The Internet Has Become a New Engine of Cultural Consumption in China

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Abstract

The vigorous development of China's Internet culture industry has profoundly changed the internal structure of cultural industry and the habits of people's cultural consumption. With the frequent international cultural exchanges, the collision and integration of different cultures often have an impact on the cultural products and services of the country. How to stick to the core of their own culture and realize the expansion and promotion of culture self-confidence in the wave of Internet communication is an issue that every country needs to face and think about. This paper aims at clarifying the necessity of developing Internet culture industry in China and illustrating the new trend and characteristics of Internet culture consumption. This paper mainly adopts cases from different industries to analysis in order to predict the direction of the industry and put forward the proposals. Only deeply analyze the present situation of China's Internet industry and accurate grasp of the characteristics of the Chinese Internet culture consumption, we are able to cultivate, guide, promote and manage the endogenous power of economic and social development, and finally make suggestions on the key points of government governance.

Keywords

China's Internet culture industry, cultural consumption, cultural self-confidence, the development trend, policy suggestions

Introduction

1. The development of China's Internet culture industry and its important status

The development of China's cultural industry includes three levels. Firstly, cultural tourism and cultural performance played an important role in the early stage of cultural industry development; Secondly, after the reform of the cultural system, the market-oriented development of public institutions represented by presses and televisions; Thirdly, the changes brought by the new trend of high technology have played a huge role in driving the traditional culture industry. Nowadays, the Internet is profoundly changing the business state of traditional culture industry and breeding a new cultural ecology. According to the data, the economic revenue of China's Internet users reached 1.8 trillion yuan in 2017, which is up about 25% from the year before. While the added value of the cultural information transmission service in 2017 reached 800 billion yuan, an increase of 34.6% over the previous year. Therefore, the Internet culture content industry has great potential and good prospects.

2. Cultural consumption is an endogenous driving force for social and economic development

Consumption is the key link of social reproduction and the important area of people's economic activities and social life.

First of all, the consumption has contributed to China's economic growth. We all known that consumption, investment and export are the three drivers of economic development. Among them, investment has contributed a lot to economic growth, but the negative effects of excessive investment are also great. In recent years, the driving force of investment on the economy is significantly decreased. Therefore, the central government has been saying that investment should be reduced. Export has been driving the development of Chinese economy, but we have seen that the upside space boost by export will also be greatly compressed since the trade friction between China and the United States. In fact, the most promising of the three factors is consumption, and so it is. The contribution of consumption to China's economy increased from 35.4% in 2004 to 64.6% in 2017.

Secondly, the cultural consumption has become an important manifestation of China's consumption upgrading. With the upgrading of cultural consumption, China's cultural Internet industry has developed rapidly and become a powerful dynamic force for the progress of China's cultural industry. In recent years, with the continuous improvement of the income level of the residents and the change of the consumption concept, the consumption structure has been continuously improved, especially the amazing pace of cultural product renewal. The fast pace, high quality and peopleoriented form and content are deeply loved by the young people, and the cultural consumption will continue to maintain a high growth momentum.

3. Promoting Internet cultural consumption is a new way to achieve cultural confidence

Cultural confidence is not only related to the prosperity of our own culture, but also determines the future and destiny of a country and a nation. In the 19th Communist Party of China National Congress, general secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: "strengthen cultural confidence, so as to promote the prosperity of socialist culture" thought from a strategically position. To be specific, the government needs to uphold the principle of cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries, adhere to the principle of "self-reliance" and "inclusiveness", and promote the building of international communication capacity. By telling a good Chinese cultural story and showing a real, three-dimensional and comprehensive China, we can improve the country's cultural soft power. The international communication of Chinese culture confidence is a bridge and link for the establishment of cultural ecological system, which can bring traditional culture to life and move from the elite level to the general public. Nowadays, simple low-level cultural products cannot meet the needs of the people for a better life. Only by continuously prospering cultural production can we enhance cultural confidence in the creation and innovation of contemporary culture and promote the Chinese culture "going-out" better. In this process, the cultivation of cultural consumption demand has become the driving force to boost domestic demand and to expand overseas market, so as to achieve the goal of international communication of Chinese culture and continuous improvement of international image.

Hypothesis

The Internet culture industry is an important area for China's future development;
Internet cultural consumption is the main driving force of economic and social development;

3. The realization of cultural confidence requires the improvement of Internet cultural consumption ability.

The current situation of China's Internet ecology

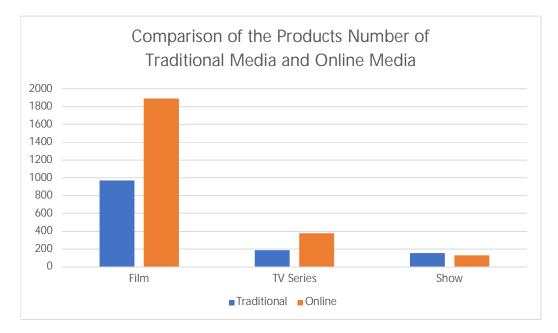
1. The Internet gathers consumers

China has a large population of Internet users and a large network of consumers.

At present, the number of Internet users is 750 million, and the number of mobile Internet users is 724 million, which accounts for 1/3 of the total number of Internet users in the world. At the same time, China has the largest Internet information transmission platform. According to statistics, China has 4.82 million websites, 28 million WeChat public account and 18 million apps. Undoubtedly, these platforms are also the most active cultural consumption platforms.

The Internet culture content industry is expanding in various industries. The users of online news, video, games, literature, music have more than 300 million people and the usage rate are over 45%. Online games have been growing rapidly from 2016 to 2017. In the first 11 months of 2017, the revenue of online game reached 134.1 billion yuan, up 22.1 percent year on year; The market scale of online literature has been expanding, and the market size of it has increased greatly from 2011 to 2017; According to statistics, from January to September in 2017, five of the top 10 TV series are adapted from online novels. Such as the popular TV series named Nirvana in Fire is adapted from an online novel; Online video users are also growing rapidly. We have seen that through the cultivation and promotion, online video is making a comprehensive comparison and even exceeding the traditional film and television products. The following figures confirm the above conclusions. The number of traditional film is 970, and the number of online film reaches 1892; the number of TV series released by channel is 186, while the number of network drama is 379; the number of shows on the national satellite TV is 157, while the number of online is 131. As shown in following figure.

Table 1 Comparison of the Products Number of Traditional Media and Online Media



In the process of Chinese culture going-out, the online culture content industry has become one of the most successful cultural categories. Currently, WeChat has 230 million overseas users, and its influence is gradually expanding. The online game *King of Glory* earned \$1.9 billion in 2017 which is ranking first in the world, and in many countries the user scale is among the largest. Online literature has a lot of influence overseas. For example, the Chinese fantasy novel platform Wuxia World has four million active readers monthly and 400,000 visitors a day. Readers are distributed in more than 100 countries and regions in the world, and a third of them are in North America.

2. The Internet has spawned an industrial ecosystem

Internet giants, such as Tencent and Alibaba, have built a cross-culture industry chain that traditional media cannot match, and they are nurtured a huge ecological rainforest for interactive entertainment. This is a complex ecological chain with IP as the core and different industries interwoven but mutually distinguishable.

It is worth mentioning that Witmart as the world's largest network crowdsourcing service trading platform is unique in numerous network service enterprises. This is a super creative platform aimed at combining people with creative design skills with those who want to get creative design products and services, and then facilitating the completion of transactions on the platform. At present, there are more than 600 kinds of online service categories and more than 20,000 daily requests post on the Witmart. The annual turnover of the company reaches 31 billion yuan, and the website is

valued at over 10 billion yuan. There are three outstanding characteristics of Witmart. Firstly, the Internet as a platform for entrepreneurship and trading has solved the problem of high rents for start-ups in big cities. Secondly, the voluntary combination transaction has alleviated the pressure of cultivating talents. Thirdly, to provide a full range of operation services for the creative company, in order to avoid enterprise registration, trademark design, invoicing and other issues.

3. The Internet promotes the effectiveness of public cultural services

The problem of low efficiency of public cultural service projects has been criticized, and the Internet has opened a new path for improving the efficiency of public cultural services. With the help of the Internet platform for the public, the company called Colorful Sports in Zhuzhou, Hunan created a platform to provide all aspects of the public cultural information service in local. It has been effectively increasing the service efficiency of the cultural service facilities, thus provides the convenience for citizens. The Dunhuang Academy has built Digital Dunhuang to provide all-round digital services to tourists, including the establishment of website, the provision of iPad, online and offline interaction, etc. Additionally, some live platform, such as Tencent, Sina, Douyu, Huajiao, Momo, KK, through broadcasting the skills of intangible cultural heritages and the craftsmanship of the Chinese traditional culture have aroused the attention of users and received a good result. For example, the "Inheritance and New - Intangible Cultural Heritage Tour" was broadcasted on live with a total of 7 million hits in June 2017.

Characteristics of cultural consumption

Firstly, the cultural consumption has the characteristic of "stickiness" which is different from material demand. It is generally believed that material needs are rigid while spiritual and cultural needs are elastic. However, once the cultural demand is generated, it will form a continuous "sticky" habit effect, such as what people often say about opera fans, Internet addiction, and fans. This shows that cultural consumption demand, as a higher spiritual need of people, is closely related to education and art edification. Therefore, it needs to be cultivated and guided.

Secondly, the cultural consumption has the characteristics of multi-level and diversified "preference consumption". Due to differences in education degree, economic and social conditions, family background and occupation, cultural

consumption varies from person to person. Elite culture, popular culture and entertainment culture are not only interrelated but also different. Such as, Beijing culture is straightforward, while the Shanghai culture is exquisite; Urban culture is fashion, while rural culture is primitive simplicity. Cultural style and consumption preference are obviously different, forming the respective characteristics of different groups, different regions and different occupations. Therefore, to promote the policy design of cultural consumption demand, government must take full account of these differences and formulate targeted policy measures.

Thirdly, the cultural consumption is characterized by the principle of supply creates demand. As the spiritual and cultural needs of people, cultural consumption is different from the material demands which is immediacy and clarity. Otherwise it is often in a status which is latent, fuzzy and unconscious. Therefore, it is necessary to stimulate people's desire for new products and services through creative and production. Take the Internet for example, before it emerges people just feel the traditional writing, making phone calls as the communication methods are a little bit inconvenient, but nobody clears what kind of cultural products can solve the problem. Until the invention of new technology and the emergence of the Internet, they instantly activate the potential demand of the people in this area, and make the Internet become the mainstream products which are leading the cultural consumption, and in a short span of few years has created a huge market.

Finally, the cultural consumption has the function of experience, content dissemination and value orientation, which makes it have obvious spillover effect and external characteristics. Elegant cultural products and services can provide positive energy for the society through the experience and communication of consumers, which is a kind of low-carbon and green consumption. However, vulgar, kitsch and profit-seeking cultural products and services often pollute the social and cultural environment through consumer behaviors. This shows that neither cultural production nor cultural consumption should be subject to the free regulation of the market, but the appropriate intervention and guidance from the government and the society are needed.

Three trends of Internet culture consumption in China

Currently, China Internet culture consumption presents the following three

trends.

1. The era of knowledge payment is coming strongly

In 2016, it was called "China knowledge payment year", and social platforms launched various online knowledge and entertainment payment products, which attracted many users and became an important mode of profit. In 2017, the market size of China's knowledge payment market is 4.91 billion yuan. With the formation of knowledge paying habit, the number of people willing to pay for high-quality knowledge service will grow continuously. It is estimated that the industry will reach 23.5 billion yuan by 2020.

From the industry map of China's online knowledge payment in 2018, it can be seen that the online knowledge payment industry ecosystem is composed of content maker, platform manager, intermediary agency, communication channel and user. The core of knowledge payment is content acquisition and efficiency. By introducing knowledge products on social, information or independent platforms, the content maker intend to accumulate popularity and then make knowledge converted into cash. The marketing of content is inseparable from the operation of the platform. The knowledge payment platform continuously expands the income scale by charging consumers. At the same time, the market forces have also promoted the iteration of its production and service. The cooperation between the platform and the content maker is the core of the online knowledge payment industry ecology. Part of the platform will establish in-depth cooperation with the invited top content maker to provide full process services from topic selection to distribution; There are also some platforms provide different levels of services in different stages of development, such as user diversion, platform subsidies and content guidance and investment incubation. Platform can help content to make production more efficiently and strengthen the chain and the relationship between maker and user. Therefore, with further enhancement of correlation, maker and user will maintain the operation of the entire ecosystem spontaneously.

2. Socialization of cultural consumption

As the "online generation" become the backbone of the Internet market, mobile social networks, such as WeChat, which are dominated by acquaintances are turning to content-centric media platforms to expand relationships and entertainment spending. At the same time, mobile social networks have also become more personalized, vertical and segmented, and have started developing towards strangers. Mobile game, for example, has become a major segment of the mobile social market for strangers in China. WeChat, Weibo, QQ and other social tools have a large user base, but the entertainment and leisure functions are not strong. As a result, young people are increasingly using social media, such as live streaming, video, games for cultural consumption. Statistics show that about a third of post-95s prefer live streaming and video social platforms, compared with 12% and 8% of post-90s and post-80s generation respectively. At the same time, post-90s consumers pay more attention to their own attributes and are willing to express themselves. Thus, they often form content social circle with specific interests and contents.

In terms of content type social segmentation, there are generally fields of work, sports, marriage, interest, learning, information, entertainment and leisure, etc. Through text, pictures, audio, video, games, live broadcast and other information carriers and channels, users can use the form of bullet screen, real-time chat and instant comment to carry out cultural consumption. Relying on the platform and channel, many mobile phone users will produce their own original content and is willing to share more widely. This will in turn make the platform richer and take the social interactions more significantly. The consulting data from iResearch showed that nearly 90% of Internet users are willing to share personal creative content, 50.8% of them chose to build their personal and public accounts to share information, 37.3% of them are willing to share emotion through radio, broadcast, etc.

3. Communalization of cultural consumption

Fan communalization is an outstanding representation of Internet economy. Under the influence of Internet and new media, fan economy and attention economy become a new kind of cultural and economic model, and gradually develop its unique form -- community economy. The community is often a subculture community centered on people with special emotional and social relations. Community members share ideas, fun, experience, opinions, and behaviors among themselves. Fans usually gathered by the common interests or the highly viscous content. They establish emotional connection, information communication and value identification through information sharing, content production, content consumption and content dissemination in social media. The huge commercial value and social influence hidden behind the fan community has become a prominent feature of Internet culture consumption.

Three key points of sticking to the cultural confidence in the process of Internet cultural consumption

No culture can be isolated from the rest of the world, and it needs to learn from other cultures. The attitude towards foreign cultures tests a country's cultural selfconfidence. The more confident a country is, the more positive it will be in dealing with foreign cultures, and the more it will be able to enrich through its interactions with foreign cultures. It is an inevitable requirement for the prosperity of Chinese culture to absorb and integrate all outstanding foreign cultural achievements.

1. Be open and inclusive

The world has diversified cultures and different strengths. Every country's culture contributes to world civilization in its own way and is the common spiritual wealth of mankind. Only by absorbing the essence of hundreds of countries and integrating the advantages of various cultures can we promote the development of our own culture; On the contrary, if we close ourselves off and reject foreign countries, we will lose the vitality of development and even die out. From the point of view of Chinese culture itself, it is a kind of culture jointly created by multiple nationalities and regions and integrated with pluralism. In the long history, openness and inclusiveness have always been the mainstream of the spread of Chinese culture abroad. For example, the silk road is a symbol of cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries. History has proved that openness and inclusiveness will not weaken the outstanding core of Chinese culture but will continue to enrich and expand it through learning from others. In the context of the globalization of consumption and the continuous expansion of China's external communication, we should treat foreign cultures with a broad vision and mind. We should not only take an active part in world cultural dialogue and exchanges, but also boldly absorb and draw on all the useful experiences and outstanding achievements that are conducive to the transformation and upgrading of Internet cultural consumption.

2. Maintaining a dialectical attitude of choice

Openness and inclusiveness are not blind worship of the outside world and learning from others is not copying from others. Every culture of a country has its soil for survival and conditions for its functioning. Without certain historical conditions and social environment, the value and function of culture will inevitably change. At the same time, foreign cultures are also diverse and mixed. This requires that we must analyze, compare and identify the foreign cultural productions and services, then make a dialectical choice and follow the rules. Nowadays, western culture, based on its economic and technological strength, occupies a strong position in the world. Although western ideology and culture have its reasonable factors, which have a positive effect on human development and progress, there are also negative and corrupt contents. Therefore, an attitude of "total rejection" or "total acceptance" of western culture is undesirable.

3. Taking the capability of transformation and reconstruction

Absorbing and learning from foreign cultures should not be a simple "physical grafting", but an organic "chemical reaction", with the purpose of transforming and enriching our own culture products. One of the great characteristics of Chinese culture is its strong ability to integrate foreign cultures. Many foreign cultures have realized organic integration with Chinese culture after their introduction. To absorb foreign culture, it is important to focus on ourselves and use it for our own benefits. Firstly, we should combine the excellent foreign culture with Chinese traditional culture, integrate the elements of Chinese culture, and brand Chinese culture; Secondly, we should be combined with China's actual needs to solve China's practical problems and serve people's production and living practices; Thirdly, we should combine foreign cultures with the acceptance habits of the Chinese people and create expressions that suit the way of thinking and aesthetic taste of the Chinese people.

Discussion: The ways government manage China's Internet cultural consumption

Vigorously promoting Internet culture content industry and Internet culture consumption is an important part of the national development strategy of the 13th Five-Year Plan. In December 2016, the state council issued the "13th FYP" National Strategic Emerging Industry Plan. In the file, the digital creative industry with the core of Internet is one of the five strategic emerging industries supported by the state. In January 2017, the national development and reform commission (NDRC) released the Catalogue of Key Products and Services for Strategic Emerging Industries (2016 edition), which has further clarified the specific category of digital creative industry. In August 2017, the state council issued a document entitled Guidance on the Further Expansion and Upgrading of the Potential for the Consumption of Domestic Demand ([2017] No. 40). In this file, the government take the digital creative content and service in the field of cultural entertainment into the key areas of future development of China's consumptions. At the same time, the government put forward three key tasks, that is improving the information consumption supply level, expanding the coverage of information consumption and optimizing the information development environment. These show that Internet consumption is the next focus area to expand consumption.

In my opinion, in order to promote the consumption of Internet culture and stimulate the cultural self-confidence, we should grasp the three key points.

1. Promoting the consumption of Internet culture must deepen the supplyfront structural reform

This reform needs to focus on two major problems: first, we should have highquality online cultural products. Second, we should establish a dynamic mechanism to support the production and consumption of online cultural products. If there has no good online cultural products, it is difficult to support the consumption; and if there has no good mechanism, it is difficult to produce good products either.

2. Taking an objective view of the subculture based on the Internet

Recently, the media has made a series of exposure to the unhealthy content, and this behavior is necessary and also conducive to the healthy development of live. While exposing the unhealthy content, we should also encourage and support the active and healthy content and programs of emerging social media. Because the basic characteristics of the subculture is vitality. In a sense, the new social media based on the Internet is the most attractive new information transmission platform, and also reflects new cultural consumption patterns.

To sum up, we should recognize the following three ideas. Firstly, historically, cultures have always been diversified and subcultures exist objectively; Secondly, subculture is different from mainstream culture, but it does not mean that it would antagonize mainstream culture; In additional, we should abandon vulgar content in subculture and guide the healthy development of subculture; In the end, we should actively absorb the beneficial elements of subculture and enrich the mainstream culture. All things are changeable, so mainstream culture is not static. Therefore, only the mainstream culture constantly absorbing the beneficial part, the mainstream

culture can maintain vitality.

3. Implement the spirit of "release, management and service" and stimulate market vitality

To expand the consumption of Internet culture, the core is to have high-quality products. While, high-quality products mainly rely on Internet culture enterprises to create. Therefore, it is a guarantee to create a good environment for Internet culture enterprises to create high-quality cultural products. It is necessary to implement the spirit of "release, management and service". That is, the government should streamline functions and administrations, delegate powers and improve regulations.

Concrete plans are the following four ways. Firstly, the departments should lower the threshold of market entry, and attract as many online cultural enterprises as possible to participate in the invention and creation of cultural products. Secondly, government department should step up mid- and post-project regulation supervision and reduce administrative approval. Thirdly, officer ought to set a benchmark, so that they can support and encourage high-quality online cultural programs and products, and then guide the production and consumption of them. Finally, managers make the clear bottom line and create a healthy environment for Internet culture consumption.

4. Promoting Internet cultural consumption and making Chinese culture going-out globally

Internet culture products going-out means to push foreign culture market system construction, expand the international space of the Chinese culture, promote Chinese and foreign cultural exchanges and cooperation, thereby giving impetus to the depth of cultural trade. Especially in the framework of One Belt and One Road, to enhance the exchange of cultural products and services with countries along the routes. To promote the "going global" of Chinese culture, country should expand the demand of Internet cultural consumption from an international perspective and expand the outward space of the development of cultural industry. In turn, it nurtures and leads the domestic market, expands the influence on the international market, and enhances the soft power of Chinese culture.

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