
Original Research Article

The role of English-language social media influencers in the cross-cultural dissemination of Chinese traditional festivals

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Abstract: With the deepening of globalization, cross-cultural communication has become a crucial avenue for promoting exchanges and understanding among different cultures. Chinese traditional festivals, as an integral part of Chinese culture, carry rich cultural connotations and national spirit. English social media influencers, with their extensive audience base and powerful communication capabilities, play a unique and pivotal role in cross-cultural communication of Chinese traditional festivals. This article aims to explore the specific roles of English social media influencers in cross-cultural communication of Chinese traditional festivals, analyze the challenges they face, and propose corresponding strategic recommendations to better promote the international dissemination of Chinese traditional festival culture.

Keywords: English social media influencers; cross-cultural communication; Chinese traditional festivals

I. Introduction

In today's digital age, social media has become a vital platform for information dissemination and cultural exchange. Cultures from different countries and regions can transcend geographical boundaries through social media, achieving wider dissemination and sharing. Chinese traditional festivals, as treasures of Chinese culture, embody rich philosophical thoughts, moral concepts, and aesthetic tastes, serving as important windows for understanding Chinese culture. However, due to cultural differences, language barriers, and other factors, the international dissemination of Chinese traditional festivals has not been ideal. English social media influencers, as key agents in cross-cultural communication, can present Chinese traditional festival culture to a global audience in a vivid and engaging manner using English as a medium, which is of great significance for enhancing the international influence of Chinese traditional festivals.

2. The specific roles of English social media influencers in cross-cultural communication of Chinese traditional festivals

2.1. Expanding dissemination scope and enhancing cultural visibility

English is a global lingua franca and holds a significant position in international communication. English social media influencers possess a large international fan base, and their social media accounts reach users worldwide. By posting content related to Chinese traditional festivals on social media, such as festival origins, traditional customs, and specialty foods, English social media influencers can disseminate Chinese traditional festival culture to a broader international audience, enhancing their visibility and recognition on the global stage. For example, some well-known English beauty bloggers posted videos about Chinese New Year makeup during the Spring Festival, incorporating Spring Festival elements into creative makeup designs, which attracted significant attention and discussion from international fans, allowing more people to learn about the unique charm of the Chinese Spring Festival.

2.2. Promoting cultural understanding and eliminating cultural barriers

Cultural differences are a significant barrier in cross-cultural communication. People from different cultural backgrounds may have vastly different understandings and perceptions of the same thing. English social media

influencers can help international audiences better grasp the cultural connotations and values behind China's traditional festivals through vivid storytelling, case analysis, and interactive exchanges. They can compare Chinese festivals with Western ones to identify similarities and differences, guiding international audiences to recognize and understand China's traditional culture from familiar perspectives. For example, when introducing the Mid-Autumn Festival, English social media influencers can draw parallels with the Western Thanksgiving, emphasizing the reunion theme and spirit of gratitude of the Mid-Autumn Festival, making it easier for international audiences to resonate, thereby eliminating cultural barriers and enhancing their sense of identity with Chinese culture.

2.3. Stimulating cultural interest and promoting cultural participation

English social media influencers wield significant influence and persuasion. By posting engaging and attractive content, they can stimulate international audiences' interest and curiosity in Chinese traditional festivals. Once international audiences develop an interest in Chinese traditional festivals, they may actively seek more information and even participate in the celebration of these festivals. For example, some English travel bloggers shared their experiences of celebrating the Spring Festival in China on social media, including visiting temples, having New Year's Eve dinners, and setting off firecrackers. These vivid experiences filled international fans with longing for the Chinese Spring Festival, with many expressing a desire to personally experience the atmosphere of the festival in China. Additionally, English social media influencers can organize online activities, such as photography contests with Spring Festival themes or tutorials on handicraft making, encouraging international audiences to participate and further promoting cultural participation and exchange.

2.4. Shaping cultural image and enhancing cultural soft power

Cultural image is a comprehensive reflection of a country or nation's culture on the international stage. English social media influencers can shape a positive image of Chinese traditional festivals and enhance China's cultural soft power through carefully planned content and proactive publicity during the cross-cultural communication process. They can highlight the uniqueness, inclusiveness, and innovation of Chinese traditional festivals, showcasing the charm and vitality of traditional Chinese culture. For instance, when introducing Qingming Festival, English social media influencers can emphasize that it is not only a festival for ancestor worship but also a time for people to connect with nature and enjoy spring outings, demonstrating the respect and love for life and nature in traditional Chinese culture. Through this approach, international audiences can develop a positive and favorable impression of traditional Chinese culture, enhancing its attractiveness and influence.

3. Challenges faced by English social media influencers in cross-cultural communication of Chinese traditional festivals

3.1. Understanding barriers caused by cultural differences

There are significant differences between Chinese traditional festival culture and Western culture, and some customs and concepts of Chinese traditional festivals may be difficult for international audiences to understand. For example, the customs of dragon boat racing and eating zongzi during the Dragon Boat Festival in China embody profound cultural connotations related to Qu Yuan's sacrifice and patriotism. For international audiences unfamiliar with Chinese history and culture, it is challenging to comprehend the significance of these customs. English social media influencers need to invest more time and effort in explaining and illustrating during the dissemination process to ensure that international audiences can accurately understand the connotations of Chinese traditional festival culture.

3.2. Accuracy issues in language expression and translation

When disseminating Chinese traditional festival culture, English social media influencers need to express and translate using English. However, due to differences in Chinese and English language cultures, some proper nouns, concepts, and cultural images specific to Chinese traditional festivals are challenging to accurately express in English. For example, "Nian monster" is an important figure in Chinese Spring Festival legends, but there is no exact equivalent term in English. Inaccurate translations may lead to misunderstandings of Chinese traditional festival culture among international audiences. Furthermore, some uniquely Chinese expressions and rhetorical

devices may lose their original charm and effect during the translation process.

3.3. Lack of innovation in dissemination content and forms

Currently, some English-speaking social media influencers face issues of monotonous content and format, as well as a lack of innovation, when spreading the traditional festival culture of China. Most of them simply introduce basic information and customs of Chinese traditional festivals, lacking in-depth exploration and presentation of the cultural connotations. In terms of communication methods, they mainly rely on pictures and text, lacking interactivity and interest. This traditional approach struggles to attract the attention and interest of international audiences, thereby affecting the dissemination effect of Chinese traditional festival culture.

3.4. Balancing commercial interests and cultural dissemination

With the development of social media, some English social media influencers may prioritize commercial interests and excessively commercialize the dissemination of Chinese traditional festival culture, neglecting the essence of cultural dissemination. For instance, some influencers may forcibly insert advertisements when introducing Chinese traditional festivals to promote products, resulting in a loss of authenticity and cultural value in the content. This overly commercialized behavior not only damages the image of Chinese traditional festival culture but also reduces international audiences' trust and favorability towards Chinese culture.

4. Strategic recommendations for English social media influencers in cross-cultural communication of Chinese traditional festivals

4.1. Strengthening cultural research and enhancing cultural literacy

English social media influencers should deeply understand the connotations and values of Chinese traditional festival culture and strengthen their research and learning of Chinese culture. Only by having a profound understanding and recognition of traditional Chinese culture can they accurately and vividly disseminate Chinese traditional festival culture to international audiences. Simultaneously, influencers should also understand the cultural backgrounds and needs of international audiences and tailor cultural dissemination based on the characteristics and interests of different audiences. For example, they can adopt more fashionable and lively approaches for young audiences and provide more in-depth and professional cultural interpretations for cultural enthusiasts.

4.2. Optimizing language expression and improving translation quality

To enhance the accuracy of English expression and translation quality, English social media influencers can utilize professional translation tools and resources or collaborate with professional translators. During the translation process, they should prioritize retaining the characteristics and charm of Chinese traditional festival culture, adopting free translation methods as much as possible to facilitate international audiences' better understanding of the connotations of Chinese culture. Additionally, influencers can assist international audiences in comprehending difficult-to-translate cultural concepts and vocabulary by adding annotations and explanations.

4.3. Innovating dissemination content and forms and enhancing interactivity

English social media influencers should continuously innovate dissemination content and forms to attract the attention and interest of international audiences. In terms of content, they can delve into the deeper connotations of Chinese traditional festival culture and create content with a contemporary and innovative flair by combining it with modern societal values and lifestyles. For example, they can produce animated shorts or micro-films about Chinese traditional festivals to vividly showcase their charm. In terms of forms, they can adopt various approaches such as live streaming, short videos, and interactive games to enhance interactivity and participation with international audiences. For instance, they can organize online Spring Festival galas and invite international audiences to participate in performances and interactions, allowing them to personally experience the atmosphere of the Chinese Spring Festival.

5. Conclusion

English social media influencers play an irreplaceable role in cross-cultural communication of Chinese

traditional festivals. They can expand the dissemination scope of Chinese traditional festivals, enhance cultural visibility; promote cultural understanding, eliminate cultural barriers; stimulate cultural interest, and foster cultural participation; shape cultural images, and elevate cultural soft power. However, they also face numerous challenges in the dissemination process, including cultural differences, language expression issues, lack of innovation in content and forms, and balancing commercial interests with cultural dissemination. To better leverage the role of English social media influencers in cross-cultural communication of Chinese traditional festivals, it is essential for them to strengthen cultural research, enhance cultural literacy; optimize language expression, improve translation quality; innovate dissemination content and forms, enhance interactivity; and balance commercial interests with cultural dissemination, maintaining cultural authenticity. Through the implementation of these strategies, English social media influencers are expected to make greater contributions to the international dissemination of Chinese traditional festival culture, enabling the world to better understand and appreciate Chinese culture.

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