

Comparative Analysis of Communication Mode and Effect of New Sports Media Platform—Taking Tencent Sports and Hupu as examples

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Abstract. In recent years, China has made many efforts to develop sports-related industries and the concept of national fitness. Currently, China has many new media users, and sports new media platform has become an important platform to popularize national fitness in China. So, accelerating construction and improving the quality of new media platform sports has become important for developing China's sports industry. In such a process, the communication modes of different new media platforms influence sports news content and communication effects. It is necessary to study the communication modes of the current popular new media platform sports in order to understand the communication modes and effects of sports news. This article takes "Tencent Sports" and "Hupu" as examples. It analyzes the characteristics of the two famous platforms by using the theory of "uses and gratifications approach" and the theory of "interactive ritual chain", aiming to summarize the advantages of the two platforms and put forward suggestions for the better construction of sports new media platforms in the future. So, the comparative analysis between "Tencent Sports" and "Hupu" has certain practical significance in promoting the popularization of sports culture and the development of the sports industry in China.

Keywords: Sports news; Sports new media platforms; Uses and gratifications approach; Interactive ritual chain.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research background

Nowadays, people are in an era of new media technology that is developing at high speed, and the media habits of users are also changing with the development of new media technology. In the new media era, communication platforms take on various forms, which leads to a completely different way for new media platforms to present news compared to traditional media. The characteristics of vertical, personalization and fragmentation of news on new media platforms have brought about new changes to the modes of communication and communication effects, which makes sports news different in the era of new media.

Sports news has distinctive characteristics, and entertainment is the key character that distinguishes sports news from other types of news. Therefore, the communication modes and effects of sports news on new media platforms differ from other types of news. Because of the uniqueness of sports news, the combination with new media platforms shows different forms, thus, offering users multiple types of new media products.

Therefore, it is an important task to accelerate the construction of new sports media platforms and improve the quality. In this process, communication modes of different sports new media platforms will have different influences on the content of sports news and the communication effect it produces. Thus, under such circumstances, research of the popular sports new media platforms' communication modes has deep and realistic significance in finding the effective way to spread sports news and know its communication effect. Under the background of the public fitness program and public health concept, this research will mainly discuss what communication mode the popular sports new media platform takes and what communication effect it brings.

1.2 Literature review

Su analyses the communication strategy of Hupu and Tencent as sports sites and found that the inherent characteristics of the professional sports website, such as the rapidity, universality, and richness of the audience feedback, bring obvious advantages to the communication strategy of the website. Still, these characteristics also bring a lot of problems and challenges to the professional sports website. With the rapid development of professional sports websites in China, the sports' new media platforms urgently need a development that combines the advantages of computers, the Internet, and other new technologies [1]. In their book, Boyle and Haynes discussed the relationship between football and new media. And present that with the rapid development of sports and the rapid transformation of media forms, the relationship between football and media has also changed significantly. In the new media era, the commercial value of portrait rights and data use rights in football events should be fully explored to promote the common development of football clubs and new media. Football clubs should pay attention to factors such as technical limitations, management norms, and market disorders in the context of new media [2]. Li and Liu present the characteristics of new media sports in their research. The emergence of new media, especially social media, is the precondition of the network group. Active individuals identify themselves based on content on new sports media platforms such as sports events, players, etc. They will construct cultural identity by doing second creation and sinngbung through the new media platforms and attract more individuals' attention. New media is characteristic of interactivity, and geographic connection provides channels and eventually forms a group of sports fans with common goals and a strong interest in stability [3].

1.3 Research gap

Most scholars research the characteristic of sports new media, and some Chinese scholars study the characteristic of Hupu and Tencent Sports as sports news websites. But in recent years, sports news websites are not the main form of Hupu and Tencent Sports, and they are building new sports media platforms which contain more content than a simple news website. So, to spread sports news better, it is necessary to analyze the difference between these two sports' new media platforms, research why their advantages are working, and how to build a better sports new media platform. This article will analyze the communication mode and effect of Hupu and Tencent Sports and find out each of their advantages so that they can be put together to build a better sports new media platform.

1.4 Research framework

Based on the various forms of expression on new media platforms, such as text, pictures, short videos, and live streaming, and the common meaning space built by the Internet for the users, this paper will adopt the theory of use and satisfaction and the theory of interactive ritual chain to analyze the problem, in order to make the analysis more comprehensive and accurate.

This article is based on the two general nurture new media platforms – Hupu and Tencent sports. Based on predecessors' research, by comparing and studying samples, analyze the different communication modes and their effect on these two sports' new media platforms. This paper compares the similarities and differences between the two platforms' communication modes from the aspects of communication content. Moreover, using the theory of use and satisfaction and interactive service chain theory to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of different communication modes and their impact on the users and how that is accomplished. By analyzing the platform design and the functions provided to study the difference between Hupu and Tencent sports in the aspects of live game broadcast, user community construction, and the effect of sports product marketing. Use the examples to illustrate the influence of different platforms' communication modes, and point out the importance of selecting the correct model for disseminating sports news and sports culture.

2. Methods

2.1 Case study

Case studies are also called case investigations. It studies particular individuals, units, phenomena, or subjects. The case study is based on collecting data to determine the production and development of the research object, the internal and external factors, and their mutual relations, to form a comprehensive understanding of the relevant issues. The unit of case study can be an individual, a group, an organization, an event, or a certain type of problem, which leads to the study of individual cases, cases of various living units or social groups, cases of the media, and cases of various social problems [4]. This paper will choose cases on Tencent Sport and Hupu, by analyzing the news products, user community, live game broadcasts, and new media technology on these two platforms to summarize the advantages and disadvantages of each sports new media platform and find out a feasible method to build a user satisfying sports new media platform.

2.2 Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis method is an analysis method that compares two or more things or objects to find out the similarities and differences between them. By comparing the counterparts in different objects, summarize the reason for similarities and differences between them and what effect these factors cause. This paper will study and discuss the similarities and differences in communication strategies, methods, and modes of the two new sports media platforms, Tencent Sports and Hupu. And find out what kind of communication effects they have finally achieved. The two platforms mainly aim to disseminate sports news, such as providing match information, match analysis, off-site news, and other sports-related content. At the same time, they will also carry out live sports events and build user platforms. However, there are differences between Tencent and Hupu in these aspects, leading to different results for the communication effect and user experience. This paper will compare and analyze the similarities and differences between the two platforms in terms of communication strategies, platform functions, and user groups, and analyze the characteristics of the two platforms in combination with the theory of "Use and satisfaction" and the theory of "interactive ritual chain". To summarize the advantages of the two platforms by comparing their similarities and differences. And finally, build a new sports media platform with higher user satisfaction by combining the advantages.

3. Results

3.1 Analysis of the communication mode of Tencent Sports

Tencent Sports is one of the well-known new sports media platforms in China, which has gained many users in China due to its live broadcast of NBA games.

3.1.1 Live event broadcast of Tencent Sports

The most core sports news product form of Tencent Sports is live sports broadcast. According to statistics, there are about 35 live events in Tencent Sports daily, covering more than 20 sports events, including NBA, CBA, domestic football, international football, volleyball, esports, baseball (MLB), rugby (NFL), and golf, as well as text life.

As a very popular sports new media platform, Tencent sports combines traditional sports media's advantages and the new transmission mode. As a new media live platform, Tencent sports broke through the traditional forms of technology and restrictions. The spread of Internet technology and mobile terminals provides a broadcasting form for the audience to watch sports events live online anytime and anywhere. In the live sports broadcasting platform, the real-time, unpredictable, and visual impact of sports events interacts with each other, which makes the live sports events meet the needs of sports fans. Therefore, the audience's experience of live broadcast and the live broadcast platform is extremely important for the live sports broadcasting platform.

3.1.2 Core position of “copyright”

The new media copyrights of major sports events are the core resources for developing the sports industry and sports new media platform. “The new media copyright of sports events refers to the right of event organizers to authorize new media organizations to disseminate and develop competitive products and services through new media channels, including new media broadcasting rights, media operation rights, and derivative product development rights”[5]. Copyrights are the foundation of all the communication, marketing, and operation strategies of sports new media platforms, only the master of copyright can carry out other news communication activities.

3.1.3 The production of sports event broadcast text

Tencent Sports will use a variety of ways to produce the broadcast text of sports events, such as adding the review of wonderful moments in the broadcast, using visual data for real-time analysis of the arena, interspersing the interaction of netizens, etc. Through these means, Tencent Sports creates very attractive event broadcast text. Moreover, the broadcast text of this kind of event can not only be produced by Tencent Sports. Users can also make user-defined broadcast text while watching live broadcasts, and the audience can freely aggregate and switch the broadcast text when watching sports matches.

3.2 Analysis of the communication mode of Hupu

In the beginning, Hupu was a professional sports website based on NBA for basketball fans. It was founded in the United States in 2004. In the beginning, the website mainly provided sports news, pictures, videos, games, downloads, data, and so on. With the development of Hupu year by year in China, it has become a professional sports website integrating forums, columns, videos, blogs, and many other specialties. Hupu focuses on NBA coverage, including basketball, football, tennis, F1, Olympic Games, and other sports, providing news, live broadcast, match schedule, data, scores, rankings, analysis, and other content of famous sports [6].

3.2.1 Construction of sports user community

In today’s highly developed new media technology, the online community is a place for new media users to carry out online social activities. As a sports-oriented online new media platform, Hupu has also built a sports network community with its distinctive characteristics. At the very beginning, Hupu took NBA as the main starting point for discussion and constructed the concept of Hupu Forum, an online sports community [7]. Users choose and join the forum according to their preferences and gradually form a user community to promote the development of Hupu.

Hupu is a relatively successful new sports media platform building sports user communities. The sports user communities constructed by Hupu have distinctive characteristics, mainly in the following aspects combined with the interactive ritual chain theory.

3.2.2 The community culture is composed of the network interests margin group

The main part of the sports user community is the network fun margin group, a group of people who love the same things and gather to form an Internet group. By establishing such a sense of identity, people inside and outside the community will be distinguished, and barriers and boundaries will be set for those outside the community. In addition, corresponding signs will be generated within the community to identify the identity so that the community members feel closely related to the collective.

3.2.3 The structure of Hupu community is flat

The so-called flat structure means that every individual in the group is equal, and every member can express their own experience and opinions in the community. This is also known as decentralization. Specifically, decentralization allows the group members to have the right of expression, that is, the right to “speak”.

3.2.4 Highly vertical media

Media with high verticality has high engagement with its core audience. The construction of Hupu community is highly refined, and many discussion groups are specially established for teams, soccer stars, and stars. The content is highly vertical, and the community is finely divided. As a result, almost all users in the community are the core users of the content in the community, and the user stickiness is high. Moreover, the strong interactivity in the community improves the sense of participation, responsibility, and belonging of the community users. Therefore, the user community of Hupu is usually small and specialized, which reflects the vertical degree of community and the precision of community division.

3.2.5 Live sports events of Hupu

3.2.5.1 Application of text broadcast

Unlike Tencent Sports, Hupu does not have the broadcasting rights of the sports leagues it reports. Therefore, when broadcasting sports events live, Hupu can only carry out text live reporting, which is the main way for people to watch sports events live via mobile terminal in the 2G/3G network era. In addition to text broadcasting, users can also interact in the hotline section in the broadcasting room, and some rumors will be posted on the page of text broadcasting, giving full play to the advantages of Hupu community construction.

3.2.5.2 Characteristics of text language

The preset text template ensures the timeliness of the broadcast. Passionate text expression, the use of a large number of exclamation points.

From the above two points, the live text broadcast of Hupu can present sports events to users in the form of words to a large extent under limited conditions and provide users with multiple choices to watch live sports events.

4. Discussion

4.1 The influence of new sports media platforms

Based on the communication effect of Tencent Sports and Hupu, sports new media platforms have the best communication effect on their core users when spreading sports news. Moreover, the communication effect will impact the users at cognitive, behavioral, and emotional levels. Taking Tencent Sports as an example, it is a sports new media platform whose core competitiveness is the holder of copyrights and lives match broadcasting, which makes Tencent Sports have a strong influence on the event promotion. Users in China tend to have emotional resonance when watching live game broadcasts. Therefore, carry out additional sports content consumptions, such as purchasing Tencent Sports membership, buying the team's products, paying for paid content, etc. The transformation of sports content consumption into sports industry consumption and the transformation of attention economy into influence economy demonstrate the influence of the communication of sports new media platforms.

Taking Hupu Sports as an example, it is a new sports media platform with the core competitiveness of building user communities and has a great influence. Users generate sports news, spread information, exchange opinions, share feelings about sports events in the community, and form opinions about the sports industry. The publication of enormous UGC (User Generated Content) also plays an important role in the communication of sports news. The user community of sports content has brought endless vitality to the sports' new media platforms and exerted great influence on spreading sports culture on the Internet and among the public.

4.2 How to build a high-quality sports new media platform

The construction of new sports media platforms has shown a trend of integration, and the functions of sports' new media platforms have become more comprehensive. More and more sports new media

platforms with live sports broadcast as the main content are also gradually building their sports user communities. Many users' interactions and topic discussions can be found on the Tencent sports platform. In order to build a high-quality sports new media platform, three aspects need to be done well:

4.2.1 Dissemination of sports information

The new sports media platform should be able to report sports news accurately and timely, including the push of event information (including pre-match updates, field commentary, post-match interviews, etc.). Sometimes, predictive reports also need to be provided appropriately. The dissemination of sports information is the most basic and core function of the new sports media platform. A high-quality sports new media platform can be built if the dissemination of sports information is done well [8].

4.2.2 Product high-quality sports content

The new sports media platform should be able to independently produce high-quality sports content and create its own sports products. For example, Tencent Sports usually invites well-known commentators and commentators on the platform to conduct professional analyses and explanations for every sports match's pre- and post-match analysis. Hupu Sports will often invite celebrities (including sports stars and famous actors/actresses, etc.) to join the discussion board, and users in the community can ask questions about those celebrities. This high quality of sports content makes the new sports media platform unique and exceptional, therefore satisfying the users. Developing new sports news production content fields is necessary to maintain the vitality of sports new media platforms and build a high-quality sports new media platform.

4.2.3 The construction of user communities

Hupu Sports sets a good example of building a sports user community and shows the importance of establishing a sports user community for a new sports media platform. Through a large number of inter-community communication, the new sports media platform can produce a large number of high-quality UGC content, which helps the platform maintain the number of users and its popularity. And promote the construction of shared identity within the group [9]. To stimulate and strengthen group members' participation behavior and promote community formation. A series of subcultural content within the group will encourage group members to produce DIY content by themselves, and group members can spread it better in combination with new media technology.[10] At the same time, the new sports media platform should increase user segmentation and strengthen user communities' management to prevent improper remarks or damage to the stability of sports communities.

5. Conclusion

Nowadays, the development of the sports industry in China is still in the primary stage, and the popularity of sports in our country is far from enough. On October 25, 2021, the General Administration of Sport of China released the "14th Five-Year Plan for Sports Development", which put forward four major tasks and two major projects to implement the national, and regional development strategy and promote the coordinated development of sports. The General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Promoting National Fitness and Sports Consumption to Promote the High-quality development of the sports Industry", putting forward 10 policy measures mentioned developing "Internet sports vigorously". It is enough to show that the country attaches great importance to sports, as well as to sports news, the sports industry, and sports culture communication. As an important position for spreading sports news and propagating sports culture, new media plays an increasingly important role.

By analyzing the communication mode and the communication effect of Tencent Sports and Hupu, two major new domestic sports media platforms, we can synthesize the strengths of the two in their respective fields and use them in the communication of various sports events in the future.

Establishing efficient and convenient broadcasting channels, building a convenient and green user community, professional, personalized sports marketing, and other means further promote the development of the sports industry in China.

At the same time, excellent new sports media communication should be used not only in commercial league events or large-scale sports events but also in the live broadcast of popular sports and the production of sports content. How to build a high-quality new sports media platform, promote the spread of the concept of national health and mass fitness to improve the physical quality of our people, and promote the development of the sports industry these issues are worth more profound thinking.

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