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## Commercialization Strategy of Personified IP: A Case Study of “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” on Bilibili (Postprint)

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### Abstract

In the context of the new media era, the public increasingly advocates for personalized creative expression, and content accounts with diverse styles have mushroomed across major platforms. However, creative accounts endowed with personified IP attributes still remain in the minority. This paper will take the Bilibili content creator “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” as a case study, and based on a review of existing research both domestically and internationally, analyze aspects including the definition and characteristics of IP, methodologies for constructing personified IP, and its commercialization potential, thereby fostering a more intuitive and lucid understanding of commercialization strategies for personified IP and proposing corresponding insights regarding its commercialization potential.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

**A Study on the Commercialization Strategies of Personified IP: A Case Study of “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” on Bilibili**  
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**Abstract:** In the new media era, the public increasingly values personalized creative expression, and content accounts with distinctive styles have emerged across major platforms like mushrooms after rain. However, accounts with personified IP attributes remain in the minority. This paper takes Bilibili content creator “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” as a case study. Based on a review of domestic and international research, it analyzes the definition and characteristics of IP, methodologies for building personified IP, and its commercialization

potential. The aim is to achieve a more intuitive and clear understanding of personified IP commercialization strategies and to propose corresponding insights regarding the commercial viability of personified IP.

**Keywords:** personified IP; commercialization strategy; “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law”

## 1.1 Domestic Research Status

Currently, academic circles have not established an authoritative and unified conceptual definition for personified communication. Most research approaches the topic from the perspectives of personified communication or personified marketing, and these studies are primarily associated with corporate branding. For instance, Chen Hong’s 2006 work “On the Personified Communication of Television Program Hosts” merely describes the advantages of the quasi-interpersonal characteristics of host personified communication, yet fails to conduct a systematic analysis from a theoretical perspective or to deeply explore its internal influencing factors. In Shen Hui’s 2009 study “Building Trust Between Media and Audience: The Interpersonal Communication Strategy of American TV Shopping Channel QVC,” it is pointed out that personified communication can establish trust between communicators and audiences, and that such trust relationships can maintain audience loyalty to television media and increase audience stickiness. In today’s booming e-commerce live streaming, most e-commerce businesses also leverage the characteristics of personified communication to gain fan trust and ultimately achieve sales goals. Yang Jinyao’s 2017 study “Research on the Personified Communication of Internet Anchors” mentions that corporate brands achieve product promotion goals through personified communication, which allows marketers to transform consumers’ understanding and perceptions of product or service characteristics into humanized features. In summary, current academic research primarily examines personified communication from the perspectives of communication subjects and content, exploring how to endow mass communication with “quasi-interpersonal” qualities through personification. These studies have, to a certain extent, provided a foundation and prerequisite for the current construction of personified IP and offered research references for building the commercial transformation of personified IP in the Internet era.

## 1.2 International Research Status

In *Being Digital*, Nicholas Negroponte points out that computers can achieve true personalization. Through the power of online social media, people can interact and communicate anytime and anywhere in a state of digital existence, showcasing their personality and emotions to the public, which also makes it easier for people to achieve psychological proximity and trust. Allport’s personality theory defines personality as “the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his

environment,” and later redefines this “dynamic organization” as a constantly changing organizational structure. In Richard Dyer’s 1979 book *Stars*, he emphasizes that beyond analyzing the characters portrayed by stars on screen, the performances of stars off-screen are equally worthy of attention. Before shaping a character, a star is first a real person with personified characteristics who is more authentic than the characters in films. Through various texts released by the media, the star’s image is constructed, and this image is further “authenticated” in various promotional activities, making the star’s “personified” features impossible to change clearly. Studying “personified communication” from the perspective of stars can provide a reference viewpoint for building personified IP. Based on the Western personality theory’s “Big Five” model, American scholar David Aaker proposed five dimensions for evaluating brand personality: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. These five dimensions are also valuable references for persona construction. Personalization is the most important factor in brand personification, as it can be directly expressed through consumer personality and represents the result of projecting human personality traits onto brands. With the continuous development of media technology, the public can ignore physical space-time limitations in open public expression spaces to conduct interpersonal communication and build relationships. Empowered by network media technology, people can more fully express their personality and emotions, thereby presenting themselves more completely. The expansion of communication channels not only more comprehensively displays the personality, style, behavior, and emotions of communication subjects but also further enhances credibility and authenticity.

## 2.1 Definition and Characteristics of IP

### (1) Definition of IP

Intelligence Property (“IP,” intellectual property) originated from the legal field and is frequently used as legal terminology, originally referring to the property rights that right holders enjoy over the fruits of their intellectual labor. Currently, as the context of online communication has gradually broadened, the definition of “IP,” which originally meant intellectual property, has extended to encompass more general content. Consequently, IP has acquired a new conceptual interpretation: a brand symbol based on content that features high recognizability, a certain audience base, strong penetration ability, long monetization cycles, and the capacity to occupy users’ minds. In short, IP refers to cultural content that can attract attention across multiple platforms and achieve commercial monetization with its own traffic. The definition of IP contains three important nodes. The first node is being content-based, including graphics, short videos, live streaming, or a physical product. The second node is occupying users’ minds, meaning that IP needs to leave an imprint in users’ minds—for example, mentioning Gree brings Dong Mingzhu to mind, and mentioning Xiaomi brings Lei Jun to mind. The third node is brand symbol, which leans more toward an image, such as well-known cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse and Pikachu.

## (2) Characteristics of IP

IP has three major characteristics: recognizability, resonance, and connectivity. First is recognizability, which requires IP to be different from other ordinary products and to possess its own unique qualities that allow it to stand out among numerous products, including many brand symbols. Second is resonance. In the current Internet context, the public's demand for emotional satisfaction is growing daily; therefore, creating content IP needs to emphasize resonance and accurately grasp users' emotional needs. For example, Luo Zhenyu, founder of Logical Thinking, uses a 60-second audio format to share content that inspires and provokes thought in his audience, thereby achieving resonance and attracting them to become fans and users of Logical Thinking. Third is connectivity. Good IP must possess commercial value, and IP will eventually become an efficient communication symbol—for instance, IP licensing, IP peripherals, IP products, IP co-branding, etc., all ultimately lead to the path of commercialization.

## 2.2 The Gradual Transformation of IP into Personified IP

The development direction of IP has evolved from productized IP and content IP to the current transformation toward personified IP. Productized IP primarily builds brand symbols around physical products, such as well-known cartoon images like Hello Kitty. Content IP requires deep cultivation in a specific field, expressing its philosophy through content to build a brand image. For example, Fan Deng Reading Club develops matrix fiction by deeply cultivating reading content. Personified IP goes a step further, referring to IP that gradually develops personified characteristics during content reproduction and operation, requiring further refinement of products and content. Currently, the construction of personified IP mainly includes self-media bloggers and entrepreneur founders.

In the current Internet context, from major portals to vertical websites, from social platforms to individual KOL (Key Opinion Leader) bloggers, the public increasingly focuses their attention on personalities. Therefore, various types of self-media bloggers and entrepreneur founders who want to express their personalities need to share their personal character traits with audiences, allowing them to depict and create a portrait based on this foundation. The ultimate ideal state is that audiences learn about a blogger because they follow a certain field, but ultimately stay and become fans because they identify with the blogger's insights on that field—this is also the construction process of a personified IP. The construction of personified IP, to a certain extent, also returns to the connection between people, rebuilding trust between people based on personality.

A teacher named Luo Xiang, known as “Bilibili's first criminal law internet celebrity” and “the Guo Degang of the political and legal world,” frequently topped trending searches by teaching criminal law and later joined Bilibili, becoming popular across the entire network. In 2020, Luo Xiang posted a video on Bilibili with the account “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” and gained mil-

lions of followers. Within just one year, Luo Xiang became the only content creator besides another Bilibili creator “Lao Fanqie” to reach ten million followers on Bilibili. Luo Xiang’s popularity is largely due to his exploration of his own personalized traits. Beyond his identity as a Bilibili content creator, Luo Xiang is also a professor at China University of Political Science and Law and director of the Criminal Justice Institute. This identity enhances Luo Xiang’s professionalism in users’ minds, thereby gaining fan trust and expanding his fan base. Simultaneously, Luo Xiang is also a criminal law exam tutoring teacher for an institution, another reason for his popularity. After his criminal law teaching courses were uploaded to the internet, they attracted widespread attention due to his humorous and engaging teaching style. Many students also uploaded course clips to Bilibili, laying the groundwork for the later explosion of Luo Xiang’s personal Bilibili account. This is also a successful example of Luo Xiang using his own personality traits to build a reputation through group communication, foreshadowing the successful construction of the “Luo Xiang” personified IP.

### 2.3 Reasons for Building Personified IP

With the emergence of film and television, mass communication entered the visual era. Simultaneously, personified communication infused with the communicator’s emotions and personality traits opened a new chapter in holographic, visual communication. As media technology continues to develop, the public has gradually realized that personified communication has outstanding advantages in gaining interpersonal trust and showcasing personalized charm, and academic research on personified communication has begun to enter the academic 视野. As mass media becomes increasingly popular among the public and media access thresholds lower, in addition to celebrities, more internet celebrities and industry representatives have begun to appear on screens, showcasing themselves to audiences in unique ways.

#### (1) The Need to Be Seen

Based on specific personified attributes, in this era that advocates personalized expression, content accounts with unique styles have emerged like mushrooms after rain. In the content explosion of the internet, building personified IP makes it easier to be seen by the traffic and users of billion-user platforms and easier to break through circles among numerous IPs. The video that brought Luo Xiang into the spotlight was part of a series of training courses. Because he used humorous and interesting language in his course explanations, he attracted the attention of many Bilibili content creators, who edited and reposted his content, creating an atmosphere on Bilibili of “Study law, watch Luo Xiang, I’m proud to have knowledge.” This, to a certain extent, pushed Luo Xiang into the public eye as someone to be noticed. Under this atmosphere, Luo Xiang was invited to join Bilibili on March 9, 2020, and within just three days, his personal Bilibili account exceeded one million followers. By November 2020, “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” had reached 19.836 million followers, released a total of 217 videos,

and received over 50 million likes, making it a top-tier personified IP.

### (2) Achieving Connectivity

On the one hand, compared with product IP and content IP, personified IP is more likely to convert public domain traffic into private domain traffic. After Luo Xiang joined Bilibili, his follower growth was extremely rapid. “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” is a personal user account oriented toward Bilibili’s entire platform, which to a certain extent converts traffic obtained from this public domain into private domain traffic. On the other hand, personified IP is more likely to establish cooperation with businesses, brands, and fans. After “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” became popular, in July 2020, Guomai Culture and Yunnan People’s Publishing House jointly published Luo Xiang’s new book *Criminal Law Lectures*. This book includes numerous cases cited in “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” videos, and the massive fan base of “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” also provided a broad sales market for *Criminal Law Lectures*, with most readers being Luo Xiang’s fans. Meanwhile, the advertising slogan on *Criminal Law Lectures*’s book band, “Bilibili’s top stream, 1 million followers in 1 day, sparking a 9 million person legal learning craze,” can to some extent attract the attention of readers who have not followed “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law.” By establishing cooperation with businesses, brands, and fans, the communication scope of “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” continues to expand.

### (3) Huge Development Potential

During communication activities, personified IP can incorporate content 植入 or advertising 带货, and even conduct live streaming 带货 after accumulating a certain level of popularity. This, to a certain extent, also makes it easier to accumulate intangible assets and gain connections. Before becoming a Bilibili content creator, Luo Xiang was a professor at China University of Political Science and Law and a tutoring teacher for the national unified legal professional qualification exam, already possessing a large fan base, which is why he was able to rapidly gain followers after joining Bilibili. Luo Xiang’s astonishing and humorous criminal law teaching videos were edited and reposted by multiple content creators, who became Luo Xiang’s earliest batch of fans, achieving the initial accumulation of “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” IP assets. Luo Xiang’s joining Bilibili is essentially the same as many content creators bringing their existing followers to a new platform. The reason he could become a Bilibili top creator is largely because he already had influence on other platforms. Luo Xiang is also very active on Weibo, a popular legal circle influencer with numerous fans. Additionally, the WeChat public account for “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” began operating in September 2017. Therefore, when Luo Xiang joined Bilibili, his existing fan base from other platforms also migrated to “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law,” and Bilibili’s social attributes attracted more non-law major users, causing Luo Xiang’s follower count to soar continuously.

### 3.1 Empathy: Sharing Warm Stories

In building personified IP, it is not only necessary to be unique but also to emphasize sharing warm experiences and stories to form emotional resonance with the audience. “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” covers a rich array of topics, including social hot events, social issues, reading comments, etc. For example, video topics such as “American College Students Outsourcing Papers? Is Hiring Someone to Do Homework Illegal?” and “Using Community Power to Reform Criminals, Is It Feasible?” are mostly news hot events or common social issues. While law popularization videos primarily focus on delivering legal knowledge, “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” emphasizes leveraging users’ curiosity psychology. When professional knowledge is cloaked in curiosity, it creates a specific context that better stimulates users’ desire to watch, allowing them to subtly accept legal knowledge in a relaxed and humorous atmosphere and use Bilibili’ s danmu (bullet comments) function to “complain,” achieving secondary communication. Although “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” is filled with entertainment and curiosity, Luo Xiang’ s entertainment has principles –its object is limited to “Zhang San” (a fictional character), and after the entertainment, he provides in-depth elaboration on the spirit of rule of law. For example, his reflections on true tolerance versus false tolerance in “Rule of Law Through Good Laws” and his call for respect for the vulnerable in “Is It Still Sexual Assault If You Start Dating After the Assault?” have all triggered strong emotional resonance among users.

### 3.2 Core: Upholding Principled Ideas

Building personified IP is not simply about emphasizing its uniqueness. When sharing personal views and experiences, one should also uphold a correct attitudinal philosophy to retain and attract more users. In “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” videos, Luo Xiang repeatedly emphasizes the need to “think from a human perspective” and “with simple justice.” Behind the humorous jokes of “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” lies rational legal spirit, and discussions involving “legal principles” and “human nature” are thought-provoking. Luo Xiang’ s interpretation of cases is always filled with humanistic care. For example, in the manure pit case, Luo Xiang mainly interpreted the concepts of justifiable defense and post-defense. Some people believe that the woman’ s first kick at the assailant constitutes justifiable defense, while subsequent kicks constitute post-defense. However, Luo Xiang’ s interpretation is: “We cannot be a Monday morning quarterback and judge from a post-event perspective.” This is also an attitude and philosophy that Luo Xiang consistently adheres to when interpreting various cases.

### 3.3 Truth: Delivering Valuable Content

The breakout of personified IP does not solely rely on “personality.” In this era of knowledge sharing, knowledge-based self-media accounts emerge endlessly,

but many are too highbrow to achieve wide dissemination, largely because they lack valuable and in-depth content and therefore struggle to retain users. One important reason why Luo Xiang could break through by teaching criminal law is his ability to view professional content from the public's perspective. By constructing the character "Zhang San, the Outlaw" (法外狂徒张三), Luo Xiang popularized criminal law in an easily understandable way while outputting some core values to viewers. This approach can quickly focus viewers' attention, deliver obscure criminal law knowledge to them, and enable them to better provide feedback on the videos.

## 4.1 Building a Vertical Domain Persona

### (1) Possessing Professionalism

According to Hovland's communication and persuasion research, the more authoritative the communicator's identity, the more easily the audience is persuaded. In the process of building personified IP, professional knowledge must be very solid. For example, the more authoritative a knowledge dissemination self-media operator is in their field, the more easily their disseminated knowledge is accepted by the public. As a content creator, Luo Xiang is a law professor at China University of Political Science and Law, possessing authority in the legal field, so his content has high credibility in fans' minds. Therefore, in building personified IP, the IP itself needs to have a reserve of professional knowledge, determine operational content based on its own academic background, and ensure the accuracy of disseminated content to enhance its persuasiveness.

### (2) Being Insightful

According to uses and gratifications theory, users often use media to obtain certain needs and gratifications, and their contact with media content is selective. Therefore, in building personified IP, insight is needed to stand out among homogeneous content. Personified IP operators should know their fan 画像 like the back of their hand, understanding their gender, age, hobbies, and common characteristics, and speak in ways they like rather than talking to themselves. "Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law" delivers content user-centrally through topics that appeal to youth groups and discussions of various social hot issues. In terms of content encoding characteristics, first, "Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law" strongly highlights personal branding in form, gradually integrating into Bilibili's social culture. Second, in content, "Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law" primarily uses oral narration with diverse themes, integrating legal knowledge and concepts into hot cases and famous quotes, combining narration and commentary with appropriate detail, and explaining from the user's standpoint using everyday language. Finally, in encoding characteristics, the encoding method emphasizes both highlighting personal features and striving to fit platform attributes.

### (3) Enhancing Interactivity

Goffman mentions in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* that people always present themselves through behavior to create impressions, and various language symbols or their substitutes, as obvious and given expressions, are rel-

actively easy for communication actors to control. When building their unique persona, personified IP also needs the ability to convey emotional resonance to strengthen interaction with users. “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” videos not only include analysis and explanations of various cases but also address common issues that users care about, primarily using the form of reading comments to achieve interaction with fans. Simultaneously, through Bilibili’s unique interactive mechanism, viewers can participate in interaction while watching videos by guessing answers before they are revealed. This approach can strengthen viewers’ impression of videos and enhance their stickiness to the IP.

#### **(4) Strengthening Communication Power**

Compared with product IP and content IP, personified IP has tremendous communication potential. Taking knowledge dissemination as an example, dry and boring knowledge is difficult to accept, especially when the communicator’s style is rigid and featureless, making it even harder to attract users’ attention. Therefore, when conducting knowledge-based communication, it is necessary to cloak it in appropriate packaging, using humorous and easily acceptable methods to achieve a “subtle” communication effect, thereby enhancing communication power. From the public’s perspective, people normally have little contact with criminal law and have impressions of it as “rigid” and “professional.” Especially on video platforms, people rarely pay attention to this area, and videos about criminal law shared by some video authors also have certain loopholes. Through his years of teaching experience and professionalism in this field, Luo Xiang provided professional and unique analysis of many cases, giving people a professional understanding of criminal law to a certain extent.

## **4.2 Monetization Methods for Personified IP**

### **(1) Live Streaming Monetization Through Platforms**

With the continuous development of media technology, live streaming has become a powerful way for the public to share life, transmit information, and even obtain profits. Therefore, after personified IP obtains a certain level of traffic attention on a platform, it can leverage platform advantages for live streaming to achieve monetization. Currently, Bilibili’s built-in like, share, and coin functions allow Luo Xiang to monetize the coins he obtains on Bilibili, and Bilibili also has a reward mechanism, so Luo Xiang can rely on video playback volume to obtain Bilibili rewards. Additionally, Luo Xiang is not only a Bilibili content creator but also a contracted anchor with Bilibili, so live streaming on Bilibili becomes a job that Luo Xiang must complete, and each time he live streams, he receives large amounts of fan donations. Different from other live streaming platforms, Bilibili’s live streaming rooms have a feature that allows the host to set up looping broadcasts without closing the room when they leave, so fans can enter the live streaming room to donate at any time, which to a certain extent has become one of the monetization pathways for the “Luo Xiang” personified IP.

### **(2) Video-Based Product Promotion Using Popularity**

Conducting video-based product promotion is also a monetization pathway for personified IP. Personified IP with high popularity can rely on existing fan bases to achieve monetization through video 带货. Unlike common advertising 带货 forms, the products promoted in “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” are all Luo Xiang’ s own books, online courses, etc. Additionally, on Bilibili, one can upload not only self-shot videos but also online courses. As long as these courses are placed on the Bilibili personal homepage, users can see them when entering the homepage, so Luo Xiang can rely on this method to monetize at any time.

### (3) Obtaining Compensation by Participating in Commercial Activities

Different from the more conventional monetization methods mentioned above, after personified IP becomes popular through its unique characteristics, it will be favored by more brands and program groups, invited to attend various events and participate in various program recordings to more comprehensively and multi-dimensionally showcase the IP’ s characteristics. With his super high popularity on Bilibili, Luo Xiang can attend some events to achieve monetization. In 2020, Luo Xiang became Bilibili’ s most popular content creator of the year. Coupled with the fact that “Luo Xiang Talks Criminal Law” videos transmit positive energy content with high dissemination, under the blessing of fame, Luo Xiang participated in the recording of numerous programs. In addition to events like Bilibili’ s 11th Anniversary Speech, he also participated in variety shows like *Rock & Roast* and other programs. The compensation obtained from attending events is also an important monetization pathway for the “Luo Xiang” personified IP.

The construction of personified IP is actually the reverse extraction of interpersonal relationships, which essentially helps reduce communication costs between people. In the process of building personified IP, one should adhere to objective and authentic concepts to fully realize its commercial transformation value. Overall, the reason why Luo Xiang could become Bilibili’ s most popular content creator of the year and successfully break through circles is not only due to his personal charm and high-quality content as key elements but also because it expresses that in this era of entertainment 至死, what people hope to see in video content is still knowledge and truth. Content is the mapping of thought, operation is the detail of treating “people,” and IP is a distinguishing symbol. In fields with relatively transparent competition and thresholds, it is necessary to break free from homogeneous dilemmas. This requires personified IP construction to achieve more innovative and deeper content to win unexpectedly and ultimately complete commercial monetization.

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