

Emotional Impact of Marketing Account on Public ---Taking the BTS Insulted China Incident as an Example

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ABSTRACT

With the development of social networks, the way people obtain and disseminate information has undergone tremendous changes. On social platforms, information has been spread faster and more widely. Under such circumstances, a marketing account came into being. They mainly rely on widespread attention to make money. For the marketing account, the amount of information that can be obtained is more important than the authenticity of the information. Therefore, many people believe that the marketing account has played a negative role in the information dissemination of social networks. One of them is that marketing accounts often create attention through emotional marketing. Hence, it is explored in this paper how the marketing account conducts emotional marketing through case study, and what are the harms of such a marketing approach. The case selected in this paper is the BTS humiliating China incident. Because Weibo is one of the largest social platforms in China, and BTS is a Korean singing group, the object of this paper is the Weibo article and the following comments of one of the largest entertainment marketing accounts on Weibo, Baquanlaogui (Old Ghost). According to the research results of this paper, Old Ghost used the subjective interpretation of the incident through the influence of opinion leaders and used the patriotism of Weibo users to incite Weibo users' emotions and aroused the negative emotions of Weibo users towards BTS. Meanwhile, it utilized the characteristics of Weibo and the importance of timing to expand the influence.

Keywords: Social media, opinion leader, marketing accounts, Weibo, emotional marketing

1. INTRODUCTION

With the transition from the Web 1.0 era to the Web 2.0 era, the internet becomes an integral part of our society. According to the data from CNNIC's 41st Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, as of December 2017, the number of Chinese Internet users had reached 772 million, and the Internet penetration rate was 55.8%. The Internet motivates personal value and connects individuals to form an extensive network of interpersonal relationships, people can share and express themselves at any time. Therefore, the structure of traditional media communication is completely subverted, and new rules of people-oriented communication are formed. [1]

Because of the prevalence of the internet, social media appeared and has changed approaches that people access information. Weibo is one of the most popular social application that was launched in 2009 in China. It is a micro-blog type of social networking site. Users

express their opinions and record their lives by posting short texts. Compared with other social media platforms, its social circle is wider, focusing on social interaction with strangers. Also, most entertainment celebrities, official departments, and companies will register for Weibo to communicate with their followers. This leads Weibo has become an extremely influential social media in China. As a classical User Generated Content (UGC) social media application, [3] everyone can post what they want to share without strict reviews, "like" the content they are interested in, and send comments to express their opinion. Additionally, based on a large number of users, Weibo has super coverage and influence, and the extremely fast information disseminate. In this situation, opinion leaders are crucial, they can guide the attitudes of Weibo users. This feature allows some specific accounts, which are called marketing accounts to get benefits from Weibo. Marketing accounts are the public accounts on Weibo that mainly send information for flow or profits, and they will collect some specific content, process

information, and sometimes even twist the truth, then upload information online to attract more readers. Because the example used in this paper belongs to the field of entertainment, the marketing accounts discussed in this paper are the entertainment accounts. The entertainment marketing account mainly publishes entertainment information, including celebrities, movies, music, variety show, and many other fields. Entertainment marketing accounts' purpose is that increasing account popularity and followers to speed up the monetization of flow, receive advertisements, or cooperate with companies to promote, etc. The ultimate goal is still to increase revenue and improve monetization efficiency [3]. Hence, flow is the most important thing for them. To attract more readers, content that is published by marketing accounts may through emotional marketing to arouse the the public. This paper is going to find out how a certain marketing account, which named Baquanlaogui, affect individual's attitudes emotionally based on an event that has been widely discussed on Weibo, BTS insulted China. Consequently, the data from this paper are from certain blogs about BTS insulted China that was published by an influential marketing account on Weibo. The paper will search the comments sent by Weibo users to find out the emotional impact of marketing account on public attitudes. This research can help marketing accounts to realize the importance of emotion when they want to attract more viewers. Additionally, Weibo can also strengthen the control of marketing accounts to deal with excessive emotional marketing.

2. REVIEW OF THE INCIDENT

To find out the emotional impact of entertainment marketing account on people's attitudes, the paper will analyze an event that has been discussed popularly on Weibo. The topic of this incident is the South Korean male group BTS suspected of insulting China in its acceptance speech. The paper will focus on the content published by a certain entertainment marketing account. Its Chinese name is "Baquanlaogui", referred to as "Old Ghost" in the following paper.

This incident happened in October 2020. "Old Ghost" published the award-winning video of BTS winning the Van Fleet Prize on Weibo. The award is named for General James A. Van Fleet, Commander of the U.S. Eighth Army at the height of the Korean War in 1951. Beginning in 1957, General Van Fleet served as the first president of The Korea Society. This award is awarded to "one or more distinguished Koreans or Americans in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the promotion of U.S.-Korea relations."

According to the video and content published by "Old Ghost", the leading member of BTS said that " we will remember the history of pain that our two nations share together, and sacrifices of countries men and women..."

This acceptance speech may seem nothing to the public at first, but "Old Ghost" specifically pointed out in the blog, "this is to commemorate the American generals during the Korean War. This speech..." this simple text instantly pointed the finger at the "pain that our two countries share" mentioned by BTS in the acceptance speech. "Old Ghost" emphasized the "two nations" in its speech, conveying that BTS did not pay attention to China's sacrifice in this war and did not respect China. The fierce public discussion on this matter has made BTS, a K-POP group that has not received the attention of Chinese netizens, gained unprecedented enthusiasm. It has been in the forefront of Weibo "Hot Search List" time and time again. This even caused some reporters to pay attention to this matter. In a regular press conference of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in China, a reporter asked Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's opinion on the matter. He said, "I have noticed the relevant report, and I have noticed the reaction of Chinese netizens to this incident. What I want to say is that learning from history, facing the future, cherishing peace, and promoting friendship should be our common pursuit and it is worth our joint efforts." It can be seen that this incident has gained a high degree of attention under the emotional guidance of marketing accounts such as "Old Ghost".

In the research of Rui Fan, Jichang Zhao, Yan Chen, and Ke Xu, anger can arouse people's discussion more than other emotions. On the social platform of Weibo, there are two things that can easily arouse people's anger, one is the domestic problems, the other is diplomatic issues. [4] BTS insulted to China belongs to the latter. The Korean War is a war of great significance for China. According to relevant statistics, China consumed more than 5.6 million tons of combat materials and 6.25 billion yuan (equivalent to 2.5 billion dollars at that time). The Chinese People's Volunteer Army has a total of 360,000 casualties. [5] Therefore, as an opinion leader on this matter, "Old Ghost" utilized the patriotic sentiments of Weibo users to attract more users to focus on this event and gained a lot of attention. During this process, "Old Ghost" is influencing the public through impacting their emotion.

3. ANALYSIS

Weibo, as a social media with a wide audience, its social features provide a suitable environment for the development of marketing accounts.

3.1. Openness

The user registration on Weibo is unrestricted and non-real-name registration. Therefore, on Weibo, people cannot only follow any person or thing they are interested in, whether they know this person or not, or whether the thing is related to them. What is more, people can speak without considering the consequences. This expands the

scope for people to post and receive information, meanwhile reduces people's sense of responsibility for their speeches. Therefore, once a public event occurs, the event will spread rapidly, the discussion will become more and more intense [6], and many extreme statements will be produced.

3.2. Timeliness

With the popularization of the Internet and the development of mobile devices, such as mobile phones, people can receive information through Weibo at any time and any place through mobile terminals. [7] Therefore, whether it is the content issued by the marketing account or the content published by official accounts, people can pay attention to it for the first time, and the marketing accounts can also disseminate information in the first time to influence people's attitudes and emotions, and gain higher attention.

3.3. Interactivity

On Weibo, users can share, comment, and forward information to each other. This helps to expand the coverage of information and form a huge social media network [7]. The marketing accounts utilize this characteristic of Weibo to spread the news they publish, thereby increasing their flows.

3.4. Collective

Granovetter has emphasized the importance of social context and pointed out that through interpersonal communication and demonstration effects, the gathering of individual rational choices leads to the occurrence of collective behavior [8]. On Weibo, collective behavior occurs when people have the same opinions. This collective behavior helps marketing accounts to grasp the trend of public opinion and publish content accordingly to attract more readers

All the above features provide a very favorable condition for the development of marketing accounts.

According to the theory of innovation diffusion, marketing account belongs to early adopters, they serve as an opinion leader, they hope to become a trendsetter. [9] In this example, the original content published by "Old Ghost", is the opinion leader of this event. Furthermore, he used ambiguous words to guide the anger of Weibo users. According to the research of D. Gruhl and his collages, there are three types of topics discussed in the real world: Just Spike, Spiky Chatter, and Mostly Chatter. Most topics spread by marketing accounts are just spike, which refers to the topics go from active to active because public's attention, then back to inactive from active again. [10] During the period that this event has high attention, marketing account will try their best to gain more attention. As can

be seen from this incident, as of March 20, 2020, the blogs published by "Old Ghost" referring to the BTS's insult to China have received a total of 660,123 likes, 22,672 comments, and 9,172 reposts. After October 14, 2020, "Old Ghost" did not post any blogs related to BTS. So, this period is very important for marketing accounts to attract more viewers.

According to *Weibo 2020 User Development Report*, which was released by Weibo on March 12, 2021, Weibo has 511 million monthly active users in September 2020. The users are mainly born after 1990 and 2000, accounting for nearly 80% of Weibo users [2] From the above data, it can be concluded that young people are the main users of Weibo. They are in a period of concept formation. As a result, their opinions are really susceptible. After the BTS's insult to China was fully fermented on Weibo, almost all the comments under "Old Ghost" blogs that related to this incident condemn BTS and its fans in China. Some statements are even extreme, similar to "get out of China", "withdraw from Chinese nationality", etc. Not only that, this incident also caused the dislike of many Chinese netizens towards South Korea. For example, they began to criticize the entire K-POP. Moreover, the expansion of the incident also affected the brands endorsed by BTS. For example, Samsung and Fila both removed BTS-related products from the shelves. Many netizens send the comments like "please continue to limit South Korea".

Because Weibo is Chinese social media, there is no need for participants to have the ability to use VPN and other network technologies to enable more fans and people with low political concerns to participate [11]. When this matter was very popular, the "Old Ghost" made full use of the patriotism of Weibo users, incited people's anger as much as possible, and gained more flow. In Ding X.W. and his collages' research, they first found that compared with neutral Weibo, emotional Weibo is easier to forward and spread. Emotions can be collectively referred to as physiological impulses, which have been proven to be an important factor driving information sharing [12]. That is why "Old Ghost" can still trigger active discussions, get a large number of "likes" and repost even when not many Chinese people pay attention to BTS. This account gained heat by stimulating the public's anger.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, marketing accounts are very good at using the characteristics of the social platform to attract popularity. They select the most popular events at the time to publish blogs and use ambiguous language to stimulate user emotions and trigger user discussions. Among the emotions, anger is the most controversial. Therefore, in today's society, marketing accounts can indeed expand the sources of information for the masses.

In addition, marketing accounts can also enjoy the benefits of network development. However, they should not do immoral things such as spreading rumors for benefits. Therefore, social platforms should control the information dissemination of marketing accounts properly, so that marketing accounts can perform emotional marketing correctly. This research can help the marketing account realize the importance of emotional marketing and seize the opportunity for marketing. However, this research only contains one case to study the influence of marketing accounts. Therefore, the results may show bias from the reality. Hence, more research is needed in this area.

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