

Analysis of Music Life Cycle Based on Product Life Cycle Theory

Ni Han

*School of Music and Recording Arts
Communication University of China
Corresponding author. Email: 2019302090116@cuc.edu.cn*

ABSTRACT

Under the background of the Internet age, music products usually have a long life cycle because of their platform-based communication characteristics and their own cultural values. In recent years, there have been some cases of music works becoming popular many years ago on the Internet, which are worth studying and paying attention to. Based on the characteristics of the life cycle of music works in the Internet era, this study innovatively puts forward the concept of the fifth stage of the product life cycle - "re-growth period" - based on the theory of the original four stages of the product life cycle through specific case analysis. Besides, this paper explores the suitability of classic theories in the Internet era through empirical research. The study finds that in recent years, the rise of short video platforms has provided a platform for some music works to "re-grow", which has brought some songs released many years ago back to the public eyes, continued the life cycle of the works themselves, and also attracted more attention to the cultural value behind them.

Keywords: *Product life cycle theory, Re-growth period, Music, Internet age*

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the Internet age has given rise to a number of new industries, and has also contributed to changes in the form of music listening, with the rise of music streaming and short video platforms providing more convenient channels for the dissemination of music works. Nowadays, there are a large number of music works in the music market, including some classic songs with a life-cycle of more than ten years. At present, the research on product life cycle theory has been more comprehensive, but in music, most of them focus on the life cycle research of the music industry as a whole market. For example, Fu Han and Yi Xuming put forward four types of music products in the research on the development of music culture industry based on product life cycle theory, namely enterprise brokerage type, network popularity type, talent show trend type and public cultural cause type, and believed that different types of music products have different characteristics at different stages of the life cycle [1]. Li Kun puts forward that the factors affecting the life cycle of pop music include creation factors, cultural factors and communication factors, and obtains the enlightenment of developing pop music [2]. Wu Jinhai explores the

product life cycle from the perspective of consumer culture and proposes three types of consumer culture, pointing out that the third type of consumer culture, which pursues the cultural value of goods and avoids negative impacts on society and nature, has the tendency to extend the product life cycle [3].

Those studies still lack theoretical verification combined with specific music works in the Internet age. Therefore, in order to provide a new perspective for combining theory with practice, as well as a useful reference for the formulation of current music work marketing strategies and the continuation of the life cycle, this paper focuses on the life cycle characteristics of music works, and tries to summarize the characteristics of the life cycle of music works in the Internet age compared with the previous ones. And it discusses the following questions: what factors have led to the resurgence of some music works after the fourth stage of "decline" in the product life cycle theory; what are the factors leading to this phenomenon; how can we use our experience to develop appropriate marketing strategies to extend the life cycle of music works?

Based on the research questions posed above, the main research method used in this paper is case study.

Through analyzing the sales of songs or albums on the best-selling list of the music platform for several months, this paper tries to verify that some music works are in the fifth stage after the fourth stage of decline - the "re-growth period".

2. ANALYSIS OF LIFE CYCLE OF MUSIC

2.1. Brief description of product life cycle theory

The product life cycle theory was first proposed by Raymond Vernon, a professor at Harvard University in the United States, in 1966 in his article "International Investment and International Trade in the Product Cycle". Raymond Vernon believes that product life refers to the marketing life in the market. Like human life, products have to go through the cycle of formation, growth, maturity and decline [4]. That is, products usually go through a stage of development, introduction, growth, maturity and decline.

According to this theory, these stages can be grouped into four stages: entry period, growth period, saturation period and recession period. The first stage is the entry phase, which refers to the product from design and production until it is put into the market and enters the testing phase; when the product enters the introduction phase and sales are successful, it enters the second stage - the growth phase, which refers to the stage when the product has good results through trial sales, buyers gradually accept the product, the product takes hold in the market and opens up. The third stage is the maturity stage, which means that the product starts to be produced in large quantities and enters the market steadily, but at the same time the number of people buying the product gradually increases and the market gradually becomes saturated. After this, the product enters the fourth stage, the decline stage, which means that the product enters the phase of obsolescence, in which the sales volume and profits of the product continue to decline and the product gradually fails to adapt to the market demand. The product's life cycle comes to an end, until it is finally withdrawn from the market. The different life stages of a product are also relevant to the development of a product strategy and marketing strategy. Products are often marketed according to their lifecycle stage in order to achieve the best possible communication results.

2.2. Division of life cycle of music

According to the product life cycle theory, the life cycle of music should also be divided into four stages, namely introduction, growth, maturity and recession period based on the degree of acceptance of music by the public [5]. The Introductory period of a musical work is the period when pop music becomes popular and grows slowly with the public, and the music now is not yet

widely heard and known. The growth period of a musical work is the period when pop music is rapidly accepted and widely distributed by the public. In this period, the music becomes popular and is gradually accepted by more and more audiences, and the sales of albums and singles reach their peak. The maturity period of music works is defined as the period when pop music has been accepted by most people and reached saturation. In this period, no new audience will listen to this music. With the passage of time, when the public are tired of this music work and gradually forget it, this music work also moves towards the last stage of their life - the recession period.

Because it is impossible to intuitively see how many people have accepted a song with the data, this paper takes the sales quantity of this song on the platform as the judgment basis. When a work falls out of the best-selling list of the platform for four weeks, it is considered that the work has entered the recession period. Take the personal album released by Liu Yuxin, a member of the girls' idol group The9, as an example. The album was officially launched on QQ music platform on April 20th, 2021. Prior to this, Liu Yuxin had a 10 day warm-up publicity on Weibo. Platform data show that the album will soon enter the growth period after it goes online. After going online, 5.266 million copies were sold in the first week, and then about 50,000 copies were sold every week, which continued to be on the album hot sales list until September 3rd. Since then, the album has not been on the list for nearly a month. So it is considered that the album is gradually saturated in the market and heading for recession period.

2.3. The life cycle of music works in the Internet age

Before the advent of the internet, cassette tapes were the most commonly used vehicle for recording popular music and were expensive for most people [6], and when a record company stopped producing a record of a song, it was the end of the song's life. When the majority of the market has a record, the songs reach their saturation point, and when the record producer stops producing the records of songs, it signals the end of the songs' life.

The advent of the internet has greatly facilitated the distribution of music works, with platforms selling single songs for as little as 2-3 (RMB) and many more songs available for free. Listeners can simply download music apps on their cell phones and listen to songs anytime and anywhere. All songs that have been released are stored on the Internet platform and are instantly searchable regardless of their age, making it possible for a song to remain popular in the music market for a long time and extending its life cycle to decades. As time migrates and listeners are constantly updated, the saturation of a music work is usually a "pseudo-saturation". In other words, there is no new listeners to listen to the work for a short period of time, which objectively also provides the

possibility of "re-growth" of the music work. This also objectively provides the possibility of "re-growth" of the work.

3. "RE-GROWTH PERIOD" OF MUSIC

3.1. Proposal of "re-growth period"

The re-growth period of music works refers to the stage when a song released many years ago (usually more than 5 years) and returns to the public's vision and becomes popular after experiencing the recession.

The hot search list of QQ music platform shows the first 30 entries of real-time hot search on that day. It is observed that for several months, non recently released songs have been on the daily hot search list. Take the hot search list of QQ music songs on August 21, 2021 as an example. Among the 30 entries on that day, 5 songs on the list have been released for more than 5 years, and some even for nearly 20 years. The song released nearly 20 years ago, after several years of silence, suddenly appeared on the hot search list recently. It can be considered that the music has entered a "re-growth period".

In the process of time development, the audience's aesthetics is also changing, which provides the possibility of "re growth" for each music work. How to formulate marketing strategies and prolong the life cycle of the work as much as possible is an urgent problem to be considered at present.

3.2. Specific case analysis

Taking the songs in the hot search list of QQ music on August 21, 2021 mentioned in the above as an example, "ring ring ring" is a song released by girl's group S.H.E in 2006, which suddenly became popular again 15 years later. Through analysis, it can be seen that TikTok was the first platform to arouse popularity in recent days. Wu Keer, a TikTok Internet celebrity, covered the work on June 17 and received 209.3 thousand likes. Two days later, Pontaston, who was also a TikTok Internet celebrity, released a multilingual cover version of the song on June 19, receiving 147.1 thousand likes. Since then, this song has quickly become popular on the TikTok platform, and some short video bloggers have added dances to this song, triggering the follow-up of large-scale users. The song also quickly appeared on the hot song list of the TikTok platform, and then on the hot search list of songs on the QQ music platform. Therefore, it can be said that the song "Ring Ring Ring" has entered its own re-establishment period.

Coincidentally, among 5 songs on the QQ music platform's hot search list on August 21 mentioned above, 3 songs have similar re-growth stages, all of which first caused popularity on the short video platform, and then caused a national upsurge. In addition, variety cover is

also one of the important ways for songs to be popular again. The song "royals" became popular again because of the singer's cover in the variety show "The voice of China 2021". It is on the platform's hot search list and ushered in its own re-formation period.

3.3. Significance of "re-growth period"

The advent of the re-growth period is a valuable opportunity for both the songs and the creators today. The life cycle of a musical work is extended and the value of the work of art is maximised, compensating for the relatively slow distribution and commercial value that was not possible during the recording era. For all music creators, the existence of re-growth period also gives insight into the process of creating music that caters to the market, and its existence even help music creators seizes the opportunity to rejuvenate former classics, a question that music creators need to pay attention to and consider.

4. THE INSPIRATION OF "RE-GROWTH PERIOD" TO MUSIC CREATION

In the process of marketing pop music, there is a need for constant visual contact and enhanced development of brand memory, which can cause waves of emotion in consumers [7]. Looking at the above-mentioned music productions that are in their re-emergence period, it is easy to see that short-form video platforms play a crucial role in the dissemination of music productions, which is the "BGM effect" in short-form video platforms [8]. Take the TikTok as an example, by its nature, its not a professional platform for sharing music, but with the spread of a large number of videos, the music as a background has achieved secondary distribution and flipped into a hit [9]. The music is often presented in the form of a video soundtrack, which combines the emotions of the images and gives users a strong emotional resonance. In addition, the secondary creation of music is another important way for works to "grow" again, with music rips from TV shows or bloggers often gaining more views on short-form video platforms, and then becoming a hit on the internet, generating more buzz.

With regard to the characteristics of the above-mentioned music works with the conditions for "re-growth", their target audience can be roughly divided into two categories. One group is the older users who have heard the music before, and the reproduction of the melodies can, to a certain extent, evoke the memories of these users from a specific era, which can quickly achieve a good dissemination effect in the present and objectively extend the life cycle of the work. The other group of users are those who have grown up in the Internet era and are relatively young and have never heard of this music before. The re-creation of classic music is partly a fusion of the characteristics of the Internet era and is more in line with the listening habits

of the Generation Z audience, and can therefore be widely distributed among them.

5. CONCLUSION

According to the product life cycle theory, the life cycle of music works should be divided into four stages, but because the cultural values contained in music are not easily outdated and have social significance for a long period of time, its life cycle is usually long, and after the decline period, it may also experience the current pop singers' covers or adaptations and return to the public again, and these secondary creations also add new vitality to the songs. These secondary creations also inject new vitality into the songs.

This paper is concerned about this phenomenon in the industry and innovatively proposes the concept of "re-growth period". The arrival of the "re-growth period" has not only extended the life cycle of the songs themselves, but also brought considerable income to the song creators of years ago, which is undoubtedly a great opportunity for the music industry in the Internet era. If music creators can seize the opportunity, formulate the right marketing strategy, and dare to challenge themselves, they can make their good music works more accessible to more people, thus adding vitality to the music market. That is, although their songs may have gone into decline, they can use "re-growth period" to make their songs more widely heard over the long term.

However, the research in this paper mainly focuses on the music works themselves, and the applicability to other cultural works such as movies and TV series needs to be studied in more depth. Besides, the ways of re-growth of different types of music works may also be different, and more detailed research is needed. Different types of music works may have different ways of re-growth, and more detailed classification is needed. How to use the research findings to develop marketing strategies for different music works is also still a problem that needs to be solved.

REFERENCES

- [1] Fu Han, Yi Xuming, Research on the development of music culture industry based on product life cycle theory, *Jiangxi Social Sciences*, (09), 2009, pp. 244-246.
- [2] Li Kun, The life cycle of pop music and its creative inspiration, (12), 2012, pp. 106-107.
- [3] WuJinhai, Product Life Cycle in the Perspective of Consumer Culture - A Sociological Exploration of Consumption, *Social Development Research*, (04), 2019, pp. 39-53+239.
- [4] Raymond Vernon, *International Investment and International Trade in the Product Cycle* Material Source, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol.80(2), 1966.
- [5] ZhangHao(2018). Research on the development of music culture industry based on product life cycle theory, *Knowledge economy*, (13), 2018, pp. 54+56.
- [6] Shi Zhuo, A Study on the Development of Internet Media and the Diffusion of Popular Music in China, 2021.
- [7] Wang Ying, Research on cultural brand marketing model of pop music, *Shanghai business*, (01), 2021, pp. 77-79.
- [8] Huang Wannan, Wang Di, A Study of the Current Situation and Development of Popular Music in China, *Art appreciation*, (08), 2019, pp. 145-146.
- [9] Zhou Meitong, On the Impact of TikTok on the Development of Popular Music in China, *House of Drama*, (34), 2020, pp. 68-69.