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The Construction of Personality IP for Knowledge Influencers from the Perspective of Social Reading: A Case Study of Bilibili UP Master “The Naive and Sentimental Novelist” Postprint

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Abstract

The integration and advancement of digital reading and social platforms have catalyzed the vigorous development of social reading. While existing research has predominantly focused on the development models of social reading, user habits, and platform analysis, this study explores the significance of personality IP construction for social reading. Grounded in the knowledge influencer community within social reading, and taking the Bilibili UP host “The Naive and Sentimental Novelist” as a case study, this paper analyzes the dialogic consciousness manifested in its personality IP construction, the establishment of shared symbolic memory, and the emphasis on interactivity and playfulness in expression. The construction of the “Novelist” personality IP facilitates enhanced user reading pleasure, establishes an online interest-based community centered on the “Novelist,” and exerts leverage on the phenomenon of fragmented reading. Additionally, this paper investigates the challenges and issues present in the “Novelist’s” personality IP construction.

Full Text

The Construction of Personality IP Among Knowledge Influencers from the Perspective of Social Reading: A Case Study of Bilibili UP 主 “The Naive and Sentimental Novelist”

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Abstract: The integration and advancement of digital reading and social platforms have fueled the flourishing development of social reading. While existing research predominantly focuses on the developmental models of social reading,

user habits, and platform analysis, this study explores the significance of personality IP construction for social reading. Grounded in the community of knowledge influencers within social reading, we analyze Bilibili UP 主 “The Naive and Sentimental Novelist” as a case study, examining the dialogic consciousness embodied in his personality IP construction, the creation of shared symbolic memory, and the emphasis on interactive and engaging expression. The construction of the “Novelist” personality IP enhances user reading pleasure, establishes a network-based interest community centered on the “Novelist,” and challenges the phenomenon of fragmented reading. This paper also investigates existing problems in the “Novelist’s” personality IP construction.

Keywords: knowledge influencer; personality IP; social reading

The concept of *renshe* (人设, character design) originated in Japan’s anime industry, referring to the design of characters’ backgrounds, appearances, and personality traits. In recent years, the application of *renshe* has expanded from fictional characters in anime, games, films, and literature to self-impression management in the real world. Notable examples include celebrities cultivating public personas and short-video influencers shaping images such as “foodie,” “goddess,” or “artsy youth” on social platforms. When the subject behind the persona is not a real person, it can be collectively termed “personality IP.” By leveraging personality IP, communicators can better reach audiences, attract followers, and monetize traffic.

Communication scholar Wilbur Schramm argued that communication is among the most human of all skills [1]. Communication is not merely a tool for transmitting information and expressing viewpoints, but also a process of personality formation. In today’s era of information redundancy, users seek new focal points for attention, giving rise to emerging opinion leaders centered on individuals. Personality IP demonstrates immense value, where the “person” is not only a brand but also the content itself. Meanwhile, the deep development of digital technology has transformed people’s reading methods and approaches. The continuous advancement of social media and digital reading has propelled reading toward community-based and interactive pathways. Platforms such as Bilibili have witnessed the emergence of knowledge influencers who primarily share book recommendations and knowledge (hereinafter referred to as UP 主). Through sharing reading insights and recommending books, they promote reading dissemination and, to a certain extent, influence users’ reading behaviors, becoming important promoters of social reading and new practitioners of nationwide reading initiatives.

Grounded in the current perspective of social reading, this study examines Bilibili knowledge influencer “The Naive and Sentimental Novelist” to explore the necessity of personality communication and personality IP construction among knowledge influencers, providing insights for the healthy development of social reading and the continuous promotion of nationwide reading.

1. Research Status

The domestic definition of social reading was first authoritatively articulated by Zhong Xiong in his article *Social Reading: The Future of Reading*, in which he argued that social reading is reader-centered, a new form of reading that supports sharing, communication, and dissemination, characterized by user-generated content (UGC). This multi-dimensional interaction among readers can infinitely amplify reading value [2]. Cai Qi, in *Reading Transformation in the Mobile Internet Era: Rethinking the Phenomenon of Shallow Reading*, indicated that social reading is a form of active participation and interactive sharing, constituting part of audience participatory culture [3]. Through literature review, Wang Haiyan organized and summarized current social reading research, identifying its characteristics as reader-centric, personalized content recommendations, and emphasis on interactivity and social behavior during reading [4]. Ran Hua and Zhong Ya argued that in the digital era, the connotation of social reading has expanded from emphasizing reading's social nature to an interactive, socialized, and re-tribalized information dissemination model [5]. Meanwhile, some scholars have conducted specific research on particular platforms or media involved in social reading, such as studies on social media-based reading on Weibo and WeChat subscription accounts, or research on book-oriented reading platforms like WeChat Read and Douban Read that integrate social functions.

The academic community has yet to provide a clear definition of the concept of personality IP. However, research on personalized communication in China initially concentrated on television programs. Chen Hong argued that personalized communication refers to program hosts using their personal charisma—endowed with cultural taste, emotional expression, language cultivation, and unique personality—to shape their image, convey information, and communicate emotions, making programs more intimate and humane [6]. With the development and popularization of social media, research on personalized communication has expanded to new media fields such as WeChat and Weibo, primarily focusing on government and mainstream media. Shi Xiaoyue, using government Weibo accounts as an example, pointed out that personalized communication is a method where communicators, aiming to shorten the distance with audiences and appear more intimate and humane, convey information, communicate emotions, shape images, and thereby establish the personal charm of the communication subject [7]. Huang Cui summarized strategies for establishing an approachable image, emphasizing audience relevance and needs, and presenting three-dimensional information in university WeChat official accounts [8]. In recent years, short videos have become a new form in the government new media matrix, and research on personalized communication has gradually extended into this domain. Lang Jinsong and Shen Qingzhuo explored personalized communication in government short videos, arguing that such strategies enable equal, people-friendly, and engaging communication, enhancing user-centric thinking and improving the personalization and accessibility of government communication [9]. Meanwhile, as internet development has entered its second half,

high-density information has caused users to experience attention anxiety and crave new focal points, leading to the emergence of IP (Intellectual Property) expression as a new discourse system and business model.

Building upon existing research, this paper extends the concept of personality IP to the field of social reading, using Bilibili knowledge zone reading UP 主 “The Naive and Sentimental Novelist” as a case study to explore and deconstruct the process of his personality IP construction.

2. The Personality IP Constructed by UP 主 “The Naive and Sentimental Novelist”

Knowledge influencers, as a branch of internet celebrities, refer to individuals or groups in the new media context who possess professional knowledge in specific fields and have gained popularity through knowledge sharing via self-media channels [10]. Reading-focused knowledge influencers can be divided into three categories: first, advanced intellectuals with author identities such as Liang Wendao and Jiang Fangzhou; second, knowledge influencers with mature community operation models represented by Luo Zhenyu and Fan Deng; and third, online celebrities who have gained fame by sharing “book deconstruction” videos. Compared with the first two categories, this third group possesses more grassroots identities and maintains more intimate distances with users. Through detailed analysis, commentary, and explanation of books, they provide professional extensions and interpretations based on original works, helping readers understand and stimulating their reading interest. Moreover, the continuous emergence of reading-focused knowledge influencers reflects the arrival of the social reading era.

The subject of this discussion is a Bilibili knowledge zone UP 主 named “The Naive and Sentimental Novelist.” Since publishing his first “book deconstruction” video on December 18, 2019, the “Novelist” had accumulated 710,000 followers and over 2.6 million likes by November 2021. As a knowledge influencer in the reading domain, he shares commonalities with other knowledge influencers in disseminating knowledge and expressing viewpoints. However, the key reason for his ability to attract a large number of highly engaged followers within less than two years can be attributed to distinctive characteristics that set him apart. His videos typically run twenty to thirty minutes, with content that is not simply book introductions, speed-reading, or book reviews, but rather features a narrative-commentary style. He begins by constructing and narrating a book’s writing background and author’s biography, then expresses personal insights and in-depth exploration around specific viewpoints or plot points, and finally connects these with reality. Through what appears to be non-aggressive and unbiased rational discussion, he provides readers with greater thinking space and more freedom in perspective. His video rhythm is slow yet not monotonous, and his casual tone makes the entire expression more personalized and intimate. This format not only enriches video content but also serves as an important means of differentiation from other similar UP 主.

Through his unique video style, expressive rhetoric, and image characteristics, the “Novelist” has successfully built his personality IP and established deeper connections with users.

2.1 Dialogic Consciousness in Personality IP Construction

One recurring comment beneath the “Novelist’s” videos is: “Very relaxing, feels like I’m having a conversation with the UP 主.” Soviet literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin believed that dialogism is the essence of discourse, where authors and protagonists enjoy equal dialogic relationships, with protagonists possessing independent and complete consciousness not subordinate to the author’s unified consciousness [11]. The “Novelist’s” narrative approach does not employ strong rhetorical rhythms or concise professional terminology. Instead, he uses non-standard Mandarin and non-fluent language to deconstruct books from simple to complex. He explores books from dimensions such as historical background, literary schools, film adaptations, insider gossip, and personal experiences, resembling a heart-to-heart conversation with a friend. Simultaneously, his narrative includes “cold humor” segments and occasional friend-like teasing of users, creating a more intimate experience and greater space for independent thought. He has expressed hope that his works can possess absurd imagination, allowing space for imagination during viewing. Maintaining dialogic consciousness during communication constitutes an important part of the “Novelist’s” personality IP construction.

2.2 Shared Symbolic Memory in Personality IP Construction

Guo Qingguang argued that the first layer of shared meaning space is the common understanding of symbols used in information dissemination, i.e., shared recognition of the same symbols [12]. In communication with users, the “Novelist” has created unique meaningful symbols. For instance, he opens each video with “Hello there,” and when viewers open the danmu (bullet comments) at the beginning, they see a full screen of “Hello there” from users, constructing and reinforcing an exclusive opening interactive symbol between the “Novelist” and his audience. His humorous reference to himself as an “oily skin 主” and users’ designation of him as “Fourth Uncle” also construct a unique shared meaning space. Additionally, the “Novelist’s” intellectual appearance characteristics—such as his middle-parted hairstyle, black-framed glasses, “salt-system” fashion style—and the red sofa in each video scene serve as distinctive symbols that continuously reinforce users’ memory points, facilitating his personality IP construction.

2.3 Interaction and Fun in Personality IP Construction

In the new media environment, media empowerment of audiences has strengthened “audience-centric” consciousness. Equal emotional communication and interaction can greatly satisfy users’ psychological need for attention and emotional expression. Beyond conventional literary book deconstructions, the “Nov-

elist’s” video topics include numerous interactive videos with fans, such as deconstructing poems written by comment-section fans with witty analysis, “What Am I Thinking When I Type My Username” featuring exaggerated “over-interpretations” of fan IDs, and answering real-world questions from fans while expressing unique perspectives and values. Meanwhile, his imaginative and highly entertaining unconventional topics are also popular among fans, such as discussing “love as a mental illness” on Valentine’s Day, analyzing an anonymous book obtained by chance and revealing at the video’s end that he wrote it himself, combining cooking with book discussions, or creating *The Biography of Egg* with an egg as the protagonist. His topic selection is non-repetitive and novel. Additionally, his analysis of niche films and entertaining interpretations of directors, such as the video *Clumsily Imitating Woody Allen’s Chatterbox*, align well with his predominantly arts-oriented fan base. The “Novelist’s” imaginative interaction modes and content topics continuously strengthen fan stickiness and enrich his personality IP construction.

3. The Value of Personality IP Construction by UP 主 “The Naive and Sentimental Novelist”

3.1 Enhancing User Reading Pleasure

Compared with pure text-based reading, the “Novelist’s” “book deconstruction” videos reflect his unique personal charisma, providing users with multifaceted pleasurable reading experiences. Li Guihua and Fan Shu, based on grounded theory, identified six primary dimensions of reading experience: aesthetic experience, emotional experience, value experience, thinking experience, social experience, and immersive experience [13]. Analyzing the “Novelist’s” videos through these dimensions reveals that his selection of classic yet unconventional books and his artsy recording environment evoke users’ aesthetic experiences. His in-depth exploration and empathy for book content satisfy value and thinking experiences. Objective book reviews, post-reading discussions in comment sections, real-time danmu feedback, and Bilibili’s interactive button functions fulfill users’ social and immersive experiences. These experiences are difficult to achieve through pure text reading, thus gaining widespread user appreciation.

3.2 Forming a Network-Based Interest Community Centered on the “Novelist”

Luo Ziwen defined online interest-based communities as groups of people with sustained interest in specific persons, events, or objects who construct “interest-based” communities primarily through online information exchange, emotional sharing, and identity formation [14]. In the social reading era, users scattered worldwide can enter the same community through shared reading interests and algorithmic recommendation mechanisms. The “Novelist” recommends, explains, and reviews books based on his personal interests, creating a distinctive and charismatic personality IP that gathers users with similar reading prefer-

ences. Through shared communication, he forms a network-based interest community centered on himself. In his video comment sections, users discuss various dimensions of the videos, expressing agreement with commenters through likes and replies, providing emotional support through positive feedback to community members, and enhancing members' sense of belonging and self-identity. Simultaneously, community members spontaneously form "Novelist"-centered organizations on platforms like Weibo, such as super topics and group chats. The community's healthy operation and emotional identification can deepen fan stickiness, inspire the creation of higher-quality content, and foster a healthy community reading ecology.

3.3 Challenging the Phenomenon of Fragmented Reading

The accelerated pace of modern life makes it difficult for people to allocate large blocks of time for deep reading, causing micro-reading, shallow reading, and fragmented reading to gradually become mainstream. The existence of speed-reading videos like "Finish a Book in One Minute" exacerbates this evolution. The "Novelist's" videos, however, exhibit an "anti-fragmentation" tendency. Most videos run twenty to thirty minutes with a comfortable, relaxed narrative rhythm that leaves more space for reflection. Believing that "books only come alive after being read," the "Novelist's" deconstruction of literary works generally avoids full plot summaries. Instead, he selects specific viewpoints or details for in-depth exploration, sometimes providing detailed explanations of authors' lives and creative backgrounds to thoroughly prepare readers for reading, thereby greatly stimulating readers' interest and critical thinking.

4. Evaluation and Recommendations

With his unique creative model, the "Novelist" has constructed a distinctive personality IP, attracting numerous highly engaged fans and occupying an important position among reading-focused knowledge influencers. His dimensions for observing and understanding the world represent a non-contradictory fusion and collision of sensibility and rationality, idealism and reality. Through open perspectives, inclusive viewpoints, sensitive observations, and sharp empathy, he provides readers with maximum thinking space and freedom. However, several issues exist: unclear video categorization on his Bilibili homepage creates disconnections between thematically similar videos, hindering complete and widespread dissemination; while successful in shaping his personality IP, he lacks mature approaches to advancing its derivative value; and his excavation of deeper content during narration remains controversial.

4.1 Standardizing Homepage Video Categorization

Browsing the "Novelist's" Bilibili homepage reveals unclear video type classification. His videos can be roughly categorized into literary deconstruction, cooking, interactive content, and film analysis, but each video title lacks cat-

egorical identification. This may cause users to lose interest due to lack of specificity. Therefore, the “Novelist” should further standardize his homepage video classification. Since most videos involve literary deconstruction, he could create a “book deconstruction” video collection and interact with users through serialized playlists, which would also increase related videos’ view counts. A clear video classification structure benefits new user attraction.

4.2 Enhancing Commercial and Social Value of Personality IP

The “Novelist” has shaped a vivid personality IP through his unique charisma, but his development of derivative value remains insufficient. Currently possessing a substantial fan base and a network-based interest community, he should next explore more diversified profit models, such as developing community and fan economies. With Bilibili as his primary platform, he could aggregate fan groups through fan clubs or interest groups, commercializing and branding his personality IP to effectively enhance fan stickiness and loyalty, laying a foundation for community economy development. Enhancing the derivative value of personality IP and striving to build a community economy centered on personal IP constitutes an important step toward improving his communication power and influence. Simultaneously, the “Novelist’s” success reflects the vigorous development of contemporary social reading models. As a reading-focused knowledge influencer, he should also assume social responsibility for promoting reading and nationwide reading initiatives by participating in related online and offline activities. Enhancing the social value of personality IP is a crucial step in determining his long-term impact and ability to withstand the test of time.

4.3 Questioning “Depth”

Searching for evaluations and opinions on Bilibili UP 主 “The Naive and Sentimental Novelist” on platforms like Zhihu reveals that the most frequently mentioned negative discussion concerns the limited depth of his videos. Although his content better stimulates critical thinking compared to most reading-focused UP 主, he chooses to remain reticent on sensitive issues, value discussions, or more niche topics. Understandably, avoiding controversy by outputting mainstream perspectives represents a relatively safe approach. However, beyond breaking free from labels of mass or niche appeal, genuinely expressing more authentic ideas and truly interesting content requires the courage to believe that audiences can accept in-depth material. Content that can truly be called thought or valuable is often not mild and harmless; avoiding thinking and controversy can only result in storytelling and joking. Although we live in an entertainment-first era, some people still crave deeper content interpretation or book selection, and this group constitutes a significant portion of the “Novelist’s” fan base. Therefore, while maintaining appropriate entertainment value, his selection and analysis of some books should also be more in-depth, striving for depth within mainstream value frameworks.

Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky wrote in *The Brothers Karamazov*: “Love a

concrete person, not an abstract person.” The return to humanity and recognition of human concreteness is essential to personality IP discussion. Throughout today’s online landscape, an increasing number of opinion leaders are engaging in concrete, personalized communication, presenting their “backstage” to netizens, constructing personality IPs, and using human vitality and complexity to communicate in cyberspace. Through attention to “dialogic consciousness,” creation of shared symbols, and equal interaction with users, the “Novelist” has constructed his unique personality IP and formed a network-based interest community centered on himself. Meanwhile, issues concerning derivative value and impact after establishing his personality IP require further advancement. The successful construction of the “Novelist’s” personality IP reflects the arrival of the social reading era. This IP’s human power benefits the promotion of nationwide reading. More importantly, at the individual level, it can foster personal passion for reading and reverence for knowledge, enabling continuous learning that leads to recognition of one’s limitations and boundaries, preventing arrogance, and maintaining eternal awe for the unknown.

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