

Strategies for New Media Documentary Creation Based on the Psychology of the Audience

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Abstract: In the new media era today, all kinds of film and television works are being rapidly updated and iterated. In the film and television market, the recognition of audience is the motivation to move forward. This article finds the needs of the audience through documentary changes in the new media environment, sees its essential problems and opportunities in the highly commercialized mass culture phenomenon of new media, and explores strategies for new media documentary creation.

Keywords: The psychology of the audience; New media documentary; Popular culture

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1. Introduction

New media documentaries have been widely sought after on major media platforms in the past two years, as they are popular with the public for their compact and exquisite features. The audience is the ultimate destination of the communication content and the basis for the existence of communication activities. Therefore, the study on the psychology of the audience is the only way to understand the audience and the key to creating good new media documentaries.

2. Definition of concepts

2.1. New media documentary

New media documentaries largely involve the internet, which is different from the traditional media of movies and television. However, at the level of production and broadcasting, new media documentaries and traditional documentaries have certain overlapping aspects: the attention to the bottom of the society and the marginal space of the city^[1]. Both types of documentaries focus on the joys and sorrows of people.

In recent years, many local video portals have launched various influential works that focus on the bottom of the society, the social style, and social issues. For example, “The Shaky World” on Youku, “A String of Life” on Station B, and “Chinese Doctor” on iQiyi. Tencent Video’s “Flavorful Origin: Gansu Cuisine” was sold to Netflix, which then conquered more than 190 countries and regions. It can be seen that the themes selected in these new media documentaries are close to the popular culture.

2.2. The psychology of the audience

The psychology of the audience includes truth-seeking psychology, which refers to the audience’s understanding of the real situation of the society and the world in which they live in; quick-seeking psychology, which refers to the hunger for information and also having the characteristics of rehearsal in aesthetic psychology; short-seeking psychology, which can be relatively compared to obtaining information

in a short period of time; seek new psychology, in which one encounters new people, new things, and events to succeed in innovation; approach psychology refers to the psychology of audiences that are more likely to pay attention to news around them or related to them.

Under the influence of popular culture, audiences in real life always focus on certain emotional desires in the deep psychological layer, reflecting the true demands of this type of society, in which they need to be satisfied at all times. Documentaries are the portrayal of reality in a certain way. This is the importance of their emotional expression. Therefore, new media documentaries should give the audience an outlet for emotional catharsis and meet their emotional needs ^[2].

3. Documentary changes in the new media environment

3.1. Diversity of creative subjects

In the new media environment, the dissemination of documentaries has undergone major changes, and increasingly more people have begun to join in the dissemination of documentaries. Although the documentaries shot by many professionals are of high quality, ordinary users cannot be denied from these documentaries. The idea of new media documentary creation today can be divided into two parts. The first part is the expression of the creator's own self-consciousness, hoping to display his or her life to the public. In this case, the creator is active and disseminates in the film according to his or her own wishes. The second part is that creators must add capital requirements to a certain extent for commercial creation. Capital wants to profit from a wide range of dissemination, so these creators are relatively passive. Their creative content must penetrate product promotion and publicity. They have a certain purpose and may be inconsistent or violate the creator's desire to record.

3.2. Personalized media features

With the continuous development of new media, more and more media models and contents are available for viewers to choose from. New media documentaries can only stand out among the audience's choice if homogeneity is avoided. In order to achieve personalization, it is important to pay attention to the personalization of the host. A host with good knowledge, unique perspective, and distinctive characteristics, with magnetic dubbing as well as particularly warm commentary should be chosen to become the representative symbol of certain works. On the other hand, the personalization of planning, the novelty of expression, and the communication perspective suitable for the audience, all belong to the category of media planning. The unique planning scheme will leave a deep impression on the audience ^[3]. For example, the dubbing in "A String of Life" is particularly friendly. The voice of a middle-aged person used for the dubbing reflects a frequent visitor to a late-night barbecue stall. This voice makes people feel a sense of substitution in the sense of hearing and stimulates interest in watching the film.

4. High commercialization of new media documentaries based on the psychology of the audience

4.1. Works and commerce complement each other

Documentary has entered the era of new media, and there is an urgency to determine the root of documentary survival in the new market structure. In order to be truly absorbed by the market, creators need to work hard and invest high-quality resources in the development of new media documentaries. The most important thing is to grasp the feeling that the theme brings to the audience. There are some production teams that rarely talk about project revenue and audiences or involve the exploration of business models. From the perspective of documentary production and publicity, the needs of the market are not met. Only by stepping out of the ivory tower of film creators and treating the work and its business model as the development direction for the sustainable development of Chinese documentaries can we truly achieve the expected commercial income. For example, the purpose of "A String of Life" is to strengthen the Chinese

commercial activities in this documentary as well as to promote and market in China and the world on a large scale, covering the market recommendation of Chinese cuisine, and possibly even the tourism industry in China. At the same time, with the help of Weibo, WeChat, and other medias, the exploration of hot events not only won fame, but also gained profits, achieved amazing results ^[4], as well as gained the love and praise of the audience. “A String of Life” has now been serialized into the third season and is still receiving rave reviews.

4.2. Life is closely related to capital

The income of new media documentaries mainly comes from advertising, IP licensing, copyright sales, and derivative product development. Therefore, when recording, they tend to cover up the bitterness and defects of the underlying society to provide the audience a sense of happiness and safe physical experience. In that way, they are able to gain loyal fans. To please the audience seems to be the only task of new media documentaries. The joys and sorrows of other people can be appreciated through the internet cloud. The commentaries of certain advertisements are directly added to the screen and pictures of products are inserted, while the background still depicts the ordinary life of ordinary people in reality. As a result, the audio-visual screen forms a strong sense of alienation. If the “representational record” is produced inappropriately, being too entertaining or commercialized, it may drift away from the “real record” of the documentary, eventually leading to the dismissal of new media documentaries by loyal fans of traditional documentaries. Therefore, although new media documentaries can be guaranteed by the economy and traffic through commercialization, they still need to adhere to the quality standards and principles of documentary production.

5. Effective strategies for new media documentary creation based on the psychological analysis of the audience

5.1. Time fits audience’s habits

In the new media environment, documentary creators also need to have a better grasp of audience’s viewing habits. Especially in recent years, with the popularity of Weibo and WeChat, there are more channels for people to receive information. Therefore, it is necessary for these creators to seize the audience’s time. Data have shown that Sina Weibo is mostly used at 9-10 a.m., 4-6 p.m., and 8-11 p.m. New media documentaries should consider these three periods when promoting. It can improve the effectiveness of publicity and promotion as well as save publicity funds to a large extent. Only the dissemination strategy that targets the audience can be effectively realized. Therefore, in the process of documentary dissemination and production, it is necessary to understand the audience’s viewing habits to further improve the broadcast effect ^[5]. For example, an episode of “Breakfast China” is broadcasted every day, from Monday to Friday, at 8 a.m., whereas an episode of the third season of “A String of Life” is broadcasted every Wednesday at 8 p.m.

5.2. Vertical cultivation of content creation

In the era of new media, the choice of the audience is becoming increasingly diverse, reflecting the specific needs of individuals. The American scholar Ponte once stated in *Digital Survival* that true personalization has become a basic feature of the post-information age; that is, the audience’s needs have been maximized. This feature enables new media to achieve one-to-one communication. Audiences are people with special needs. They use media and inspire motivation to meet specific needs. Therefore, new media documentaries should also focus on their own creation, cultivate certain themes vertically and thoroughly, and persistently implement those themes. At the same time, the creation of new media documentaries should also enable viewers to gain knowledge and recognition after watching, thereby satisfying their psychological needs.

“Breakfast China” is not only a short documentary about food, but also focuses on breakfast. In each episode, a city will be selected, and its unique local breakfast will be shown to the audience^[6]. Through short stories about people, food, and the inheritance of food, the profound food culture in China is displayed.

5.3. Entertainment of audiovisual language

Nowadays, the form of new media documentaries is novel, and the trend towards entertainment has been very eye-catching. In “Breakfast China,” various creative techniques are used, such as funny emoticons, colorful flowers and characters, light and cheerful tone, lively music and special effects, as well as recordings of ordinary conversations among ordinary people to create an atmosphere reflecting life. It is very interesting and infectious. The language used is relaxed and pleasant; whether it is a recording or commentary, it is biased towards colloquialism. The audiovisual language of new media documentaries has gradually become more valuable and attentive to social trends, life, common people, and the use of simple languages.

5.4. Commercialization of production methods

Producing new media documentaries in line with the audience’s preference creates a larger traffic market in the development stage of new media. This is the impetus for the stable and sustainable development of documentaries. By recording life in a relaxed way, it allows the audience to relax physically and mentally while watching these documentaries during their spare time. What is more prominent is that the traces of commercialization are obvious. New media documentaries are no longer simple records, but commodity attributes that are closely related to the public are integrated. On one hand, this method has provided funds for the development of new media documentaries; on the other hand, it has promoted economic development, which is inevitable under the influence of popular culture. However, in creating, it is still necessary to grasp the balance between commercialization and documentary production. New media creators should actively explore ways to build resonance with the audience, gain the audience’s psychological, emotional, and ideological recognition, as well as utilize various ideas to convey humanistic feelings and reveal the spiritual connotation of the times.

6. Conclusion

In summary, in the context of the era of new media, diversified forms of communication have improved the dilemma of documentary dissemination and provided greater development advantages, but at the same time, higher requirements have been put forward in the production of new media documentaries. It is worth mentioning that under the influence of popular culture, the creators and audiences are both participants and builders. In this environment, new media documentaries can effectively disseminate and develop. However, it is still necessary to grasp the essential development changes and characteristics, determine the development needs of the times, meet the psychological needs of the audience, and make achievements on this basis. The specific strategies can then continue to stimulate the growth of new media documentaries.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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