today. With the main forms of short video and vlog, We Media has played an incomparable role in cultural communication. At the same time, due to the short start time and the expanding coverage of the media platform, the overall quality of traditional cultural communication videos is uneven. Some domestic media practitioners do not respect our traditional culture and even tamper with the excellent traditional culture to attract attention and seek profits. Some others twisted the positive ideas of original Chinese culture into entertainment footage and spread them widely, resulting in the public's mixed views on traditional culture.

This study is to explore the communicators, the content and effect of the dissemination of We Media. The dissemination of traditional culture not only provides the audience with rich cultural knowledge but also has great importance in shaping their values. There are several key research objectives: What are the critical factors for Liziqi's success in using We Media communication? How can We Media cultural communication attract the audience? How could the audience maintain continuous growth and attention to We Media videos?

2. Literature Review

From the perspective of macro cross-cultural communication, Limin Liang uses the method of text research to point out that the success of LiZiqi is not only recalls the city dweller's nostalgia for the rural lifestyle but also reveals the role of more structural forces (namely, the market and the state) in the appropriation of religious desires and consumption in the construction of a "modern identity" - both as individual consumers and as a collective state [1]. This article provides a complete research framework and critical perspective.

As for the content, Chen Guo and Crystal Abidin used the Grounded Theory to find out how Li Ziqi's video gained a foothold on Youtube. They think that Li's content deals with countryside, nostalgia, orientalism, exoticism, and commodification [2]. Using the method of comparative research, Tang Miao compared and analyzed the composition, the replicability, and hidden ideas of two IP elements, the TV program "Yearning for Life" and Li Ziqi's video, finding that the participating in the construction of ordinary people's daily life at the aesthetic level is the key to the higher influence of short video IP [3].

From the perspective of personal image presentation, Zhen Troy CHEN and Thomas William WHYKE draw the automatic stereotypes and (self) orientalism depiction of rural China in Li Ziqi's

video through the Critical Visual Approach (CVA). A positive image of China is built by composing an idyllic “fantasy” of rural China [4]. Qinpei Fan used text analysis to sense the non-verbal communication elements such as sound, body, clothing, and spatial settings in Li Ziqi’s video, which fully demonstrated the importance of non-verbal communication and scaled up diversified non-verbal expressions [5]. Lin Yijie and Li Feiyue, revealed Li Ziqi’s image of the conflict using the method of text analysis, such as the contradiction between a farm girl and a fairy, the gap between a traditional lady and a modern woman, the distinction between the sense of reality and play feeling. These seemingly contradictory images, liked by the public, highlight the significance of public image shaping [6].

From the aspect of communication strategy, Geng Mengnan, based on Lasswell’s “5W” model theory, researched the five elements of communication: the subject, content, channel, audience characteristics, and the effect. It is found that the key to the success of Li Ziqi is her elegant style, excellent personal quality, and the professional operation of the MCN organization [7]. Yuxin Zheng and Wanmin Ni conducted a case study on the transformation and development of traditional enterprises based on the Internet celebrity economy. The results show that the interaction between the marketers and the consumers of big name will significantly affect e-commerce sales, namely, the first-order effect of Internet celebrity endorsement. In addition, the interaction within the fan group has a second-order impact on the sales performance of content marketing [8]. From the perspective of audience research, Zihan Wei, Mingli Zhang, and Tong Qiao identified user perception based on the content model and then used the regression model to construct the relationship between personal brand stereotype and user engagement, concluding that perceived warmth has a significant impact on user emotional engagement. The effect of perception ability on a user’s cognitive and behavioral attention is fairly important [9]. Using the case study method, Lu Xiaoming, Nong Ningchun, and Xu Zengzhan pointed out that the brand advertisements in Li Ziqi’s videos are user-oriented and highly integrated with the content. They are delivered accurately through the media platform and finally arouse resonance and cause secondary dissemination. In terms of narrative strategies, the key points are that the documentary forms, such as the freely changing time and space, the diversified documentary perspectives, and the artistry close to painting to heal anxiety, have achieved artistic effects. [10].

3. Introduction and Marketing Analysis on Dianxi Xiaoge Case Analysis

3.1 Introduction and Marketing Analysis on Dianxi Xiaoge

Dianxi Xiaoge is a well-known food blogger. She shows the unique regional characteristics and cultural scenery of West Yunnan by shooting food videos and vlogs. The scenes depicted in the videos of Dianxi Xiaoge are close to life and have an affinity. In the videos, the family members sat together and shared dinner, with the harmonious atmosphere which matches the family-oriented values of Chinese viewers. In addition, Yunnan is a place rich in natural products and beautiful scenery, both of which are shown in details in the videos of Dianxi Xiaoge.

She showcases the customs of the local ethnic minorities by shooting the food in Yunnan. To achieve long-term development and sustainable profit in the short video industry on food, high-quality content and IP are indispensable, just like what Dianxi Xiaoge does. Since 2016, she has seized the chance of We Media and made her short videos from scratch. Later, she joined Papitube. Since 2018, the videos have been spread on some foreign online platforms. The marketing strategies of Dianxi Xiaoge include promoting the ethnic food culture of Yunnan, showing the warm atmosphere of the families, and launching new products of the season. For example, when the Moon-cake Festival was approaching, the sales team promoted the ham mooncakes.

In addition, the videos of Dianxi Xiaoge have been put on many platforms, and brand advertisements are inserted in the program so that the author gets dividends from the publicity. After gaining popularity, she began to expend her e-commerce brand to sell Yunnan food which attracts

more customers. Moreover, the team established frequent coverages on Tencent, Youku, Sohu, and other outlets to promote short video works.

From June 6 to June 9, 2021, Watermelon Video, Douyin, and Toutiao launched the “China Video Partnership Program” with C2B innovative link to create emotional & precision marketing. The documentary “Dianxi Xiaoge and Her Friends” has gained more than 1 billion total exposure and made dozens of Micro-blog hot search lists. It also attracted the attention of the food industry and the media producers.

3.2 Introduction and Association on Li Ziqi

In 2015, Li Ziqi began to shoot some short videos on traditional foods and craftsmanship by herself. Initially, the quality of the videos was not good enough since she was lack of experience in video shoot, until Li Ziqi chose the most familiar topic ---the "rural life" with her grandma.

The video “Lanzhou Beef Noodles” uploaded by Li Ziqi was popular in 2016, and the number of the fans began to rise steadily. In 2017, Li Ziqi established a professional team named Sichuan Ziqi Cultural Communication Co, LTD.. The personal brand of Li Ziqi was born on August 17, 2018, and it's flagship store in Tmall officially kicked off. In the year of 2021, Li Ziqi's program set a Guinness World Record for the most subscriptions in Chinese YouTube channel.

The videos are associated with the continuation of traditional Chinese culture. Her works had “the concise of the traditional aesthetic elements, corresponding with the poetic imagination by foreign audience”, which differs from the common narrative of Chinese traditional culture. Li Ziqi presents the most basic life to the audience, making the video programs more natural and persuasive. China is becoming increasingly globalized, while this trend also brings problem: the aphasia of Chinese culture, which means there is a lack of national cultural identity among language learners.

The questionnaire we did demonstrated that about 60% of high school students (most of them will study abroad) felt unconfident in using English in cross-cultural communication and were not familiar with the English expressions of Chinese culture.

Fortunately, Li Ziqi caught the critical timing to promote Chinese culture through the individual perspective, in order to nourish the audience with the traditional cultural and inspire their cultural confidence. Meanwhile, these videos help many foreigners to understand the culture of China better, as their Internet exposure has gained more than 17 million followers on YouTube.

Li Ziqi has set up her own brand and style. In her videos, there are no blunt advertisements so the audience could enjoy an immersive viewing experience. The purpose of establishing a brand is to win a large number of viewers in the long run.

Li Ziqi's parents divorced when she was a child, so she spent her childhood with her grandparents in rural area. Compared with people living in the city, she has quite a lot of experience in farm life. Moreover, her identification is quite special. Her graceful appearance, artistic dress, and simple lifestyle increase the consumers' interest in the brand. The short videos made by Li Ziqi show that the food has a solid ancient style, such as peach blossom sauce, autumn pear paste, etc. The scenes are shot in the countryside, and even the cooking utensils there are antique.

The KOL model adopts the method of dividing IP and commodities into two parts. Li Ziqi is mainly responsible for the video content, planning, and the operation to create an independent IP. At the same time, the company is primarily in charge of the back-office support, promoting and the monetizing of Li Ziqi's products on a large scale.

3.3 Comparative Analysis

Marketing methods: Li Ziqi realized long-term goals through brand building. However, Dianxi Xiaoge has direct advertisements planted in her videos, which makes the effect of her videos not as lasting as a brand. Although they both used KOL, Li Ziqi creates her brand in this field, making it easier for the fans to recognize and trust her.

The background: Dianxi Xiaoge joined the short video in 2016, when Li Ziqi already won particular influence and popularity. As a result, Dianxi Xiaoge couldn't catch the audience's attention by using the similar video style.

4. Conclusion

Nowadays, many We Media bloggers use the KOL strategy. From the cases of Li Ziqi and Dianxi Xiaoge, we can find that this strategy requires the vloggers to have a combination of skills, including the filming, cultural accomplishment, the learning and expression ability, etc. Li Ziqi also accurately positioned the market and met the audience's needs, that is why she can stand out among many vloggers.

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