

# Research on the Cross-cultural Communication Strategy of Chinese Internet Celebrities Based on SWOT Analysis in Video Forms —Taking Li Ziqi's Video as an Example

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## ABSTRACT

With the widespread use of social media platforms such as YouTube throughout the globe, it is much simpler to obtain foreign cultural goods, facilitating cross-cultural media consumption. In these social networks, especially YouTube, some Chinese web celebrities, such as Li Ziqi, stand out in many video producers, which attracts extensive attention from people in China and all around the world. Using the SWOT analysis method, this paper systematically analyzes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Chinese web celebrities' cross-cultural communication through video and points out some development strategies of their overseas publicity based on the SWOT analysis. As shown in this essay, some of the penetrating strategies, such as choosing the topics of the videos carefully, are presented. These suggestions may be useful for the media producers to keep developing in long run.

**Keywords:** cross-cultural communication, Chinese web celebrity, YouTube, SWOT analysis

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the development of new kinds of social media and the popularization of 4G technology, the global mobile Internet has undergone new changes, and the Internet has gradually become a viewing platform driven by video content. YouTube, as the most popular video-sharing website all over the globe, is the main field of cross-cultural communication, which refers to the process of identifying both cultural differences and similarities to involve successfully in each setting [1], of cultural videos in the world. With the rapid development of video technology and the continuous updating of various communication methods, more and more Chinese Internet celebrities can create personalized stories in the form of videos on YouTube. Through the influence of video promotion, this also broke the world's stereotypes of Chinese people.

Until July 20, 2021, in the numerous Chinese web celebrities who post YouTube videos, according to the data gathered from Global web celebrity marketing service platform Noxinfluencer, Li Ziqi ranks 384th among all YouTubers for the numbers of subscribers

with 15.8 million followers and an average of 212.1 million views for the last 30 movies. Due to the extremely huge number of viewers and subscribers from Li Ziqi, it would be interesting and meaningful to investigate the strategy Li Ziqi use to have large amounts of international viewers and followers and their potential challenges. This paper first points out the characteristics of modern social media marketing. Then the author uses the example of Li Ziqi, as one of the most influenced Chinese YouTubers on youtube. The aim is to systematically analyze the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and threats of Chinese web celebrity propaganda in international media by SWOT analysis method. Finally, the author comes up with the video development strategy of Chinese web celebrity outside.

## 2. FEATURES OF NEW MEDIA MARKETING

### 2.1. The use of new social media to build brand loyalty through online communication

Social media is a platform that allows companies and individuals to build brand loyalty by facilitating

networking, dialogue, and community building outside of the traditional method[2]. Traditional media is one-way media communication; the audience can only communicate with the producers in the form of telephone or email. Such a form is not only slow but also creates trouble for people who want to give suggestions. Producers cannot get feedback from the audience in time and make adjustments to the means of communication in time.

In contrast, nowadays, the use of social media helps the producers and individuals create an online community of fans through social networking sites, blogs, short and long video platforms, and other forms of social media. In addition, a conversation between fans in the communities also helps every information producer have an efficient way to improve the current services and raise brand awareness, thus boosting brand loyalty.

### ***2.2. High speed of spreading information***

New media can spread information much faster than traditional media. Traditional media, such as newspapers, need to collect and edit a certain piece of news. After strict examination, it is finally distributed to the newsstand after printing the newspaper and sold the next day. By this time, the audience has already learned about the news from social media. Right now, audiences can also browse information through Weibo, Instagram, and other social media. They can also share some articles and videos that they are interested in, so family and friends around them can receive the information. Although most people nowadays do not have professional reporting techniques, they can quickly receive and transmit information around them. This would improve the timeliness of news and other kinds of information.

### ***2.3. Low cost of producing information***

Traditional media such as newspapers and magazines cost a lot of money in the production process, which makes very few people can produce some information. The production of new media is simple and convenient, and it can be released on Weibo, Twitter, and other platforms anytime and anywhere to achieve a very good effect of communication. The speed of network information transmission reduces the marketing time cost of new media. Also, new media has a high degree of flexibility. If media producers can keep up with the needs of users, they can achieve advertising success at the least cost.

## **3. SWOT ANALYSIS FOR CHINESE LAB CELEBRITY ON CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

Li Ziqi is a vlogger and web celebrity from China. Her hometown is a rural village in Pingwu County, Mianyang City, Southwest China's Sichuan Province. She is known all over the world for the videos on YouTube about making delicious food and handmade products. In her videos, she often shows some records of using traditional Chinese techniques to make basic ingredients and tools[3].

The SWOT analysis method is based on the situation analysis of the internal and external competitive environment and competitive conditions. The research object is closely related to various main internal strengths, weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats, etc., using the idea of system analysis, the matching analysis of various factors, and finally draw the corresponding conclusions[4]. The following SWOT method is used to make a systematic analysis of the intercultural communication of Chinese web celebrities represented by Li Ziqi. The aim of SWOT method is to clarify the internal advantages and disadvantages, external opportunities, and threats of Chinese web celebrities in the form of external video publicity.

### ***3.1. Strengths***

As a rising industry in recent years, Chinese web celebrity has formed unique advantages in the skills and social influence of global video publicity.

Firstly, most of the popular Chinese web celebrities on YouTube use non-verbal symbols as the main carrier of meaning expression to reduce language barriers in cross-cultural communication[5]. Many web celebrities in China adopt the "silent film" narrative mode, and the symbol type is a non-verbal symbol. Other Chinese web celebrities, who mainly use language symbols to express their thoughts and stories, has a relatively low number of foreign fans. This is because linguistic signs are largely determined by specific cultural ways of thinking, which significantly disturb cross-culture communication. However, an important reason why many Chinese web celebrities can successfully avoid language problems is that their clever use of the form of "silent films". The use of non-verbal symbols, such as time language, space language, and environment language instead of language symbols, helps to explain the situation of the text to the audience. This clever use would reduce the obstacles in the early stage of cross-cultural communication and presents the cultural appearance and the cultural differences in a natural way. For instance, Li Ziqi often uses natural environmental sounds, such as the sound of wood burning, as the background music of the whole video. This method not only effectively conveys the appearance of local culture but also successfully helps

other non-Chinese people to establish a preliminary understanding of the Chinese environment without language difficulties.

Most of the popular web celebrity videos in China uses novel stories, which is greatly different from their audience's experience in daily life. This may stimulate the audience's curiosity for other culture and life and helps to reduce the cultural gap between western and eastern societies. The subject of the video produced by Li Ziqi is the traditional culture of ancient China, including ancient Chinese cuisine, calligraphy, and so on. For example, one video from Li Ziqi is about the process of production of rice. Specifically, the video shows Li Ziqi from planting rice, including how to raise rice seedlings, threshing, transplanting rice seedlings, growing rice, releasing water, and finally harvesting the crops, and then shows the production process of rice[6]. The video is carefully polished and accurately edited, making the complex process of producing rice easy to understand for foreign fans. Although foreign netizens are not familiar with these local daily life scenes, they feel they are in "dream" and "heaven" and give positive comments to Li Ziqi. On the platform of YouTube, video images are reorganized in the human brain with their own personalized experience and culture, and the information produced by the original. Chinese web celebrity is integrated into their respective social and cultural elements, thus forming a rich and diverse global media imagination. This helps to break down the barriers of the cultural identity of different nationalities, seek mutual understanding, and avoid the antagonistic relationship in culture.

### **3.2. Weaknesses**

The popularity of web celebrities has led to the fierce development of the whole web celebrity industry, which has prevented many Chinese web celebrities from developing steadily in the international market consistently on YouTube.

Web celebrity economy has spawned several MCN (Multi-Channel Network) organizations. These organizations always work with video platforms to provide help to a channel owner in areas such as "product, programming, fundraising, and partner management." in exchange for a share of the channel's advertising income[7]. Under the mass production of the same type of video by MCN organizations, more normalized web celebrities are further generated. The unified training mode makes them lack creativity and their orientation, which leads to aesthetic fatigue among international audiences and diverts their attention. The short life cycle and easily lost flow to make it difficult for many web celebrities to maintain their commercial value, therefore no longer have the advantages of guiding the flow, and hinder the development of cross-cultural communication. Secondly, the theme content of the

videos is not very different, and the lack of new ideas will reduce the freshness and loyalty of fans. This will encourage them to look for better vloggers or web celebrities, resulting in the loss of viewers.

### **3.3. Opportunities**

Under the background of the rapid development of the global economy, industrial civilization, and globalization, Chinese Internet celebrities can use this opportunity to present the theme of returning to nature to reflect on the anxiety of modernity and seek global "emotional resonance" [4]. In modern society, due to the rapid development of capitalist society, global netizens increasingly feel that their destiny is in the hands of capitalism, and they are forced to adapt to the great pressure of modern society and the high cost of living. Most people are exposed to computers, mobile phones, processed foods in their daily life. In this case, there is a large group of people will begin to miss the past life. Many people think that before industrialization, humans mostly lived in small tribes when humans might have been happier. This presents a huge opportunity for modern Chinese Internet celebrities. Although the countryside is often criticized by modern society as backward and wild, Chinese Internet celebrities can make use of their cultural characteristics to illustrate the traditional lifestyle in the background of the countryside and produce the content of anti-modernity[4]. Therefore, a series of factors such as the development of science and technology in modern society, which cause huge pressure in people's lives, provide great opportunities for Chinese Internet celebrities, which is conducive to their cross-cultural communication.

### **3.4. Threats**

There are threats and challenges for Chinese Internet celebrities to conduct cross-cultural communication through YouTube videos. Conflicts may exist in different cultural backgrounds, because of the differences in perceptions of things and different values between different cultures. In the process of mutual communication between different cultures, fierce collisions may still likely occur. On January 9, 2021, Li Ziqi Posted a video on YouTube about the "life" of radishes from growing up to be made into kimchi. The kimchi culture mentioned in the video sparked controversy between Korean and Chinese netizens. Netizens in both countries believe that kimchi was invented in their own country [8]. As a result, different views on kimchi led by different cultures in the two countries have led to fierce fights among Internet users in the two countries, which is a potential threat for Chinese Internet celebrities to communicate across cultures.

#### **4. POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

According to the SWOT analysis results of the above Chinese Internet celebrities' cross-cultural communication through videos, Chinese Internet celebrities propagated on YouTube need to build their development strategies in the following aspects in the future. Firstly, they tend to choose video themes carefully and avoid unnecessary disputes and conflicts that reduce cultural communication. Secondly, the Chinese celebrities and their teams should encourage diversification, tap other fields of Chinese traditional culture and encourage more video producers to join in, leading to form a positive cycle. Thirdly, they should continue employing professional teams to help Chinese Internet celebrities to make videos. Therefore, the video quality is guaranteed, and misunderstanding about Chinese traditional culture would be avoided. Lastly, before starting to join the traditional Chinese Internet celebrities, they need to first clarify their specific video themes and positioning to avoid the aesthetic fatigue of the audience for the video.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

In this study, the author utilizes SWOT analysis to illustrate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of cross-cultural communication by Chinese web celebrities. After the COVID-19 crisis, people's minds have been affected to some extent because of enormous financial pressure, which gives Chinese Internet celebrities a new opportunity to spread their culture naturally. Under such circumstances, these Chinese celebrities should seize the opportunity to find the best convergence point between national culture and international multi-culture and use scientific and reasonable cross-cultural marketing strategies to make some videos with local characteristics that can also resonate with the international community, to expand China's cultural status in the whole world.

However, there are still some parts of my essay that could be improved. For example, there is a lack of data in my theory, which may not be a strong proof of my thesis. Therefore, to further improve my essay, the author could use more data either by primary data gathered by questionnaires or secondary data from other formal research. In addition, the author will further study how to use different social media to promote cross-cultural communication. For example, the author could conduct similar research by changing the examples in the research, such as a Japanese web celebrity, to explore possible strategies these web celebrities may use to develop rapidly. Besides, the author could change the platform from YouTube to other platforms, such as Instagram, to find out the effects of different social media

to the strategies the web celebrities may use in cross-cultural communication.

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