

A Study on TCM Inheritance and Communication based on the Audience-oriented Theory

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Abstract—The inheritance and development of TCM is inseparable from different kinds of media, among which people are the most important. The audiences have their own priorities and concerns over TCM for many reasons. With the rapid development of science and technology, TCM should pay more and more attention to the interaction between individuals' seeing and feeling of TCM and their efforts in communicating TCM-related knowledge both at home and abroad. Based on the selectivity of TCM communication and inheritance, this paper tries to employ the audience-oriented theory to analyze the situations of TCM communication both at home and abroad and of TCM inheritance in our country. It's found that the audience, as the core factor in science communication plays an essential role in inheriting and communicating TCM culture.

Keywords—TCM communication; inheritance; audience-oriented theory; science literacy

I. INTRODUCTION

The disputes over the abolition of TCM, an indelible mark in the process of TCM communication, used to be science debates. Is TCM scientific? This is an inevitable question in the disputes, for the scientific nature of TCM is an issue of mutual concern shared by both parties. Science, in fact, is not a static stereotype, especially when it links with human society. Even in the modern age, science can't explain everything and science waits to be improved. Science communication is at the third stage, and the campaigns on the abolition of TCM can also be divided into three stages. Each stage of TCM communication is worth exploring, especially the third stage. The third stage is right the beginning of the 21st century. Against the background of "Internet Plus" and new media, science communication finds its own position, as well as TCM communication. Disputes over TCM are no longer confined to debates for scientists, TCM doctors and scholars or through traditional mass media. Even Weibo, forums and websites gradually become the battleground of TCM disputes for science community, or even

for the public. The ordinary people, once innocent in science communication, are engaged in the disputes, which is worth analyzing. Up till now, researches on TCM disputes based on science communication are not sufficiently done either. Although some scholars have published articles on campaigns of disputes over TCM and they have mentioned the science communication, they have no elaboration on the disputes over TCM according to the three stages of science communication. Above all, now that disputes over the abolition of TCM are a part of science communication, it should be analyzed according to the development of science communication which is the background of the campaigns on the abolition of TCM. In the meantime, the core factor of modern science communication, the audiences, should be in a paramount position.

II. THE SELECTIVITY OF TCM COMMUNICATION AND INHERITANCE

According to the audience-oriented theory, the selectivity of TCM communication and inheritance is an issue worth discussing. Although many professors and the public have debate over the science nature of TCM, most of the audiences represent more concern to the safety and treatment of TCM. Actually, when it comes to science communication, the audience concerns less to the theories and principles than to the negative influence caused by the uncertainty of TCM. In another word, the audience's increasing focus on science problem is mostly based on their own concerns. The uncertainty of science problems attracts public attention because of their unknown results and various standpoints. This purpose-oriented behavior can be found in "the use and gratification theory" about the audience in science communication, which is the second stage of science communication.

At this point, a conclusion can be made that the communication and inheritance of TCM should be selective.

Since 1949, the foundation of China, the government has been paying great attention to science communication in many aspects, such as establishing science and technology museum, making advertising video and publishing brochures. These efforts were made to improve the scientific quality of the public. In the light of TCM, the government has issued many regulations on the qualification of TCM doctors and clinics. Great impetus has been given in cultivating TCM talents. Over the years, great achievements have been made, but the problems are obvious as well. For example, the TCM disputes started by whether TCM should be abolished, followed by whether TCM belongs to science and what is science. As the development of the disputes, it's hard for the ordinary people to follow the initiators' ideas. It's known that the audiences prove to be the center of science communication. In the aspect of the theory of science communication, at some degree, the audiences serve to be the core factor of science communication. Therefore, science communication, especially TCM communication, should take into enough consideration the audiences.

III. TCM COMMUNICATION BASED ON AUDIENCE-ORIENTED THEORY

A. *TCM Communication in China based on Audience-oriented Theory*

Communication is a horizontal progress. TCM communication in China has a long history. Up till now, TCM communication depends mainly on the government and scientific community. There is no doubt that whether TCM should be abolished is the concern not only for the academic community, but also for the government. Over the years, the government at all levels has issued regulations on TCM communication, which demonstrate the firm standpoints of the government towards TCM issues. In February 2016, for example, *the Outline of Development Strategy of TCM*, which was issued by the State Council, drew the attention of the public nationwide. The new plan, which was different from the previous one that had focused on the modernization of TCM with scientific methods, attached equal importance to original TCM theories and classics. Over the years, especially since the founding of People's Republic of China in 1949, great efforts have been made in inheritance and development of TCM. Premier Li Keqiang announced during the report on the work of the government on March 5, 2017, "we should give impetus to the development of TCM and ethnic medicine. As health is the basic need of the public, we should develop a healthy China through the constant improvement of health care system." [1] In December 2016, the white paper—*TCM in China*, published by the State Council, has revealed the great efforts and highly attention paid by the government. Under the government's great impetus, TCM has gradually become one of the important features and distinct advantages in medical and health care undertakings in China with its own characteristics.

Entering into the 21st century, the third stage of science communication, the audience has become the core factor in TCM communication. The popularization of TCM depends on not only the government, but also the media and audience

which play an important role in communication of TCM. At this stage, policies are still important, but the interaction and feedback of the audience seems to be imperative. Nowadays, there are so many websites about TCM culture or treatment. It's difficult for the audience to recognize what is real and what is false. With the development of Big Data analysis and "Internet Plus", the combination of TCM and these advanced technologies are worth exploring. The TCM classics, for example, can be classified and gathered to meet the demand of the ordinary people. The great repository of TCM, which is well-regulated, will do good to the audience. This represents the use and gratification theory in the second stage of science communication.

B. *International Communication of TCM based on Audience-oriented Theory*

Among the international community, traditional Chinese culture has caught the eye of the world. More and more people represent a strong interest in traditional Chinese culture. As one of the representatives of traditional Chinese culture, TCM not only spreads health preservation methods and treatments, but also enhances the identity of traditional Chinese culture among people.

In recent years, President Xi has launched several speeches on the development of TCM and he has set a great example for the international community on the communication of TCM culture worldwide. In June, 2010, Confucius institute of TCM opened in Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia, President Xi attended the opening ceremony and said, "As the quintessence of China's ancient science, TCM embodies the profound philosophy and wisdom of ancient Chinese, and represents the unique health care concept and its practice. Deep studies and researches on TCM are of great importance in enriching the global medical care undertakings and advancing the study on creature science." [2] The speech was very important, for it was a milestone for TCM development and kicked off a new landscape of TCM international communication. In December 2011, in order to advance the international cooperation of TCM, the Ministry of Health and the State Administration of TCM published *the Medium and Long term Outline of the International Exchange and Cooperation of TCM (2011-2020)*. Great achievements have been made towards TCM development with the help of the government and pertinent regulations. According to the data in the White Paper—*TCM in China*, issued by the State Council, by the end of 2016, TCM has spread to 183 countries. The legislation of TCM has been passed in Australia, Canada, Austria, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, South Africa and the UAE. [3] Since the very beginning of "Belt and Road" initiative, the international communication of TCM has been regarded as one of the key items. All these efforts are made to provide a larger platform for people all over the world to get into the roots of TCM and benefit from TCM.

Over the years, efforts made by the government have been bearing great fruits. There is no doubt that the results are based on the feedback of the audience. On January 5, 2018, *Global Investigation Report on China's National Image* was published by the International Communication Center of CIPG. It said that TCM ranks the second among the representatives

of Chinese culture, bested only by Chinese food. 30 percent of the respondents have a basic knowledge of TCM, among which, 64 percent, mostly old people, give TCM thumbs up. In the report, we can recognize that the image of China in the world enjoys a steady rise and TCM plays a leading role in the process.

C. TCM Inheritance in China based on Audience-oriented Theory

Inheritance is a vertical progress. Although it's different from communication, we can still analyze the inheritance of TCM based on audience-oriented theory. How to achieve the inheritance of TCM from generation to generation? The answer lies in the audience. Therefore, the State Administration of TCM has taken many steps to improve the quality and cognition of TCM among the audience. For instance, *the Resources Survey of TCM*, the movies and TV series related to TCM, children's books on TCM, TCM classes for elementary students and so on. The following comic book - TCM Literacy on Life Cultivation and Health Preservation, for example, was edited by He Qinghu, a professor from Hunan University of TCM. The comic book originates from the book entitled *An Interpretation of TCM Literacy on Life Nurturing and Health Care of Chinese Citizens*, published by the National Administration of TCM and the National Health and Family Planning Commission. Given the theories and concepts are too difficult and professional for the ordinary people to understand and get interested in TCM, Professor He changed it into a comic book. We can recognize from the following pictures that he added many vivid pictures to explain the basic TCM theories. For the ordinary people, at all age, they can have a basic understanding of TCM through the pictures. According to data from *the 8th Survey on Public Scientific Literacy*, only 3.27 percent of the public have a basic scientific literacy, among which, 14.67 percent know necessary scientific knowledge, 9.75 percent can use scientific method to solve problems and 64.94 percent have a warship towards science spirit. It shows that, the steps based on the audience works well. [4] From the design of the books, the enrichment of contents and the wide range of audience, we can also recognize that putting the audience at a paramount place and improving their scientific literacy are the premises for the effectiveness of science communication. On May 17, 2018, in order to improve the science literacy of the public, greatly meet the demand of the ordinary people, the National Administration of TCM launched activities on the theme of "TCM Popularization in China". The activities include exhibitions, health consultation, competitions on TCM knowledge and TCM classes for elementary students. The interactive experience zone should be a revolution. It provides demonstration for life-preserving gymnastics, experience of intelligent devices of TCM and cartoons for Chinese herbal medicine processing. These interactive activities can give an immediate feedback of the audience which advances TCM inheritance in China.

For the inheritance of TCM, higher education is indispensable, especially universities with TCM characteristics. In 2018, in response to "Healthy China" strategy [5] and the great efforts on the inheritance of TCM

made by the government, Tianjin University of TCM, for example, has changed its "School of Language and Culture" into "School of Health and Cultural Communication" which focuses on the inheritance and communication of TCM and talent cultivation for the prevention of disease and health communication. Besides, this university set up a new major—communication, divided into two directions: communication of TCM culture and health communication. [6] It's the first university to have majors on TCM inheritance and communication nationwide. Besides, Hunan University of TCM has published a series of books about TCM culture and other TCM universities begin to imitate what Hunan University of TCM has done. Due to the great efforts of TCM universities, pertinent books and cosmic books are on a rise to promote the development of TCM and prevailing in the society.

IV. CONCLUSION

Since the beginning of the 21st century, researches on science communication have been on the rise both at home and abroad, with a focus mainly on the mass media and TV program. But up to now, related domestic monographs on science communication are rarely found, other than some popularized materials for the beginners. Besides, western countries have a head start in the research on science communication and some foreign universities have set up majors on this subject. However, science communication has triggered a heated discussion domestically for the past decades. Through a comprehensive analysis on domestic researches, they can be divided into the following parts: firstly, the researches on a specific target or an event with science communication theory; secondly, the researches on science communication in the background of Internet and mass media; thirdly, the researches on the development of science communication and its theoretical system. This paper focuses on a specific event—the abolition of TCM, through a perspective of science communication theories under the background of the Internet and media. The audience, as one of the core factors in science communication, has become a main point in the study of science communication. However, with the development of science communication, the audience at different stages of science communication represents various features. A profound analysis on the audience should include different features of the audience at different stages. For further study, the emphasis should be laid on the connotation of the audience-oriented theory under the framework of science communication theory as well as the relationship between TCM communication and inheritance especially domestically.

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