"Cultural and Creative IP" Empowerment Model for Red Culture under the New Media Environment

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Abstract. Boasting exemplary national qualities and high educational value, Red Culture is a unique spiritual wealth that make the Chinese nation stand out from the rest nations. Under the new media environment, however, the collision between the disparate characteristics of Red Culture and new media has given rise to the predicament plaguing the communication of Red Culture. With the advent of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, both tangible and intangible cultural heritage and resources are being valued, tapped and cultivated across the country. With the cultural and creative industry in the ascendant, the concept of intellectual property ("IP") has seeped into all aspects of our everyday lives. Against that backdrop, this study attempts to explore novel ways to link up the Red Culture resources scattered across China, to combine education with cultural tourism through the "4+5+2" cultural and creative IP empowerment model, and to pass on and spread Red Culture and add new value to the industry on the strength of influential IPs.

1 Introduction

In our days, the widely accepted Red Culture refers to "a characteristic, advanced culture brought into existence through integration and absorption by the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China amid the historic struggles for the liberation and freedom of the Chinese nation and during the three pivotal periods of socialist transformation after the founding of New China"[1]. It's also called the "Revolution Culture", and the revolutionary spirit is generally hailed as the "Red Spirit".

On the occasion of the centenary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, a sweeping wave of learning the party history and carrying out red ideological education has been set off across the country. Availing themselves of their historical connections with the red revolution, provinces, cities and districts have been keen on tapping resources available at hand to build Red Culture memorial halls and education bases, in a drive to boost the effectiveness of publicity and education. However, in the context of the on-going epidemic control and the unstoppable rise of new media, the publicity and education work in many places is seemingly missing the point and has become a mere formality, not to mention the poor collaboration among publicity agencies, who tend to roll out similar and homogeneous cultural and creative products that instead curb the audience's enthusiasm for learning. Given the communication plight consequent on the divide between Red Culture and new media, this study will draw on some cases relating to the cultural and creative industry and IP creation to shed light on the basics and connotations of the "Cultural and Creative IP" model, and to explore effective ways to better materialize the communication value and economic value of Red Culture, in an effort to empower the cultural industries in addition to fulfilling the mission of educating people.

2 Pain Points and Predicament of Red Culture Communication under the New Media Environment

As a new form of media entirely different from the traditional media, new media are best known for their instant, efficient, interactive and experience-centric ways of communication and the diversified, massive, fragmented and entertaining contents of communication. In the old days, Red Culture was mainly communicated through then important and popular traditional media such as newspapers, radio, etc. The collision between the disparate characteristics of traditional media and new media has given rise to the predicament plaguing the communication of Red Culture. Drawing on the classic "5W" model of communication proposed by Harold Lasswell[2], the problem can be examined from the following five dimensions:

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2.1 Who (communicator): lack of voices

The communication of Red Culture in the past relied heavily on the traditional media, and the communicators were mainly journalists working for traditional paper media. Although they have gained deep expertise and rich experience in the sector of traditional media, most journalists fail to acclimatize themselves to the new media era, and some even encounter career crises. It takes time to bring in and foster talent proficient in the use of new media for communicating Red Culture. For the time being, the uneven competency and professional quality of practitioners will inevitably lead to the lack of voices from Red Culture communicators for a certain period of time.

2.2 Says what (message): trapped in the three nets of "amusing ourselves to death", "decentralization" and "information cocoons"

As mentioned earlier, "amusing ourselves to death", "decentralization" and "information cocoons" are unarguably the three nets impeding the communication of Red Culture. Fast-paced life and ever-mounting pressure make people favor those amusing and entertaining contents, the viral spread of which can be best explained by the "Meme" theory[3] — that is, people amuse and entertain themselves through the constant imitation and reproduction of the so-called popular culture. "Decentralization" allows each individual to take part in the entertainment on the internet, thereby weakening the voice of influencers or even misleading others. Driven by big data algorithm, the "personalized recommendation" is virtually narrowing the scope of information received by individuals in an imperceptible way, thus creating "information cocoons". These three barriers are marginalizing the Red Culture by trapping it in the predicament of being unable to reach out to the people, or to increase its visibility, or to make its voice.

2.3 In which channel (medium): fragmented contents are imperiling the integrity and weight of Red Culture

It is undeniable that compared with traditional media, new media are more multi-dimensional in terms of media presentation, breaking through the plane boundaries of graphics and texts and playing to their strengths in sound, image, video and real-time interaction. However, if their fragmented forms of presentation are not artfully handled, the integrity and weight of Red Culture itself will be imperiled. If a story is pieced up with one-sided elements and plain information, it would be difficult for the audience to gain a comprehensive understanding of Red Culture. Such kind of superficial information, lacking a good sense of atmosphere and substitution, may leave the audience with a "boring" stereotype, prompting them to resist receiving such information and even the akin culture.

2.4 To whom (receiver): gradually waning attachment to and dependency on the contents

Amid its long-run development, traditional media have acquired a fixed set of audiences and developed relatively fixed forms of expression. The new media, however, have even wider audiences and tend to go after headlines and hot topics. Compared with the audiences of traditional media, audiences of new media are less attached to and dependent on the contents of Red Culture.

2.5 With what effect: lack of appeal and credibility

Diversified cultural collisions has sparked public opinion, the network discourse system impacts the voice of mainstream values, and the guiding mechanism is becoming weak under the massive fragmentation of information and the profit-seeking big data algorithm. Under the influence of these factors, the red ideological and cultural communication is submerged in a large number of entertainment, one-sided and even wrong information, which appears to be unattractive, and the credibility will inevitably decline, bit by bit.

3 Cultural and Creative Design and IP Exploitation of Red Culture

Although the rise of new media is impeding the spread of Red Culture, it is also bringing about new technologies and new opportunities for the cultural industries, especially for the cultural and creative industry. According to the China Culture Consumer Index 2019, "the Internet has emerged as the most important conduit for cultural consumption, and the applications of 5G, VR, blockchain and other technologies are beefing up this trend ... short video related activities have become the most popular online cultural services."[4] On top of that, with 75 cities listed as the first batch of demonstration cities and pilot cities in cultural and tourism consumption by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in December 2020, provinces and cities are seizing on this very opportunity to fully tap their cultural consumption potential and to make constructive attempts in expanding cultural tourism consumption, providing cultural services and designing cultural and creative products. Without question, all these efforts will lay a strong technological foundation and provide new consumption patterns for cultural and creative design, product consumption and cultural communication.

Improving both the content and expression of cultural products is also a key direction for development in China's cultural and creative industry in recent years. A number of outstanding creative cultural enterprises and brands have carried out "IP exploitation" around the most representative cultural relics, characters and even animals. They also further combine with popular things through the Internet for secondary creation, creating all kinds of cultural and creative lifestyle products including

tableware, stationery, decorations, clothing and even film and television works loved by consumers[5]. For example, Forbidden City Taobao has built on the historical and cultural heritage of the Forbidden City to launch a stunning collection of cultural and creative products that are both artistic and useful in daily life. By integrating the royal culture people used to look up to with everyday items, Forbidden City Taobao not only effectively drives up the added value of its products but also successfully spreads the unique charm of traditional Chinese culture with cute and trendy designs[6]. The ever-mounting influence and customer base of Forbidden City Taobao have not only buoyed the IP exploitation efforts of the Palace Museum, but also provided a proven and replicable business model for other cultural and creative brands and practitioners and laid a strong industrial foundation for sustainable development.

Aside from the splendid IP products created by Forbidden City Taobao, there are also a wide array of shoddy and imitative products churned out by others. Those products are hardly distinct from each other. The imbalanced development of cultural and creative industry in various parts of China has led to significant differences among provinces. Against the macro backdrop of recalling history and advocating the protection and mining of red resources, and given the high spirit of patriotism among people, we must, building on the existing technological and industrial basis, exploit featured IP contents while passing on and carrying forward the Red Culture, and devise characteristic cultural and creative products tailored to local conditions. To this end, the "Cultural and Creative IP" model tailored to the promotion of Red Culture is proposed below to assist in the development of cultural and creative industry in respective provinces, including cultural tourism.

4 Construction of the "Cultural and Creative IP" Model for Red Culture

4.1 Put emphasis on the unique characteristics and turn disadvantages into advantages

Under the new media environment, the fragmented communication must be rebuilt by supplementing and introducing extracted contents rather than looking at matters in isolation and interpreting out of context. Under this premise, the fragmented spread of Red Culture is conducive to its acceptance among the audience, who will gradually supplement their own red thoughts, deepen their ideological and political understanding, and eventually develop a full-fledged ideological and political mindset.

Moreover, big data analysis also allows accurate and dynamic demand forecasting, thus pointing the way forward for product design. By collecting feedback, designers can also make timely adjustments to products and the forms of cultural communication.

4.2 Make explicit orientations and engage fans in product design

In addition to identifying the target audiences and consumers, market-oriented red-themed cultural and creative products must also take into account their emotional and demand orientations.

In terms of target audiences and consumers, it is imperative to discern the different preferences of teenagers and adults. Serious, obscure sermons cannot touch the hearts of young people. To them, short stories narrated by cartoon characters might be more appealing, and that's why IPs such as "Red Star Boy" and "Little Solder A-rong" are gaining currency among teenagers. For middle-aged adults and elders who share strong feelings for the red history, "cute" cartoon characters are obviously inappropriate. Instead, plain but graceful products would better cater to their practical or gift-giving needs.

From the perspective of meeting the diversified needs of consumers, cultural and creative products can be divided into two broad categories for meeting either the practical needs or cultural needs of consumers, such as the accessories, furniture, stationery and other products launched by the British Museum. Merchants sometimes recommend different products according to different gift recipients, a reflection of their keen insight into consumers' emotional needs. The overarching value the Red Culture holds is education and emotional identity. Bearing this in mind, we can devise some parent-child interactive products or educational toys aimed at presenting certain cultural images. In this way, not only can parents tell red stories to educate their children in spending time with their kids, but parents themselves can also deepen their understanding of and find ideological resonance and spiritual identity in Red Culture, thereby strengthening their national sentiment and national pride.

Furthermore, when a specific IP has a lot of fans, online social platforms and offline facilities such as cultural centers and museums can be utilized to engage fans in the design of cultural and creative products, such as by indirectly collecting fans' opinions and suggestions on product design.

4.3 How the model works

4.3.1 Element extraction and design

4.3.1.1 Extract cultural elements from the four aspects of "people, things, stories and spirit" through meticulous investigation

"People" refer to those who fought bravely and relentlessly for the victory of the revolution, such as the well-known revolutionary heroes, martyrs, and veterans. "Things" refer to the various objects used during the revolution, such as red scarves, red armbands, military uniforms, military caps, grass roots, tree bark, rickshaws, radio stations, rifles, etc., which are not only the witnesses of the revolutionary history but also the embodiment of the revolutionary spirit. "Stories" refer to

those major historical events during the revolution, such as important meetings, important battles, important milestones, etc., which jointly made up the great revolutionary history. "Spirit" refers to the revolutionary spirit, such as Hongyan spirit, Jinggangshan spirit, Yan'an spirit, etc. The revolution witnessed the birth of many revolutionary heroes who were indomitable, selfless, self-denying and innovative[7]. The lofty outlook on life and values and the holistic views that these heroes represent should be fully extracted, as they still have great educational significance for the current and even future generations.

"People, things, stories and spirit" are independent of each other, yet they also unite as a whole through progressive reinforcement, thus contributing to the in-depth interpretation and all-round transformation of the connotations of Red Culture. Cultural and creative products allow Red Culture to seep into all aspects of people's everyday lives through figurative objects adored by people, who will strengthen their socialist ideals and beliefs after realizing that today's happy life has been earned hard. By extracting cultural elements from the four aspects of "people, things, stories and spirit", we can make sure that each cultural and creative product has a rich and profound heritage of Red Culture, and that these products will remind people of the ideological connotations and historical value of the revolutionary spirit and increase people's awareness of potential dangers and patriotism[8].

4.3.1.2 Enhance product experiences from the five senses of "sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch" through scientific design

In taking information from the external environment through sensory organs such as ears, eyes, mouth, nose and skin, people consciously observe, analyze, perceive and process things surrounding them, followed by the deconstruction and integration of the information obtained and then higher-level rational construction. Five-sense design aims to enhance the consumers' sense of experience and participation, to enrich the forms of products, and to add more fun to products. On the strength of the five-sense design techniques and concepts, different cultures and stories can be interpreted through human senses such as sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. By adding immersive, interactive and experience-rich design elements, consumers will find emotional resonance in the products and develop deeper feelings, which can in turn help pass on the Red Culture.

For example, Henan Museum has recently rolled out an archaeological blind box which contains different kinds of exquisite imitations of cultural relics with rich historical and cultural connotations. The blind box also comes with a Luoyang shovel, the archetype of Chinese archaeological tools. The archaeological blind box not only highlights the unique characteristics of Henan Province, but also conveys a sense of immersion, enhances the interactivity of cultural and creative products, enable consumers to empathize with the difficulties facing archaeological exploration and

cultural relics preservation, and helps today's young people develop their interest in and enthusiasm for archaeology[9].

4.3.2 Construction of "online + offline" IP matrix

We can harness various social media platforms to open official accounts for IPs and to launch special columns introducing local Red Culture. According to the styles and characteristics of different platforms, we can design interactive adventure-themed mini-games based on various short stories, publish interesting short videos about playing the red hero for one day, properly adjust the approaches to video editing or the length/depth of articles, spread Red Culture in the form of special topics, create adorable and captivating IPs, and design unique cultural and creative products. Furthermore, we can also team up with revolutionary scenic spots to help boost the visibility of their IPs. We can combine local unique IP characters with location IPs and red story IPs so that IP characters can tell about Red Culture in an easy-to-understand way for teenagers, thus bring into being a vertical matrix of "locations, stories and people", which can be further expanded to include book publishing, online fun courses and cultural tourism. After building a vertical matrix for each IP, different vertical matrices can be bound together and expanded to form a greater horizontal matrix, thereby inaugurating a grand ecosystem of socialist Red Culture with Chinese characteristics. By promoting the close linkage between online and offline communication efforts, IP characters and Red Culture will become deeply rooted in the hearts of the people.

5 Value and Significance of the "Cultural and Creative IP" Model for Red Culture

5.1 Add momentum to industrial development

From the perspective of promoting economic development, the IP exploitation and the cultural and creative design of Red Culture seem to be the breakthrough point for the development of cultural and creative products in many places. Building on the collections of cultural facilities and museums, and harnessing the revolutionary stories and heroes in these places, we can roll out diversified cultural and creative products and kick off the relevant commemorative activities, which would contribute to the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese culture. These efforts can also be combined with services such as cultural tourism related hospitality and catering to extend the industry chain, thereby preparing the ground for the Red Culture industry to thrive and undergirding local economic growth and high-quality development of regional and national economies[10].

5.2 Give full play to the value of Red Culture in boosting patriotism and educating people

In the current era of ubiquitous entertainment, "eyeball economy" and "traffic mania" have spawned a flurry of chaos in the cyberspace. People who have long been bothered by vulgar tastes and insane groupies are eager for more high-quality works and products that spread positivity. The popularity of The Age of Awakening well justifies the charm of Red Culture. Meticulously produced and history-respecting film and television works with intriguing storylines and appealing characters will never go unnoticed. In recent years, many patriotic films were not only greeted with roars of approval, but also became box office hits, suggesting that the successful works of Red Culture are by no means scant. Keeping up with the trend of the times, these works are leading the way of thinking and have won the support and recognition of a vast number of audiences. In such a context, IP-oriented cultural and creative designs can immerse our next generation in Red Culture since childhood, encourage them to follow the example of heroes, and help them develop a sense of patriotism[11].

On the strength of new media, we can break temporal and spatial boundaries and spread Red Culture in various forms across the whole country. Through online and offline endeavors, we will take Red Culture to the hearts of more people, help them find resonance in Red Culture, and shoulder the paramount responsibility of boosting patriotism and educating people.

6 Conclusion

"The color of the People's Republic of China is red, and we shall never let it fade." Red Culture represents those fine qualities of the Chinese nation, the Chinese communists and the general public. It contains the spirit of adhering to the revolutionary ideals, the spirit of unity and cooperation, and the indomitable spirit of hard work and innovation, which fits the Chinese nation 's personality and value pursuit of enduring hardship, advocating justice and daring to fight. Consequently, red culture is an important part of Chinese values. In order to entrench Red Culture in the hearts of the people and take ideological and political education to a whole-new level, we must spread Red Culture in forms favored by the people. The "4+5+2" cultural and creative IP model is ideal for Red Culture communication, as it allows the adjustment of target audiences and orientations to cover multiple spheres and age groups in addition to promoting the coordinated development of cultural industries. Aside from creating economic value, we must stay true to our original aspiration of boosting patriotism and educating people, and play a greater role in passing on, spreading and transforming Red Culture.

Acknowledgements

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