

Research on the Current Situation and Development Strategy of Health Communication in a Short Tiktok Video: The “Dingxiang Doctor”

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Abstract: With the development of global economy and network technology, the new media era is accelerating, which has changed the channels and ways of social information transmission. As a new media carrier, short video platforms, represented by Tiktok, Kuaishou and Tencent Micro, have developed rapidly in their fields. They resort to the communication mode of audio-visual painting, which updates the way people receive and disseminate information and social life, and also provides a new platform and development fertile ground for health communication. This article takes the Dingxiang doctor’s Tiktok video as an example to explore the current situation of health communication in the short video area and further explore its future optimization strategy.

Keywords: Health communication; Short video; Dingxiang doctor

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1. Traceability and development status of short video

In the context of the rapid development of mobile information networks and the popularization of intelligent terminals, consumers’ demand for social networking in various forms and rich media is increasing. In recent years, short video applications that integrate audio, visual, sound and picture are on the rise. Short video generally refers to those online videos that are from a few seconds to a few minutes in length and are shot, edited and released after short video applications (APP). Short video applications have become the most popular social applications at present due to their simple video production, strong dynamic sensory stimulation, fragmented transmission mode and time, and rich post-effect, especially occupying an important position among the young Generation Z.

In 2016, the Chinese native company ByteDance launched Tiktok, a short video app, in response to demand for short music videos from the young Generation Z consumers. With the accumulation and development in just two years, Tiktok APP is in the limelight in the field of short videos. The huge traffic bonus brought by its popular short videos has become a vast blue ocean of knowledge dissemination. In the “Knowledge Generation-Research Report on Short Videos and Knowledge Dissemination,” we found that on such a platform, among the knowledge accounts with more than 10,000 followers, science and technology accounts are the most popular among the audience. The relatively boring knowledge in the stereotype is processed in the way of short video and spread on the hot short video platform, indicating that the knowledge dissemination on the short video platform is becoming a new development trend and liquid.

2. Health communication

Along with the development of human society itself, human health problems and health consciousness are closely associated with each other. Meanwhile, human health consciousness is a historical process of human self-consciousness. Health communication, as the materialized carrier of human health consciousness, carries the historical mission of maintaining and promoting human health. The research on health communication began in the 1970s with the famous “Stanford Heart Disease Prevention Program” (SHDPP) in the United States, the current concept of health communication is best known to Rogers in 1996 as “any type of human transmission that involves health content is health communication ^[1].”

With the continuous improvement of people’s living standards, people have more demands for a healthy life, and people will pay more attention to health information. The government and social institutions will open accounts on Weibo, Wechat and Tiktok to spread health information to the public through various means. In the steady development of Weibo and Wechat, short video with rich form of expression and appeal as well as the kaleidoscope of tiktok’s natural flow base, has attracted more and more we-media health communication institutions, including government and social institutions, rushing to the huge traffic track of short videos like Tiktok, which has divided the attention resources of the public again.

3. Analysis of the development of “Dingxiang doctor” Tiktok

“Dingxiang Doctor” is committed to providing health services for the public in the field of pan-health. It belongs to Dingxiang and provides professional and reliable diversified health scene solutions for the public, including health science content, health knowledge services, health goods and online consultation. It focuses on the health scene outside the hospital and is committed to doing a healthy lifestyle guide. Its own Omnimedia matrix includes mobile phone applications, Weibo account, Wechat public account, small program, Bilibili website channel, Zhihu account, etc. As the most active member of health science accounts, multiple indexes show that “Dingxiang Doctor” has far more likes, page views and followers than other health science accounts ^[2].

On April 12, 2018, “Dingxiang Doctor” was launched on the short video platform Tiktok, and on June 28, 2018, it was launched on the short video platform Kuaishou. With the slogan of “fun, knowledgeable and attitude, a new generation of public health science,” it started the dissemination of health and medical science on the short video platform. Up to now, the Tiktok account “Dingxiang Doctor” has attracted about 9.381 million followers and received more than 42.564 million likes, making it the most popular “We-Media” of Tiktok health and medical science. Since the opening of Tiktok account of “Dingxiang Doctor” in half a year, the number of followers has reached 5.6 million. Such a good result cannot be attributed to the good audience base accumulated in the “Weibo and Wechat” in the early stage, but also cannot be attributed to the highly compatible development of professional communication team and Tiktok platform. First of all, the development and communication status of Tiktok, “Dingxiang Doctor,” is combed. In terms of communication content, from the perspective of “position” theory of marketing, the creative team positioned the content of the original short video as topics such as common sense of life, disease prevention, sports and fitness, daily diet, mother and child, and expert rumor refuting, which are hot topics of great concern to young people. On the contrary, esoteric advanced medical knowledge, terminology and content are less. The distribution and selection of such content is really related to the positioning nature of Tiktok, that is, the original intention of users to pay attention to “Dingxiang Doctor” Tiktok is to get some “light” and “grounded” health knowledge to guide their life practice while “viewing” Tiktok for relaxation and entertainment. For example, “Five hygiene questions about staying at a hotel during the holiday,” “How to eat breakfast,” “Super effective weight-loss tips” and etc. When there are hot topics on Tiktok or Weibo, the creative team of “Dingxiang Doctor” will immediately draw on relevant health knowledge and questions to provide professional answers. For example, in view of the topic of online red eye drops, it quickly made

and distributed a short video titled “Eight bad habits that hurt eyes,” which received more than one million likes.

In terms of short video shooting techniques to convey health knowledge, the team that created Tiktok, “Dingxiang Doctor,” used humorous shooting methods to attract users’ continuous attention based on young portraits of Tiktok users. For example, in “It turns out that eating coriander is fate,” “Do you want to eat cilantro? Look at this green slice!” “In another article entitled” “Can you lose weight without dinner?” “There’s nothing a dinner can’t do, and if there is, then have another night snack ^[3].” Short videos, ranging from 15 to 30 seconds long, bring interesting and informative “lightweight” knowledge to the audience, and are well matched with the style of the platform.

Second, in terms of the communication subject, the high credibility and authority of the creative team add color to the short video ^[4]. Throughout the entire Tiktok APP platform, the content production is divided into two parts, one is user-generated content, the other is professional production content, user-generated content due to the low threshold and convenience of short video content production, every user is the creator and publisher of short video content. The professional production content is in the charge of the professional team, which has a higher level of content quality and intention. Facing the torrent of short videos, users of this app are more inclined to believe in the information and content transmitted by officially certified professional institutions, thus the “clove doctor” with a team of professional medical workers will stand out in the vast number of short videos. Users have a thirst for knowledge of medical health class, and after honing a series of well-received short videos for COVID-19 2020, “Dingxiang Doctor” Tiktok is constantly exploring topics and filming, as well as even to cater to the bytes to beat company platform algorithm and recommended rules, work of each issued a short video for more quality traffic.

Third, in the short video narration, the serious and rigorous medical topics are combined with the lively expression content. In the videos released by “Dingxiang Doctor,” more than 90 % of the content is Doctor Tian and Shu Gui two staff go out to talk about health problems. Doctor Tian’s personality narration is simple and interesting, and the context is clear. Such a video arrangement can make serious medical knowledge simple and interesting in a short period of time. Doctor Tian’s popular science content is based on the movement of “adjusting glasses” as the dividing line. Before “adjusting glasses,” it is the medical popular science content. “Adjusting glasses” is followed by funny jokes. This contrasting design makes the audience weaken the seriousness of medical knowledge when watching the video, create a relaxed and cheerful atmosphere for learning knowledge, and subvert the traditional serious and rigid image of doctors in their minds.

Finally, in the social aspect of audience interaction, it can be seen that imitation of health knowledge is closely related to people’s lives. A short 15-30 seconds health science video can be used as a social knowledge. In the comments section of each video posted by Dingxiang Doctor, many users participate in the discussion, and Dingxiang Doctor also has interesting and informative interactions on some of the topics discussed. For example, a short video about “3 ways to get Swanneck as well as brave the wind and the waves with your sisters” has been liked more than 135,000 times. In the comments section, we have seen the highly liked comments like “Have you ever been slapped on the back by your parents while walking and wearing a Babaka?” On the one hand, the production of “like” behavior is the audience’s encouragement and appreciation to the video creators; on the other hand, when users see the videos they like, are interested in, are funny and useful, the “like” behavior can be used as a mark for repeated viewing and imitation. Based on the setting of the Tiktok account platform, “Dingxiang Doctor” Tiktok account will launch health topic challenges. In the virtual community, interested people will “copy” interesting videos and become producers of short videos. From watching to imitating, on the one hand, it realizes the deep social interaction between “Dingxiang Doctor” and the audience, on the other hand, it realizes the secondary dissemination of health science knowledge ^[5].

4. Health communication in the field of short video

No matter from the content of communication, the way of communication or the interaction of audience, Tiktok is the best in short video health communication. However, in the process of communication, the problems of lack of originality and short service value chain of the main creative team have also emerged. First, the creative team lacks the original motivation. Since mid-November 2018, the frequency and number of videos released by “doctor clove” have decreased significantly. Once, up to three videos were updated a day, but now only three videos are updated every week. The decrease of video frequency shows the lack of original power. On the other hand, the low update frequency and the change of the shaking algorithm make the content of Tiktok video less and the main power of the main player is not enough to release video [6].

Second, the service value chain is short. At present, the “Dingxiang Doctor” Tiktok account is limited to short videos on health science, short video advertisements and window products that jump to Taobao. The function of Tiktok does not support other extended functions, which cannot be the same as the Wechat official account of “Dingxiang Doctor.” Thanks to the support of small programs, it can push health knowledge on Wechat and complete payment activities such as in-depth consultation, health care services or commercial purchase.

5. Health communication optimization strategy in short video field

The rapid development of short video brings infinite possibilities for future health communication. With people’s pursuit of healthy lifestyle, the demand for health is also increasing and specific. As a new media with medical background, “Dingxiang Doctor” has rich health knowledge reserves and will make full efforts in health communication in the future [7].

First, focus on the audience and improve the health communication map to achieve continuous delivery of quality content. The medical background of “Dingxiang Doctor” short video team makes it possible to insight into the user’s health knowledge demands. After mastering the pain points of the audience’s health knowledge, it uses the rich forms of short video to disseminate health knowledge content. For the audience’s desire for mental health and emergency common sense health communication content, it is timely filled. As a leader in the health new media industry, it has the ability to capture hot words on the Internet, provide inexhaustible short video materials and inspiration sparks for its health topics, actively set health-related topics with the help of health “hot” words, do a good job in the interaction of health topics and the communication and feedback of health needs, so as to make health information “hot” again, meet the health needs of the audience, improve the attention of society and Internet users to health problems, produce high-quality health content, improve the health communication map, and realize the continuous transmission of high-quality content [8].

Second, publishers should strengthen theoretical learning of health communication and improve professional knowledge and accomplishment. Compared with other types of short videos, the information of short health videos will be directly affected by the establishment and behavior of cognition. This principle puts forward higher requirements for the “Dingxiang Doctor” Tiktok short video publisher. They need health information to understand and digest in depth, and then produce scientific and credible. Interesting and easy to read high-quality health content and publish.

Information publishers should not only have a more comprehensive professional hard core, achieve the scientific authority of information sources, have a reasonable basis, but also have a certain communication foundation, which can return health communication to the scientific essence, make use of the relevant theories of health communication, deeply and comprehensively understand health communication, realize the integration of medical health knowledge and news communication theory, and understand the context of health information communication, interpret the behavior of the audience, tap the potential health demands of the audience, and provide timely and effective health information services for the audience.

At the same time, the health communication theory should be applied to the actual scene of short video health communication, the health content should be strengthened, the proportion of high-quality health content should be improved, the time cost of the audience to understand health knowledge should be reduced, the coverage and communication power of information content should be improved, the health knowledge gap should be narrowed, and the value of health communication should be improved. It helps “Dingxiang Doctor” to have its own core competitiveness and reputation in the field of health short videos, guide the correct values of health communication, assume the function of network opinion leader, and become a “professional communication worker” in the field of health.

Third, while adhering to the moral bottom line of moderate marketing, it is also necessary to extend its own service value chain. As a kind of communication category with strong public welfare, health communication helps to improve the health cognition of the audience by providing information and services, but it is also a health risk practice related to the life safety of the audience. It needs to be more scientific and cautious, grasp the communication methods and scales, and stick to the moral bottom line.

On one hand, from the perspective of social benefit, Dingxiang doctors as a platform focusing on provide medical health content and services, should be based on health information and services of original intention, stick to temperature attitude as the standard, committed to providing scientific and reliable health information and services, produce high quality health content and considerate service, and bring the audience maximize the health benefits.

On the other hand, from the perspective of its own commercial benefits, it should improve the sensitivity of the health consumption market, deeply insight into the health needs of users, analyze the potential health needs and behavior trends of users from social hot spots, and use digital technology to realize accurate health marketing, so as to provide high-quality health content and personalized services to achieve knowledge subscription payment and to realize the extension of the length of its own value chain. It should adhere to the unity of commercial interests and social benefits, establish a good image of “Dingxiang Doctor”, communicate sincerely in health communication, improve people’s trust and stimulate the enthusiasm of health consumption, and open up a new path of health service and health marketing.

6. Conclusion

As a disseminator of short video health content, we should actively respond to the actions of healthy China. As the main body of health communication, “Dingxiang Doctor” makes full use of the advantages of short video media to enrich the expressiveness of health information on the premise of ensuring the authority and scientific reason of health information sources. At the same time, it actively uses real-time hot topics to set up health issues and lead correct attitudes and health behaviors. It should adhere to the concept of audience-centered development, in-depth insight into the health status and needs of users, so as to provide diversified and personalized health information and services for the audience. In the aspect of effect feedback of health communication, it should do a good job of quality assessment and audience effect feedback, constantly summarize, reflect and innovate, and realize the better development of short videos of future health communication types.

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