Vol.5 Iss.8 2024 Communication & Education Review
https://doi.org/10.37420/j.cer.2024.107

Participatory Promotion of Ethnic Culture: Research on Traditional Game Brand Creation

Zeng Deyun*
School of Literature and Journalism and Communication,Qinghai Minzu University, China
***Corresponding author, E-mail: zdy7576@gmail.com**

Abstract:
From the perspective of value co-creation, this paper discusses the motives andbehavioral effects of netizens participating in digital culture communication. Value co-creationtheory refers to the interaction between enterprises and netizens to create value. For example,publicity videos stimulate netizens" thinking and feedback, which promotes the improvement ofthe game, and the communication among netizens also helps the spread of the game. From the perspective of innovation and diffusion, the impact of early adopters on "breaking the circle" is significant, and KOL's second creation video attracts people to participate in the dissemination.The participation behavior of netizens makes the symbols related to "Black myth Wukong" become "memes". The video of second creation, the social communication text of forwarding comments and nationalist feelings promote its spread through different ways respectively.Through the method of questionnaire survey and in-depth interview, this paper analyzes the participants of "Black Myth:WuKong". This paper studies netizens involved in the digital dissemination of Wukong and analyzes their reactions and related behaviors after watching the promotional video with a view to revealing the reasons behind the rising popularity of the game, and further thinking about the challenges and difficulties faced by domestic games in helping the spread of traditional Chinese culture and breaking down the cultural barrier, so as to provide useful reference and inspiration for promoting the development of domestic games and cultural dissemination.

Keywords:
value co-creation, Black myth Wukong, participatory culture, meme

1 Introduction

In the new era of digital communication, the integration of culture and science and technologyis increasingly close, and the digital cultural industry is booming. As an important part of it, gamesnot only have entertainment functions, but also play a unique role in cultural communication and value creation, Black Myth: Wukong, as a high-profile domestic game, has attracted wide attention and heated discussions since its release, thanks to the rise of participatory culture. Today audiences have changed from the traditional role of consumers to more proactive producers and consumers, who actively participate in the creation and dissemination of cultural content, which has greatly enriched the cultural diversity and democratization process, With the development of science and technology, netizens' participation in cultural production is becoming more and

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

more frequent. The rise of short video platforms provides netizens with channels to directly participate ircontent production. Scholars at home and abroad have also conducted certain researches on it. However, while the existing researches focus on the participation of the government and netizens in the production of cultural content, they ignore the reasons why participatory culture prompts netizens to co-create value. Therefore, this study focuses on Black Myth: Wukong, and attempts to explore how the game stimulates netizens" participation, what motivates netizens to participate in digital cultural communication activities, and how netizens" participation promotes the brand reputation of Black Myth: WuKong from the perspective of netizens" value co-creation.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Value co-creation

Value co-creation refers to a new method of value creation proposed by management gurus Prahalad et al at the beginning of the 21st century, which relies on an individual-centered approach where consumers and enterprises create value together. In recent years, with the rise of cultural tourism phenomena such as Zibo barbecue and Harbin Ice and Snow World, these have attracted academic research from the perspective of value co-creation. Chinese scholar He Chunhui, in the article "Building the Uniqueness of City Brands and Creating Value Co-creation for All Citizens - Taking 'Internet Famous' Harbin as an Example," points out that Harbin's use of its ice carving technology for collaborative co-creation has driven the cultural and tourism co-creation in the three northeastern provinces, providing a typical example for the development of other cities.[1] Foreign scholar Liu Yu, in "How online reviews of sports tourism affect tourists' value co-creation behavior: Findings from PLS-SEM, NCA, and fsQCA," indicates that high levels of value co-creation behavior have a significant impact on tourists' experiences. Today, value co-creation has become a key guiding concept for corporate competition.[2]

2.2 Participatory culture

Jenkins proposed the concept of "participatory culture" in his work "Textual Poachers," suggesting that the audience plays a role not just as a passive consumer and receiver, but as a proactive producer-consumer. Domestic scholar Xu Zhenyi, in "A Study on Participatory Culture in User-Generated Short Videos," points out that participatory culture emphasizes individuals and groups not only as consumers but also as active producers participating in the creation of cultural content, lowering the barriers to creation and promoting cultural diversity and democratization. [3]Foreign scholar Henry Jenkins, in "The path from participatory culture to participatory politics: A critical investigation—An interview with Henry Jenkins," notes that different groups deploy public resources strategically and emotionally for various purposes.[4] The research fully indicates the active role of the public in content consumption. [5] In the era of immersive screen consumption, the attribute of users being both producers and consumers has become more prominent, and participatory cultural production has become the norm.

2.3 Behavior of netizens participating in cultural production

From the perspective of Heidegger's "technological vehicle," the development of technology provides tech-

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

nological affordances for netizens, enabling them to participate in content production. Chinese scholar Zhang Lei, in her study "Research on the Short Video Consumption and Production Logic of 'Silver-haired Netizens'," points out that the rise of short video platforms has provided netizens with channels to directly participate in content production. [6]For example, the Douyin platform blogger "Jihan Film" has re-edited short videos of the TV series "Outlaws of the Marsh" for netizens, gaining millions of likes through humorous content explanations. Foreign scholar Chen Jiali, in "Participatory Culture and IP Construction: Research on the Role Shaping of Mainstream Media Anchors and Audience Participation," notes that netizens create various anchor personas through content production, and this creation further attracts more netizens to pay attention to the anchor.[7]

Although these studies discuss how governments can build urban brands and how netizens participate in the production of cultural content through co-creation of value for all, they overlook the reasons why participatory culture motivates netizens to engage in value co-creation.

2.4 Question raised

Therefore, this article explored the following questions from the perspective of netizens' value co- creation with the game: How did stimulate netizens' participation? What were the motivations for netizens to engage in digital cultural dissemination activities? How did the participation of netizens promote the brand reputation of ?

3 Method

3.1 Survey method

Questionnaire survey was a method that collected data and information from the subjects through written form, using strictly designed questionnaires as tools. It was mainly used to gather information on people's opinions, attitudes, behaviors, social characteristics, or social backgrounds. In this study, to demonstrate the correlation between the promotional video of... and the discussion level among netizens, content analysis was adopted, sampling was conducted on the population, and questionnaires were created.The research subjects were netizens involved in the digital dissemination of "Black Myth: Wukong".

We conducted representative sampling of this type of media and chose the Douyin platform. The reason for the choice was its high influence, wide user base, and the fact that the likes, shares, and comments on videos were clearly calculable, thus providing strong representativeness. Secondly, the researchers selected videos with promotional attributes for "Black Myth: Wukong", and ultimately chose the Black Myth Wukong cosplaying video by the Douyin blogger "Mogai, Lao K" for questionnaire setup.

The hypotheses of this research were as follows:

H1: There is a difference in the discussion level about the game "Black Myth: Wukong" between audiences who have and have not watched related cosplay videos.

H2: There is a difference in the evaluation level of "Black Myth: Wukong" between audiences who have

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

and have not watched related cosplay videos.

H3: The higher the frequency of viewing promotional videos related to "Black Myth: Wukong," the higher the discussion level about the game.

H4: The higher the frequency of viewing promotional videos related to "Black Myth: Wukong," the higher the evaluation level of the game.

H5: Age is related to the discussion level about "Black Myth: Wukong."

H6: Age is related to the evaluation level of "Black Myth: Wukong."

H7: Level of gaming experience is related to the discussion level about "Black Myth: Wukong."

H8: Level of gaming experience is related to the evaluation level of "Black Myth: Wukong."

3.2 In-depth interview

The in-depth interview method was an unstructured, direct, one-on-one form of questioning. The interviewer delved into a conversation with a single interviewee to uncover the underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions regarding a particular issue. It aimed to explore the interviewee's deep-seated thoughts and feelings through profound communication, understanding their experiences, perspectives, and behaviors, and the complex, deep-rooted reasons behind them.

The interview questions were mainly divided into three parts. The first part focused on the interviewee's basic information, including age, occupation, and interests. The second part was about the interviewee's ways of understanding Black Myth: Wukong, including the reasons for understanding it, the first impression, and whether they had watched related cosplays or promotional videos of Black Myth: Wukong, as well as the promotional effect of these videos. The third part involved whether the interviewee participated in discussions about Black Myth: Wukong, asking about the motivation for participating in the discussion, the impact of the discussion on themselves, and how they viewed the act of discussion. The fourth part was mainly involving potential deep-digging questions. During the interview and research process, researchers strived to avoid the four ethical issues and deviant behaviors emphasized by scholar Allen Bryman.

This study conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with seven interviewees aged between 15 and 40, each of which lasted 15 minutes. The interviews had started in September 2024 and concluded in October 2024. Initially, the respondents had included college students and professionals. Subsequently, more research samples were recruited through social channels. Following the principle of maximum sampling in qualitative research methods, recruitment was stopped when the seventh interviewee was reached, as the content of all interviews had been sufficient to answer the research questions. The sample collection was terminated at this point. The interviewees had varied in age, region, and upbringing, with a low degree of homogeneity. The interviews had been conducted face-to-face on a one-to-one basis.

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Table 1 The basic information of the interviewees

Serial number	Age	Gender	Game experience level
1	15	Woman	Novice player
2	22	Man	Veteran player
3	28	Man	Ordinary player
4	23	Woman	Novice player
5	38	Man	Novice player
6	31	Man	Veteran player
7	32	Man	Novice player

4 Analysis of the Motivation of Netizen Participating in Digital Culture Dissemination

4.1 The "Breaking the Mold" Influence of Early Adopters from the Perspectives of Innovation and Diffusion

According to the theory of innovation diffusion, the spread of new game information requires change agents and early adopters. "Black Myth: Wukong" collaborated with multiple beauty bloggers to launch a cos challenge event, spreading pre-launch information to various niche communities through KOL before the game's release, thus achieving a "breaking through the circle" effect. From the analysis of the research results, it can be found that people are willing to participate in discussions related to "Black Myth: Wukong" because they have seen related promotional videos and are attracted by the content to actively engage in the dissemination of digital culture. Many respondents stated that it was due to the second creation videos by KOL that they discovered the game "Black Myth: Wukong" and then participated in the dissemination of digital culture, creating a multi-level information diffusion effect.

From the perspective of value co-creation, the promotional videos of "Black Myth: Wukong" stimulated discussions among netizens in cyberspace, and value was co-created in the process of interaction between enterprises and netizens. The development team shared game information through promotional videos, sparking netizens' thoughts on the possibilities of the game, and netizens' discussions provided the team with new ideas. At the same time, netizens' feedback could prompt improvements and optimizations to the game. For example, netizens pointed out that some animations in the chapters of "Black Myth: Wukong" were blurry, and the official team changed the quality of the animations in subsequent updates and made blurring treatments for sensitive areas. The interaction among netizens co-created value, and in this process, people's knowledge and experience were continuously exchanged, enriching people's understanding of this genre and knowledge and aiding in the promotion of the game. It is worth noting that a shared cultural identity and national pride built up people's emotional experiences, enhancing their attention and participation in the game. For instance, netizens combined past domestic animation content, modified mods, and created "Black Myth: Xiong Er", "Black Myth: Jiji King", "Black Myth: Pig Hero", etc. Early adopter Douyin blogger "Lao Youtao

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Shuo" produced a collection of "Black Myth: Wukong" modified videos, which received 38,000 likes, maintaining the popularity of "Black Myth: Wukong".

4.2 From the perspective of participatory culture, the herd mentality of poachers

According to Jenkins' theory of participatory culture, netizens are motivated by change agents to participate in game entertainment and publish gameplay videos. In the new media environment, the audience has changed its mode of information reception, prompting changes in the way information is disseminated. In the context of new media communication, the audience itself is active, meaning that the audience can understand and interpret information content based on their own feelings and experiences, creating personalized new content. Since the official release of "Black Myth: Wukong," many bloggers have started live streaming the game and have created edited videos of their playthroughs, using major bosses as milestones to produce guides for defeating them. Taking the Douyin platform as an example, after a blogger with 160,000 followers named "Ran E" posted a video of defeating the "Tiger Vanguard Boss," other netizens followed suit, filming their own playthroughs of the boss.

Katz's Uses and Gratifications Theory suggests that people typically obtain satisfaction through the use of media, whether it's the information itself or the situation or technology that brings satisfaction to people. The theory posits that the audience approaches media based on specific needs and motivations, from which they derive satisfaction. Because defeating the Tiger Vanguard is quite challenging, being able to post a video of defeating it has become an achievement for users in mastering the game. Therefore, users post videos of their victories, even those without taking any damage, all to gain recognition from other netizens and satisfy their own emotional needs.

5 Analysis of the Effectiveness of Netizen' Participation Behavior

5.1 Fan-created videos have turned the related symbols of "Black Myth: Wukong" into "memes"

The concept of meme originates from sociobiology and is used in the field of communication studies to describe the unit of cultural information transmission. Just as genes are spread through heredity, memes spread through imitation within culture. In the case of "Black Myth: Wukong," various symbols in the game, such as the image of Sun Wukong, game scenes, and unique skill animations, can be considered as memes. Amateur videos created by netizens extract these symbols, turning them into independent meme units. These memes are spread through the form of online videos, being imitated and shared among different netizens.

The amateur videos created by netizens act like carriers for viruses, with the symbols related to "Black Myth: Wukong" serving as the genes of the virus (i.e., memes). When an interesting amateur video is released, it sparks the interest of other netizens, who then actively share the video, causing its spread to increase exponentially. For example, the popular "Fate Person" on Douyin, due to players in the game frequently assuming the identity of "Fate Person," and because of its characteristic of "your own story is walked by yourself," many netizens have brought the identity of "Fate Person" into reality. The tragic plot from the game is introduced into reality, and the symbol of "Fate Person" becomes a meme that exhibits a viral spread across

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

the online space.

5.2 Forwarding comments has made the related symbols of "Black Myth: Wukong" become "memes"

The agenda-setting theory posits that the mass media can effectively influence what facts and opinions people focus on by providing information and arranging related issues. During the online discussion about "Black Myth: Wukong," the discourse played an agenda-setting role. For instance, because the character "Si Mei" (fourth sister) in the game caused dissatisfaction among players, it led to extensive discussions about "Si Mei," which in turn resulted in more users recording and uploading videos upon completing the "Si Mei" section, making "Si Mei" a new "meme" that drives netizens' attention to "Black Myth: Wukong".

With the continuous evolution of social media in the internet realm, the original one-way communication model centered on professional institutions is gradually shifting towards a multi-directional and complex communication model centered on users. In this process, the content of communication has also evolved into user-generated content (UGC, User Generated Content). Given that UGC is an ecological model that emphasizes user aggregation, it is easy to build a shared discourse system and public opinion field within such a relatively stable ecological environment. On the internet, typical exclusionary consciousness promotes the construction of group identity among users. For example, in "Black Myth: Wukong," regarding the plot between Zhu Bajie and Zi Zhu'er, netizens argued about whether the two should recognize each other. Some netizens believed that Zhu Bajie was heartless and ungrateful for not recognizing Zi Zhu'er and her daughter, leading to tragedy, while others argued that Bajie's action was a necessity, expressing not only deep affection but also enduring pains that ordinary people could not bear. The netizens' arguments and discussions about the event became a new "meme," driving even greater attention to "Black Myth: Wukong".

5.3 Nationalist sentiment has made the related symbols of "Black Myth: Wukong" become "memes"

Since the release of "Black Myth: Wukong," the game has been criticized within a few days. For example, journalist Elsie Chen from the Associated Press wrote an article claiming that "Black Myth: Wukong" disrespects women. At the same time, Rolling Stone magazine in the United States pointed out that the game lacks inclusivity and diversity. They attempted to mislead foreign netizens who are not familiar with traditional Chinese culture into joining the spiral of attacks against "Black Myth: Wukong", suppressing the game's continued popularity. In the face of foreign media "bullying" "Black Myth: Wukong", domestic netizens have retaliated. Driven by patriotic feelings and love and respect for traditional Chinese culture, domestic netizens have refuted and clarified these unfair accusations in various ways and have rallied support for the game. For instance, a "China expert" foreigner tweeted an explanation of the background of the creators' statements, and many industry insiders also came out to support "Black Myth: Wukong", emphasizing that the game's success should be based on its quality and innovation, not on whether it conforms to politically correct standards. Domestic netizens expressed agreement and support for these views, publishing their opinions on related topics, and the actions of the netizens formed a counter-spiral to vindicate "Black Myth: Wukong". At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and CCTV specifically praised "Black Myth: Wukong", and the conflict between the netizens' nationalism and the opponents also made the related symbols of "Black Myth Wukong"

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

become "memes". As the incident escalated, the dialogue of netizens in cyberspace to some extent stopped other foreign netizens from participating in the slanderous behavior against "Black Myth: Wukong" under the Western cultural hegemony, promoting netizens' attention to "Black Myth: Wukong".

6 Conclusion

This study employed questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews to analyze audience reactions to the promotional video of "Black Myth: Wukong" and to explore the various responses after viewing. It revealed that the extraordinary rise in popularity of "Black Myth: Wukong" is due not only to elements of the game itself but also to its exquisite content and visuals, as well as the creative output of traditional culture, which are significant reasons for attracting continuous user attention. Moreover, the participatory content production by netizens has helped to enhance the value of the game. The study indicates that watching the promotional video of "Black Myth: Wukong" is positively correlated with netizens' evaluations of the game, and age and gaming experience levels also have a significant impact on their evaluations. Netizens' fan creations of "Black Myth: Wukong" have contributed to its sustained popularity, and the ongoing buzz around the game continues to attract new netizens to participate in discussions and derivative creations. Netizens have a high level of recognition for "Black Myth: Wukong", but there are still significant obstacles to how Chinese games can help traditional Chinese culture break cultural barriers and allow international audiences to recognize a more comprehensive Chinese image. We should reflect on how to further research ways to expand the value co-creation between Chinese games and Chinese netizens to the global netizens, modernizing and innovating China's excellent traditional culture.

References

[1].He Chunhui & Wang Yikai. (2024). Constructing Urban Brand Uniqueness to Create Value Co-creation for All Citizens Across the City-Taking "Internet Celebrity" Harbin as an Example. Shanghai Radio & Television Research,(02), 83-90.(in Chinese)

[2].Yu Liu & Qiao Meng.(2024).How online reviews of sports tourism affect tourists' value co-creation behavior: Findings from PLS-SEM, NCA, and fsQCA. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 360-372.

[3].Xu Zhenyi. (2024). A Study on Participatory Culture in Fan-Created Short Videos. Media Forum, (18), 42-44.(in Chinese)

[4].Henry Jenkins. (2004).Textual Poachers.Taylor and Francis.

[5].Henry Jenkins & You Jie.(2024).The path from participatory culture to participatory politics: A critical investigation-An interview with Henry Jenkins.Communication and the Public,(1),11-30.

[6].Zhang Lei. (2022). Research on the consumption and production logic of short videos among "silver-haired netizens". Media, (04), 57-59.(in Chinese)

[7].Jiali Chen.(2022).Participatory Culture and IP Building: A Study of Mainstream Media Presenter Persona Shaping and Audience Participation.Communication & Education Review,(7).

[8].Guo Xinhao, Kong Rui & Liu Kang. (2024). New Media Communication and the Development of Participatory Culture among Audiences. Media Forum, (15), 89-91.(in Chinese)

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

[9].Li Yue, Niu Xueying & He Wei. (2024). Spreading Chinese Traditional Culture through Domestic Digital Games: Approaches, Current Status, and Perception. Digital Publishing Research, (02), 18-29.(in Chinese)
[10].Tian Runguo & Zhong Xintong. (2022).Fans Creation in the Development of New Media Technology: The perspective of the Participatory Culture.(eds.)

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)