

Research on the Success Elements of Animation IP: Creativity, Marketing, and Globalization

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Abstract: In recent years, the global animation industry has undergone profound changes, and intellectual property rights (IP) have become the core standard to measure the market success and cultural influence of animation works. As a successful case of Chinese animation IP, the themed animated films of the series have not only made breakthroughs in business but also promoted the influence of Chinese animation in the international market. This study combines industry reports, market data, and the latest academic research, discusses the key success factors of the IP in content creativity, marketing strategy, and audience feedback, and analyzes the role of cross-media narrative, digital technology innovation, and global expansion on the sustainable development of IP. The development of animation IP is not only an important topic in China's animation industry, but also highly attracts attention around the world. The animation industry in the United States and Japan has formed a mature IP operation system. For example, Disney, Pixar, and Marvel companies rely on their long-term established brand assets and form IP into a stable business model through cross-media narrative, multi-channel marketing, and global layout ^[1]. In contrast, although China's animation industry started late, it has risen rapidly in recent years, and the box office of domestic animation has repeatedly reached new highs. For example, the success of films has brought Chinese animation into a global perspective. How to learn from the international experience and combine the local cultural advantages to promote the international development of Chinese animation IP is an urgent problem to be solved at present. The research methods include case analysis, market data statistics, and literature review, and strive to fully reveal the successful path of animation IP. The results show that the modern adaptation of traditional cultural elements, multi-platform integrated marketing strategy, social media interaction, and derivative business model are the key factors for the success of this IP. This study can provide industry insight for animation production companies, marketers, and academic researchers, and help the future dissemination and commercialization strategy of animation IP.

Keywords: Animation IP; Content creativity; Cross-Media narrative; Digital technology innovation; Global expansion

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1. Introduction

The animation industry has become an important part of the global cultural and creative field. The success

of animation IP not only affects the commercial return of the work, but also plays a key role in cultural communication and global market competition ^[2]. In recent years, China's animation industry has risen rapidly, and internationally influential works such as *Ne Zha* and *White Snake: Origin* have effectively promoted the global spread of traditional culture through the combination of innovative narrative and modern technology ^[3].

This study with which powerful series theme animation film, for example, the system analysis in the content creativity, marketing and the successful experience, audience acceptance combined with the latest industry data to explore the sustainable development strategy of animation IP, aims to summarize the spread of Chinese animation IP mode, for the future animation works marketing and brand building provide reference.

Based on the above background, this paper will take the series of theme animation films as the starting point, from the three aspects of creativity, marketing, and globalization. In the following part, the creative highlights of the animation are discussed in detail, including its unique narrative structure, character shaping, and how to skillfully integrate traditional cultural elements and use advanced technology to achieve visual innovation. Subsequently, the article will focus on its practice in digital marketing and brand co-branding strategies, and analyze the role of social media and cross-border cooperation in expanding the influence of IP. Finally, through the discussion of audience feedback, social influence, as well as cross-media narrative, digital technology innovation, and global expansion, the internal mechanism of the sustainable development of animation IP is fully revealed.

2. Animation IP content creativity

2.1. Narrative structure and character shaping

The success of the series of themed animated films is inseparable from its unique narrative mode and distinct character shaping. While retaining the essence of traditional Chinese mythology, the film has made a new story adaptation, which is more in line with the aesthetic needs of modern audiences. The image of *Ne Zha* has changed from the traditional myth of "natural prodigy" to "a hero who is born as the devil but determined to fight against fate". This theme of rebellion and self-redemption is very attractive in the global animation market. In addition, the film uses a non-linear narrative, showing the character's growth through the interweaving of memory and reality, and enriching the level of emotional expression. This narrative approach is similar to the style of Hollywood animated blockbusters (such as *Spider-Man: Parallel Universe*), which further enhances the market competitiveness of the films ^[4].

2.2. Cultural elements and a visual style

The film skillfully incorporates traditional Chinese cultural elements, such as Taoist philosophy, the balance of Yin and Yang, mythological creatures, and ancient Chinese architecture, making it more unique in cultural communication. Although the settings of "Lotus Incarnation", "Qiankun Quan", and "Huntian Ling" originate from traditional culture, they are innovative under the interpretation of modern animation technology and can attract young audiences more.

At the same time, the film adopts a unique art style, integrating Chinese ink painting and modern CGI technology, so that the picture not only retains the oriental charm but also meets the visual standards of international animated films ^[5]. Data show that animations with distinctive cultural characteristics are easier to recognize in overseas markets, and their unique visual effects can help improve the cultural communication power ^[6]. In contrast, European and American animation puts more emphasis on character personalization and dynamic fluency,

while Japanese animation is good at expressing emotions in a fine, two-dimensional, hand-painted style. While maintaining the local cultural characteristics, Chinese animation also needs to further optimize the narrative structure and visual performance to enhance its competitiveness in the global market.

3. Animation IP marketing strategy

3.1. Social media promotion

In the era of digital media, social platforms have become the key channel for animation IP promotion. The promotion of the series of animated films on Weibo, TikTok, and other platforms was very successful, which not only triggered a wide range of topics but also greatly increased the participation of the audience. Before the release of the film, the official account released several promotional videos and character posters, and used the power of KOL to promote related topics, making the related topics of “Ne Zha” read more than 5 billion times, becoming one of the hottest animation topics on Weibo in the year ^[6]. At the same time, on the TikTok platform, the official account released behind-the-scenes production and character editing videos, and encouraged users to create content, making the cumulative number of related videos played 1.5 billion times.

3.2. Brand joint name and cross-border cooperation

In addition to social media promotion, the film also carries out cross-border cooperation with a number of well-known brands through the brand co-branding strategy, further expanding the influence of IP. For example, the “sneakers” launched with Li Ning was sold out within 1 hour of the first release, demonstrating the strong appeal of IP; the “Magic Boy” jointly launched with Xi Tea increased by 45% ^[7]; in addition, the authorized mobile game, King of Glory, the game was downloaded 10 million times on the day of launch ^[8].

Brand co-branding has become an important strategy for animation IP commercialization, which not only improves the market exposure rate of the works but also extends the life cycle of IP and enhances user stickiness. For example, the “Bear” series has long been cooperating with food brands to launch co-branded biscuits and fruit juices, forming a stable consumer group in the children’s market ^[9]. At the same time, Disney has more diverse cross-border cooperation modes. For example, the Frozen series not only launches clothing, toys, and theme parks, but also cooperates with luxury brands to launch high-end fashion products, continuously enhancing its IP value. In contrast, Chinese animation IP is still in the exploration stage in cross-border cooperation. In the future, we can learn from international experience and further expand joint cooperation in sports brands, fashion trends, and daily consumer goods to enhance the overall commercial influence.

4. Audience feedback and social influence

4.1. Audience evaluation and feedback

After the release of “Ne Zha 2”, it has been praised by the majority of audiences and has become one of the most popular domestic animations in recent years. The film topped 5.03 billion yuan (\$695 million), ranking second in the Chinese animation box office, behind “Ne Zha” ^[10]. On various platforms, Bilibili scored 9.5/10, 8.5/10 on Douban, and IMDb scored 7.4/10, fully demonstrating its global recognition. In addition, Weibo-related topics have been read more than 5 billion times and received more than 3 million user comments, making it the most popular domestic animation of the year ^[11].

4.2. Cultural communication and social influence

The film has not only been a commercial success, but also had a profound impact on cultural communication and industrial development. The film promotes the adoption of advanced CG technology in Chinese animation, in line with international production standards, showing the significant improvement of China's animation production capacity ^[12]. By reinterpreting traditional Chinese stories through a modern narrative approach, the film inspires young audiences' interest in traditional culture. At the same time, the film was released in North America, Japan, and other overseas markets, and promoted through Netflix, Crunchyroll, and other platforms, further expanding the influence of Chinese animation in the international market.

5. The long-term business model of animated IP

The long-term success of animation IP not only depends on the box office revenue of a single work but also requires the construction of a sustainable business model through cross-media narrative, digital technology innovation, and global expansion.

5.1. Cross-media narrative

Cross-media narrative is a way to tell the same IP story through multiple platforms (movies, TV series, games, comics, novels, etc.) to increase user engagement and improve commercial value ^[14]. The series of themed animated films not only launched official comics and derivative novels but also authorized several game companies to launch the related character skins, such as King of Glory, which was downloaded more than 10 million times on the first day of its launch.

In the international market, successful cross-media narratives include Disney's Marvel Universe (MCU), a series of movies, TV series, comics, and games that allow sustained audience participation in different mediums ^[13]. In contrast, Chinese animation is still in the development stage in cross-media integration. In the future, the industry can learn from the experience of Hollywood and Japanese animation to further expand the IP ecosystem.

5.2. Digital technology innovation

In recent years, the progress of digital technology has brought new opportunities for the commercialization of animation IP. Artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain (Blockchain) technology are increasingly widely used in animation production, marketing, and IP protection.

AI-assisted animation production: AI can be used for animation character modeling, scene generation, automatic dubbing, etc., to improve production efficiency and reduce costs. For example, some AI tools have been able to analyze user preferences and intelligently recommend IP content.

NFT and digital asset: NFT (non-homogenized tokens) technology enables animation IP to digitize and sell digital collectibles (such as character skins, movie clips, limited edition surrounding) to enhance the fan economy.

Blockchain copyright protection: Blockchain technology can ensure that the content of animation IP cannot be tampered with, prevent piracy, and improve IP profitability ^[14].

5.2. Globalization expansion

If Chinese animation IP wants to gain a firm foothold in the global market, it needs to adapt to the needs of different cultural markets. Although Chinese animation IP has made some achievements in the overseas market, it still faces multiple challenges. First of all, the problem of cultural adaptation is the core problem of domestic

animation going to sea. European and American audiences have limited acceptance of Oriental culture, and some works lack sufficient localization considerations in translation and plot adaptation, which leads to poor market response. For example, when some Chinese animations enter the North American market, due to the differences in cultural background, it is difficult to understand the plot, which affects the viewing experience of the audience. Secondly, the competition in the overseas markets is fierce. Japanese animation has established a mature fan group in the European and American markets. If Chinese animation wants to occupy a place, it needs to invest more energy in narrative mode, character building, and marketing. In the future, Chinese animation IP can learn from the promotion mode of Japanese animation, such as through the international animation show, overseas agencies, and co-production methods, to gradually open the global market. Therefore, in order to better adapt to the market needs of different environments, the industry needs to constantly adjust the story content to make it more in line with the audience preferences of different cultural backgrounds. For example, the Pixar film *Coco* succeeded globally with Mexican cultural elements. Provide high-quality translation and dubbing versions to enhance the acceptance of overseas markets, and cooperate with animation production companies in Europe, America, and Japan to promote their works with mature distribution channels ^[15].

6. Future trends and challenges

6.1. Animation IP market opportunities

Artificial intelligence and big data technology are increasingly widely used in animation production and IP marketing. For example, AI can be used for animation character modeling, scene generation, automatic dubbing, etc., to improve production efficiency and reduce costs ^[16]. In addition, data analysis can help to predict audience preferences and optimize marketing strategies. For example, Netflix uses big data analysis to determine the types of stories that audiences are most interested in, to accurately deliver content, and to improve user engagement.

6.2. Future challenges

For Chinese animation, how to realize the cultural adaptation in the international market while maintaining the cultural uniqueness is the key problem to be solved in the future. For example, Japanese animation makes it more in line with the acceptance of European and American markets. In the future, Chinese animation can explore ways to enhance international audiences' understanding and global influence of local culture through cooperative development and joint production.

7. Conclusion

This study takes the case of the series and analyzes the successful experience of animation IP in content creativity, marketing, audience feedback, and long-term business model. The research shows that cross-media narrative, digital technology innovation, and global expansion are the key to the sustainable development of animation IP. In the future, China's animation industry should further learn from international experience, use new technologies such as streaming media, AI, and big data to optimize IP operation, and strengthen international cooperation, to enhance the global competitiveness of Chinese animation.

The conclusion of this study can provide reference for animation production companies, marketing personnel, and academic researchers, and help the long-term development of Chinese animation IP.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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