

Innovative Strategies for Promoting China's Excellent Traditional Culture to the World in the Digital Age: Taking the Animated Film "Ne Zha 2" as an Example

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Abstract. In the context of the deep integration of globalization and digitalization, the dissemination of China's excellent traditional culture abroad presents both opportunities and challenges. As film is an important medium for cultural dissemination, the effectiveness of its cross-cultural communication strategies directly impacts the growth of China's international cultural influence. This article takes the highly anticipated animated film "Ne Zha 2" (2025) as its research subject. Considering its global box office revenue of 15.9 billion yuan, this article explores strategies for promoting Chinese traditional culture internationally in the digital age. This study employs a case study approach, systematically examining the practices of films in the contemporary adaptation of traditional culture and global promotion, from the perspectives of content, technology, and marketing. The research results show that "Ne Zha 2" achieved success through its innovative content strategy, as well as its all-cycle marketing approach and dual-drive media communication strategy based on the 4I theory. This approach successfully facilitated the cross-cultural transmission of cultural values and maximized commercial value, significantly enhancing the international recognition of Chinese animated films. This film offers a valuable model for the innovative dissemination of Chinese traditional culture. At the same time, it pointed out that Chinese films still need to improve in terms of cross-cultural communication. It is necessary to further deepen the innovation of modern translation and dissemination mechanisms for cultural symbols, in order to enhance the influence and global reach of Chinese culture.

Keywords: "Ne Zha 2", intercultural communication, Chinese traditional culture, global marketing, technology application.

1. Introduction

In the current era of globalization and increasing cultural diversity, the dissemination of China's excellent traditional culture abroad presents both opportunities and challenges. In the increasingly competitive international environment where cultural soft power plays a crucial role, as the core of the Chinese nation's spirit and the embodiment of its wisdom, traditional Chinese culture plays a crucial role in its international dissemination. This dissemination not only serves to tell the Chinese story and showcase China's image to the world, but also serves as a key path to strengthening

national cultural confidence and promoting cultural exchange and mutual learning. With its powerful visual and auditory impact and broad audience reach, film has become an important vehicle for cultural dissemination. The goal is to ensure that people from different regions, countries, cultures, educational backgrounds, and social classes can all understand and appreciate the message conveyed in the film. Ensure that everyone can equally understand the core message and cultural significance of the film [1]. Its strategic innovations play an irreplaceable role in the field of international cultural exchange. This research has significant theoretical and practical implications for understanding the cultural dissemination pathways of the Chinese film industry within the global context, promoting the modern adaptation of traditional culture, and enhancing China's international influence.

In recent years, the Chinese film industry has been booming. The Chinese film industry is showing positive growth trends in terms of theater capacity and market performance. The industry has shown strong resilience and continued growth. The rich and vibrant traditional Chinese culture serves as the lifeblood of Chinese cinema, providing fertile ground for creativity, from story themes to core values, thus laying a solid foundation for the development of the film industry [2]. Against the backdrop of the growing influence of China's excellent traditional culture and advancements in production technology, Chinese animated films have undergone significant evolution over time and have become an important medium for cross-cultural communication [3]. Among these, the animated film "Ne Zha 2" stands out as a prime example of how Chinese traditional culture can be effectively promoted internationally, thanks to its outstanding market performance and widespread global influence. This film has garnered widespread popularity among audiences worldwide, not only did it achieve great box office success, but it also successfully integrated elements of traditional Chinese culture with modern film and television technology, offering a new approach to promoting traditional culture internationally. This study primarily examines "Ne Zha 2" from three perspectives: content strategy, lifecycle strategy, and media strategy, systematically analyzing its innovative practices in areas such as narrative reconstruction, technological integration, translation and adaptation, full-cycle marketing, and cross-media dissemination. During the research process, this paper employed a literature analysis method to systematically search and review relevant materials, including policy reports, academic papers, film reviews, and market data. The advantage of this approach lies in its ability to comprehensively integrate existing theoretical findings and empirical data, thus providing strong support for interdisciplinary, multi-perspective theoretical analysis and case studies, which facilitates the extraction of communication patterns and strategic mechanisms from observed phenomena.

Debray's mediology theory helps us recognize that transcultural communication is not an abstract process but an economic activity integrated into the global consumer society. To succeed, Chinese animation must transcend rigid binary oppositions between China and the West and embrace a pluralistic view of civilization [3]. This study delves into the strategies used by "Ne Zha 2" to promote Chinese traditional culture internationally, analyzing its successes and potential shortcomings. The ultimate goal of this research is to reveal the strategic framework and effectiveness factors of "Ne Zha 2" in cross-cultural communication, providing a reusable theoretical model and practical approach for the international dissemination of Chinese animated films and traditional Chinese culture. This will help promote the more effective and targeted dissemination of Chinese traditional culture on the global cultural stage, thereby enhancing the international discourse power and influence of Chinese culture. To achieve this goal, the article discusses the issue from multiple perspectives, aiming to develop an innovative framework for the international dissemination of Chinese traditional culture in the digital age.

2. The external communication strategy for the film "Ne Zha 2"

2.1. Content strategy

"Ne Zha 2", which stands out from the animation film market, has quickly become a phenomenal animation film blockbuster at the beginning of 2025 with its phenomenal popularity and word-of-mouth effect, their remarkable achievements are not merely a coincidence, but rather the inevitable result of the film production team's continuous innovation in content, technology, and the expression of traditional culture. In addition, in the dimension of cross-cultural communication, "Nezha 2" uses the three-dimensional conversion translation principle in ecological translation studies to achieve accurate expression of subtitle translation, find a reasonable translation direction for the subtitle translation of traditional cultural films, and fine-tune the cultural translation of foreign language dubbing to ensure that the core of traditional culture is effectively transmitted in language conversion [4].

2.1.1. Target audience positioning

In the context of media communication, "Ne Zha 2" breaks through the traditional boundaries of the target audience for animated films, using a family-friendly narrative to transcend age barriers. By targeting a global audience of all ages, it delves into the cultural consumption needs of adult viewers, thus pushing Chinese animated films towards a more adult-oriented narrative style. The film constructs a multi-layered narrative structure and injects a relatively mature and philosophical core of thought and realistic value, separating animated films from the inherent cognition of low-age entertainment products, making the film style of "Ne Zha 2" childlike but not childish. Incorporating elements such as passion and comedy into the film's worldview, the film uses the contradictory unity of the "demon/child" image to satisfy the imagination consumption needs of audiences of all ages, achieving an organic fusion of adult and child-oriented content [5]. By expanding the target audience while simultaneously enhancing the depth of content and artistic value, this approach opens up new avenues for the creation and cultural dissemination of animated films for adult audiences.

2.1.2. Visual spectacle

Ne Zha 2 presents audiences with a spectacular feast of technical difficulty and oriental aesthetics, This film utilizes "algorithmic aesthetics" to create a visually stunning and romantic emotional climax, employing cutting-edge technology to present surreal and grand scenes, integrating advanced 3D modeling, dynamic particle effects, and artificial intelligence—all cutting-edge visual technologies. Through the ultimate restoration and artistic creation of mythological scenes, we have created extremely shocking visual wonders such as the mist-shrouded Chentang Pass and the majestic Yuxu Palace. The digital translation of mythological worldview concepts not only preserves the core meaning of traditional symbols, but also enhances their expressive power and reach through modern media, allowing audiences to perceive the visual structure and imagery details of mythology from multiple perspectives [6]. The extensive application of dynamic particle effects provides more possibilities for the construction of visual wonders and the rendering of plot atmosphere. It not only vividly presents the artistic conception and charm of oriental aesthetics, but also enhances the visual appeal of the film. Empowered by algorithms, the details in the film present a stronger sense of reality, showing the unique aesthetic charm of Eastern culture to global audiences.

2.1.3. Story core

The film creatively adapts traditional mythological stories, skillfully integrating core values such as "one's destiny is in one's own hands, not determined by fate" into contemporary themes of self-identity and the struggle against fate, thus reflecting the multiple anxieties that young people face during their growth and development [7]. The film uses simple and easy-to-understand narrative logic and plot elements that resonate with everyday life, breaking down cultural barriers and allowing audiences both domestically and internationally to easily grasp the deeper meaning conveyed by the story. At the same time, it gives new contemporary value to traditional concepts such as loyalty, bravery, filial piety and righteousness, and uses universal emotional resonance points (such as family narratives) as a link to promote the connotation of Chinese traditional culture across regional and cultural differences, achieving wider and deeper dissemination, and effectively enhancing cultural identity and communication effectiveness.

2.1.4. Language translation

The rapid rise in popularity of "Ne Zha 2" overseas can be attributed, in part, to the excellent English subtitle translation; the English subtitles played a crucial role in its international promotion [4]. Optimizing the localized expression and emotional transmission effects of foreign language dubbing provides language dimension support for cultural conversion and achieves accurate output of story content and cultural connotation. The film team conducted in-depth research on language habits and acceptance psychology in different cultural backgrounds, and creatively translated culturally loaded vocabulary, proverbs and metaphors, retaining a certain traditional Chinese cultural color. At the same time, by combining the Western context and adjusting the semantic focus, we can minimize the understanding deviation caused by cultural differences, effectively reduce the impact of cultural discounts, build an accessible cultural cognition bridge for overseas audiences, and help the core of Chinese traditional culture maintain its integrity and appeal in cross-lingual communication. Furthermore, exploring effective translation methods for films about traditional culture and establishing a unique discourse system can better promote the translation of Chinese traditional culture into foreign languages, enhance cultural confidence, and increase global understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture [4].

2.2. Cycle strategy

Ne Zha 2 builds a full-cycle communication strategy system based on the 4I theory, accurately positioning consumer groups. Combine interesting content, novel marketing with product features to create highly interesting marketing, attract audiences' attention to products, actively interact with audiences, and put audiences' needs first in all actions [8]. The 4I theory is the cornerstone of Internet marketing, which points out that successful communication must follow four core principles. First of all, the content must be interesting and attract users' attention in a creative way. This is the starting point of dissemination. Furthermore, it is necessary to include clear interest points to meet the user's practical or emotional needs and make them feel valuable. At the same time, interactive links must be designed to enable users to shift from passive reception to active participation, thereby deepening brand relationships. Ultimately, the entire strategy should highlight individuality and accurately touch the target group through unique positioning and expression. In its initial stage, "Ne Zha 2" was preheated through multiple dimensions such as replays of the previous work and new media interactions. In its growth stage, it maintained its popularity through derivative

content and interactions with the main creators. In its mature stage, it extended its value through peripheral development, commercial collaborations and overseas previews. The strategies for each stage are interconnected, promoting long-term and effective dissemination of the film and contributing to the successful promotion of traditional Chinese culture in the global market.

During the initial stage of brand development, "Ne Zha 2" employed a multi-faceted communication strategy to generate initial buzz and awareness. Replaying the previous work "Nezha 1" awakens the audience's memory and activates the potential influence of the series IP. Initiate promotional interactions on new media platforms such as Tik Tok and Weibo, and stimulate user participation through suspenseful trailer releases, topic challenges, etc. Collaborate with influential figures on major social media platforms to repost relevant posts about the video, promoting the video's creative concept and cultural essence, and leveraging their fan following to expand its reach. At the same time, Filmmaker invited film critics from major online portals to provide initial reviews and analyses of the film, using their professional perspectives to generate interest and anticipation among industry professionals and audiences, thus creating a strong pre-release buzz for the film's official release.

Entering the brand growth stage, "Ne Zha 2" continues to empower its communication effectiveness with high-quality content. On the one hand, they continuously release derivative content such as creative highlights, deleted scenes, and creative documentaries to satisfy the audience's desire to explore the behind-the-scenes stories of the film and deepen their emotional identification with the work; on the other hand, the creative team maintains high-frequency interactions on new media platforms, and through live interviews, sharing of behind-the-scenes stories, etc., they narrow the distance with the audience and enhance fan stickiness. In addition, by combining hot events with audience feedback, we adjusted our communication strategy in a timely manner and launched customized content, such as holiday theme posters and character re-creation solicitations, to continuously create communication hotspots, maintain the film's popularity and exposure, and drive the film's popularity to continue to rise in the market.

In the brand maturity stage, "Ne Zha 2" has achieved in-depth expansion of brand value through diversified strategies. Timely launch of a wide range of peripheral products, covering figures, stationery, clothing and other categories, combining film IP with consumption scenarios to extend the life cycle of the work. Actively carry out commercial joint cooperation, launch joint products with well-known brands, leverage the brand influence of both parties to achieve traffic mutualization and expand the audience circle. Carry out overseas preview activities, accurately select regions and screenings with high cultural acceptance, open up the international market through word-of-mouth communication, and at the same time collect feedback from overseas audiences to provide a basis for subsequent optimization of global distribution strategies. Through multi-dimensional efforts in peripheral development, commercial linkage and international expansion, we will further deepen the brand influence of "Ne Zha 2" and promote the sustainable development of Chinese animation IP in the global market.

2.3. Media strategy

As a literary adaptation, Ne Zha 2 naturally possesses cross-media characteristics. In the era of media convergence, Ne Zha 2 innovatively constructs a dual-driven media communication strategy of "traffic explosion + word-of-mouth cultivation" [5]. With the help of short video platforms such as Tik Tok and social platforms such as "Weibo" and "Xiaohongshu", by relying on fragmented content, creative topic interactions and high-frequency responses from the creators, the platform's traffic dividend is fully released, and the film's exposure and expectations are quickly increased. At

the same time, we have deeply deployed portal websites such as Douban, relying on their professional rating systems and user evaluation ecosystems to guide the accumulation and spread of high-quality word-of-mouth before and after the film is released, and drive viewing decisions with real and diverse audience feedback. The two strategies complement each other, effectively expanding the coverage of communication, deepening the influence of cultural communication, and providing an innovative example for the external dissemination of Chinese traditional cultural films.

2.3.1. Short video matrix

In its communication strategy on short video platforms, "Ne Zha 2" fully utilizes the "short, flat and fast" communication characteristics of mainstream short video platforms such as Douyin, TikTok, and YouTube, and systematically constructs a multi-level, highly interactive three-dimensional publicity and promotion matrix. The film's marketing team strategically releases short, engaging snippets of content on their official social media accounts, including exciting trailers, behind-the-scenes footage of special effects, and character background information, using strong visuals and suspense to quickly capture audience attention and spark interest. For example, a 20-second short video featuring highlights such as Nezha fighting against the dragon clan besieging Chentang Pass had over 72,000 reposts and over 863,000 likes, effectively stimulating the audience's expectations and emotional resonance. At the same time, the main creative team and the publicity and promotion team actively entered domestic social platforms such as Weibo and Douyin, as well as major global social media platforms including TikTok, YouTube and Twitter, and encouraged users to engage in secondary creation and wide dissemination by launching interactive topics such as "#Even Nezha Has to Go Through Security Check" and "#DrawNezha". The creative team not only interacted with the audience and fans frequently in the comment section of the topic video, but also actively explored and promoted the hot topics spontaneously produced by the audience, fully mobilized the enthusiasm of users to participate, further narrowed the distance with the audience, and converted many "passers-by" users who originally had a wait-and-see attitude towards domestic animation into "fans" who actively spread the word. Social short video platforms have broken the geographical limitations of traditional media and promoted the widespread dissemination of Chinese culture through algorithmic recommendations and user interaction. Audiences discuss, share, and recreate films on major mainstream short video platforms, deepening their understanding of the cultural connotations of films and promoting cross-cultural dialogue [9]. This cross-platform, multi-account linkage communication mechanism successfully created a strong public opinion before the film was officially released, achieving a preheating effect that made the film popular before it was released. In addition, after the screening, the film team continued to update the box office data in real time through short videos and Weibo, released a fun celebration video drawn by the director himself, and launched customized short video content based on the hot spots of the schedule to continuously maintain the popularity of the topic and public attention. This fission-type dissemination based on traffic ecology not only significantly increased the domestic exposure of "Ne Zha 2", but also provided a new path for the modern dissemination of Chinese traditional cultural elements such as myths and oriental aesthetics, highlighting the important role of new media platforms in cross-cultural communication.

2.3.2. Reputation management

"Ne Zha 2" focuses on the role of word-of-mouth aggregation platforms such as Douban and IMDB in guiding public opinion, and accurately grasps the public opinion guidance in the early stage of the

film's release. Before the overseas release of "Ne Zha 2", film critics and opinion leaders were invited to have an in-depth experience through preview screenings, producing professional film reviews and public word-of-mouth content. The film team made full use of the platform's rating mechanism and long and short review ecosystem to consciously accumulate positive reviews. On the Douban platform, the film's rating remained stable at over 8.5 points after only three days of release. The long review section contained a large amount of analysis from the dimensions of the film industry and the modern transformation of traditional culture, while the short review section formed high-frequency word feedback mainly based on "emotional resonance + visual shock", together creating a word-of-mouth atmosphere that was both professional and friendly. Users of such platforms generally rely heavily on ratings and reviews to make consumption decisions. By incorporating authoritative film reviews and high public scores into communication materials, and leveraging the platform users' high reliance on ratings and reviews, the film transforms high-quality word-of-mouth into appeal for viewing, effectively influencing the choices of ordinary audiences and ultimately forming a virtuous communication closed loop of "word-of-mouth drainage - viewing feedback - word-of-mouth diffusion." Many viewers voluntarily returned to the platform after watching the film to leave ratings and comments, which further strengthened its positive reputation and provided strong momentum for the film's continued success and the widespread recognition of its traditional cultural values [10].

3. Conclusion

This study, through a systematic analysis of "Ne Zha 2" across three dimensions—content strategy, release strategy, and media strategy—reveals the underlying logic behind the success of Chinese films in achieving commercial success and broader cultural impact. The study found that the film achieved a dual breakthrough in commercial value and cultural communication through the modern adaptation of traditional mythology, full-cycle marketing strategy and integration of special effects technology. These practical results not only demonstrate the breakthroughs of the Chinese film industry in creative concepts, marketing strategies and technological applications, but also confirm the strong vitality and communication potential of China's excellent traditional culture in the contemporary context. At the same time, we also need to realize that Chinese films still have a certain gap in cultural communication compared with other major film countries. Their effective output depends on the support of systematic and multi-dimensional innovative strategies, especially in the aspects of narrative universalization, language localization and media integration. At present, the cross-cultural communication of Chinese films has not yet formed an extremely effective and systematic communication strategy framework. The universal transformation of traditional culture in Chinese films is still in the exploratory stage. The influence of domestic films in overseas markets still needs to be improved. Current domestic films still have shortcomings in exploring the national uniqueness of China's excellent thoughts and culture, and the cross-cultural transformation efficiency of their cinematic expression is insufficient. This study provides important theoretical references and practical inspiration for the fields of domestic films and international cultural communication, mainly influencing the application of film industry aesthetics and cross-cultural communication theory in animation media. It also sets a typical example for the modern transformation and external export of China's traditional cultural resources, and enhances the industry's attention to content, technology, and marketing integration strategies. In future research, we should focus more on building a mature cross-cultural communication strategy system for Chinese films, deeply explore the modern translation mechanism of traditional cultural symbols, strengthen differentiated communication strategies for different cultural regions, and pay attention to

the application potential of new technologies such as artificial intelligence in cross-cultural understanding and communication, so as to continuously enhance the acceptance and influence of Chinese films and culture in international communication.

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