

The Development Path of Micro-Documentaries from the Perspective of New Media

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How to cite this paper: Xu, W. Z. (2024). The Development Path of Micro-Documentaries from the Perspective of New Media. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 12, 403-412. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2024.127029>

Received: June 23, 2024

Accepted: July 22, 2024

Published: July 25, 2024

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Abstract

With the continuous transformation of technology, new media such as mobile phones and computers have emerged, making our society what communication scientist McLuhan called the “global village”. This has made our information access more convenient, diverse, massive, and real-time, and has also made the film and television art ecosystem more prosperous. As a result, micro-documentaries have emerged. Although micro-documentaries have not been around for a long time, they also have unique advantages. This article analyzes the current situation and characteristics of micro-documentaries from the perspective of new media, and introduces them from multiple perspectives, all aspects, and at a deeper level. With the continuous improvement of media literacy among viewers, micro-documentaries can learn from the advantages of traditional documentaries to achieve innovative development.

Keywords

Micro-Documentary, New Media, Innovation-Driven Development, Film and Television Art

1. Introduction

With the birth of new media, the level of user activity on new media continues to increase, and mobile devices have become the main channel for users to engage in leisure, entertainment, information acquisition, and knowledge acquisition (Cai, 2022). With the growing popularity of 5G and smart phones, new forms of Internet media such as short video and live broadcast have also begun to develop in a blowout manner, and the society has become more rhythmic and fragmented. Traditional documentaries are constantly innovating and developing in response to social trends, and micro-documentaries have emerged, making them

an indispensable new form of film and television art media in the field of new media.

Micro-documentaries have evolved from traditional documentaries, possessing the objective and authentic characteristics inherent in traditional documentaries, as well as the short and powerful highlights that are adapted to new media. However, with the continuous improvement of the public's aesthetic level and media literacy, if micro-documentaries start to be conservative in form and content, the audience will also turn around without mercy, lose confidence in the program, and have a "backlash" effect on micro-documentaries. Some micro-documentaries may rely too much on traditional topics such as historical culture and biographical stories, such as historical micro-documentaries, lacking attention and discussion on social hot topics, modern life, and other real-life issues. Additionally, there is a lack of innovation and breakthrough in narrative perspective and depth, making the program content seem bland and unremarkable, difficult to resonate and provoke thought among audiences, resulting in a severe decline in ratings. Therefore, for micro-documentaries, it is necessary to continuously innovate and develop on the basis of borrowing from traditional documentaries. Micro-documentaries should adhere to the creative concept of "content is king, form innovation, and channel is gold", continuously achieve innovative development of micro documentaries, and enable them to leverage the characteristics of new media in the perspective of new media to assist in the development of micro-documentaries. To better understand and grasp the development trajectory of micro-documentaries in the era of new media, we must delve into the actual data and factual evidence behind them. These data and evidence not only provide us with an intuitive presentation of the current status of micro-documentary development, but also reveal key factors such as market trends, audience preferences, and technological innovations. Firstly, from the perspective of market trends, key indicators such as viewership, likes, and shares of micro-documentaries have shown a steady upward trend. This indicates that micro-documentaries, as a new content form, are gradually gaining recognition and popularity among audiences. At the same time, with the continuous development and application of technologies such as 5G and AI, the production and dissemination of micro-documentaries are facing more possibilities. Secondly, from the perspective of audience preferences, micro-documentaries have attracted audiences of different ages, genders, and regions with their unique charm. Through the analysis of audience behavior data, we can find that audiences prefer micro-documentaries with authentic content, sincere emotions, and strong storytelling. Finally, from the perspective of technological innovation, the development of new media has provided more tools and means for the production and dissemination of micro-documentaries. For example, the application of technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) has brought a more immersive viewing experience to micro-documentaries; while the rise of short video platforms has provided a broader stage for the dissemination of micro-documentaries.

2. The Reasons for the Rise of Micro-Documentaries

With the emergence of new media based on digital technology, infinite communication networks and other network technologies, and computers and smartphones as terminals, people's lives have become faster, more convenient, and efficient. At the same time, information acquisition has become more fragmented, and the pace of life has accelerated. Furthermore, due to the unequal information held by the media and the audience, the media needs to present the most exciting content to the audience in the shortest possible time. Short videos have emerged, and micro-documentaries have gradually emerged under the influence of short videos. A micro-documentary is a film or television art form that uses real-life events as creative material, focuses on true stories and real people, and has a duration ranging from 5 to 25 minutes. It employs the language of micro-films for artistic processing and presentation. Adapted to various communication channels, it is characterized by its concise length, single narrative focus, microscopic perspective, and documentary style. It is one of the significant directions for the development of documentaries in the era of new media. Micro-documentary (Sun, 2022). It includes two aspects. On the one hand, it is a documentary film, which has the characteristics of being documentary, objective, and authentic; On the other hand, it is "micro", which is represented as "small, small" in Chinese, but in the perspective of new media, it can be understood as "fine volume" and "micro intention". "fine volume" refers to the short length, which is very suitable for fragmented reading habits, while "micro intention" refers to cutting small mouths and seeing small things as big. The perspective of intention is not only limited to grand events, but also turns to the lower class society, showcasing the original ecological process of life. The perspective is more micro and civilian, starting from the needs of the audience, making it suitable for the characteristics of new media's approachability, popularization, and popularization.

In summary, the birth of micro-documentaries is inseparable from the development of society and the improvement of people's aesthetic level. Micro-documentaries are a new form of film and television art that rejects fiction, takes objective reality as the main object, and presents real people, events, emotions, and feelings through the lens in a real and objective manner. They are mainly disseminated through new media, with a duration ranging from 3 to 30 minutes.

3. Research Status of Micro-Documentaries

Micro-documentaries, as an emerging art form in the era of new media, have rapidly emerged with their concise and rich content, playing an important role in cultural communication, historical inheritance, and discussion of social issues. Based on a review of existing literature, this article aims to summarize the research results of micro-documentaries in terms of digital imagery creation, creative themes and techniques, narrative structure and innovation, cultural com-

munication practices, as well as new trends in creation, aesthetics, and dissemination in a converged media environment.

In the article “Creation and Presentation of Digital Imagery in Historical and Cultural Micro-documentaries” by Zhang (2024), they delve into how historical and cultural micro-documentaries utilize digital technology and creative techniques to create and present digital imagery in the digital era. They point out that the creation of digital imagery is an important means for micro-documentaries to convey historical and cultural connotations. By employing advanced technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality, immersive viewing experiences can be created, enabling audiences to intuitively feel the charm of history and culture.

Wu (2024), in her article “Analysis of Creative Themes and Techniques of Micro-documentaries in the New Media Environment”, conducts an in-depth analysis of the creative themes and techniques of micro-documentaries in the new media environment. She believes that the new media environment provides a broader stage for the creation of micro-documentaries, while also posing higher demands on creative themes and techniques. Micro-documentaries need to focus on social hot topics, be close to people’s lives, and adopt diversified creative techniques such as nonlinear narrative and multi-perspective switching to attract audience attention.

An & Wang (2024), in their article “Research on New Trends in the Creation, Aesthetics, and Dissemination of Micro-documentaries in the Context of Converged Media”, conduct an in-depth study on new trends in the creation, aesthetics, and dissemination of micro-documentaries in a converged media environment. They argue that in a converged media environment, the creation of micro-documentaries needs to pay more attention to cross-border integration and innovative development, while also focusing on the aesthetic needs and communication effects of audiences. By utilizing new technologies and new media platforms, micro-documentaries can achieve more efficient and precise dissemination, expanding their social influence and cultural value.

4. The Current Situation and Characteristics of Micro-Documentaries from the Perspective of New Media

4.1. Microscopic Perspective Presentation and Diversified Theme Expression

Micro-documentaries integrate the attributes of traditional documentaries and short videos, retaining the essence of documentaries. They express real people and events objectively, presenting the original ecological process of life, and adding some artistic processing to make them more in line with the fast-paced and fragmented reading methods of today. At the same time, micro documentaries showcase the social landscape and characteristics of the times from a small perspective, recording true emotions and emotions, and subtly incorporating mainstream ideology into micro-documentaries through audio-visual imagery,

allowing audiences to receive aesthetic education in the shortest possible time. CCTV's "Youth Roughly" features contemporary youth as characters, showcasing how young people choose to face life, career, and love. In the fourth episode, the theme is contemporary youth staying up late, showcasing the true reason why young people stay up late not only for leisure and entertainment, but also for life. Presenting from a micro perspective can evoke emotional resonance among the audience, thereby achieving objectification of essential power and obtaining aesthetic pleasure.

Micro-documentaries reflect social life, so the themes are more diverse due to life, which can make them cater to the aesthetic tastes and appreciation habits of different audiences. Although "If National Treasures Can Speak" has not received as much attention as the food documentary "Breakfast China" and has a huge audience, it still has great charm for enthusiasts who love cultural relics, and can achieve its "long tail effect" and expand the influence of history and culture. In recent years, the themes of micro-documentaries have covered various fields, including the food micro-documentary "Breakfast China", the famous painting micro-documentary "How to Speak of This Painting", the police micro-documentary "Guarding the Liberation of the West", and so on. In the field of documentaries, a variety of works have emerged to meet the diverse needs of audiences. Micro-documentary creators create different works based on the viewing characteristics and aesthetic tastes of different target audience groups, segment the audience, and enable the audience to meet their own identity and value construction needs.

4.2. Artistic Narrative Techniques and Storytelling Narrative Methods

Documentaries aim to record life and present events, which makes traditional documentaries mostly narrate in chronological order and causal relationships. The Grierson model of "picture + commentary" presents the audience in a way that can cause aesthetic fatigue. Micro-documentary creators, in order to cater to the fragmented viewing habits of the audience, highlight the artistry and storytelling of the narrative, break the original expectations of the audience, and obtain a novel aesthetic experience. Storytelling collective memory can not only mobilize the audience's emotions, but also enable them to gain a sense of identity and belonging through watching the film. Bilibili's product "If a National Treasure Can Speak" uses first person personification to evoke the audience's emotions, allowing them to unconsciously enter the "heart" of cultural relics. While it may seem like cultural relics telling their own experiences, it is actually human beings telling their own history. For example, introducing the owl as the "most silly and cute bronze artifact" and "angry bird" is very in line with the taste of young people today. Combining cultural relics with contemporary internet slang can dispel barriers to understanding elite culture.

Storytelling creation can help documentaries break free from dry moral preaching and move people with emotions. Through emotional resonance, docu-

mentaries are endowed with more connotations and implications (Li, 2022). Starting from a personalized perspective, select typical stories and detailed fragments from daily life, and narrate the culture of the Forbidden City from multiple angles, deep levels, and all-round perspectives, making the history of the Forbidden City more down-to-earth and easily accepted by ordinary audiences. For example, in “How to Tell This Painting”, famous paintings are selected for storytelling, allowing the characters in the paintings to be portrayed in a modern context, making the paintings more popular and artistic. In the first episode of “The Painting of Taming”, Taming, Sewing, and Ironing are treated as different professions, metaphorically referring to the workplace environment, and adding network terms such as “the bitterness of social animals”, “hidden rules of the workplace”, and “remote work” to describe the work scene of aristocratic women pounding and sewing clothes in a modern tone. Artistic and narrative micro-documentaries not only bring history to life, but also enhance the audience’s aesthetic appreciation ability.

4.3. Technological Display of Visuals and Ultimate Audio-Visual Expression

The development of technology is constantly changing our lives, making our lives more convenient. At the same time, it is also constantly improving our aesthetic experience in our appreciation. Through technology, we can see perspectives that are difficult for ordinary people to see. As Yao Si discussed about “expectation vision,” artists need to break the original expectation vision of the appreciator, but cannot be too advanced. They need to make the audience feel familiar while shining in front of them. Science and technology provide new material means for art. For example, at the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics, high-tech technologies such as light and shadow screens and 3D simulation technology were added, successfully turning the director’s artistic creativity into reality. Using technology can improve the expressive power of art, allowing the appreciator to obtain a richer aesthetic experience.

Empowered by technology, micro-documentaries can provide a more visual experience, showcase perspectives that the audience cannot normally see through technology, break the audience’s conventional thinking, and bring visual impact to the audience. Currently, the multiple combinations of micro lenses, time delay photography, motion lenses, and other lenses have become the standard configuration for each film. Fine post production is carried out to enhance the color and viewing quality of the images, enhancing the overall quality of micro-documentaries. The micro-documentary “Sounds Delicious” produced by CCTV focuses on sound, selecting 15 dishes with Chinese culinary characteristics, combined with close-up shots and sports shots, to make audio-visual expression more extreme. Through the use of highly three-dimensional sounds such as hot oil pouring, boiling soup, and stir frying in an iron pot, we achieve synesthesia, where various sensations penetrate and move towards each other, stimulating our taste nerves and greatly enhancing our aesthetic perception. When crispy

Sweet and sour pork meat is poured with sticky sour and sweet juice, and Deep-fried meat balls collide with each other to make a sound like glass, sound and picture are organically combined to arouse your appetite. "If National Treasures Can Speak" uses a large number of close-up shots to showcase the delicacy of cultural relics, highlighting the exquisite skills of craftsmen, and allowing the audience to feel the charm of cultural relics.

5. Innovative Development of Micro-Documentaries from the Perspective of New Media

5.1. Improving the Quality of Topic Selection and Arousing Cultural Identity

If the form of documentaries becomes conservative and the content becomes conventional, the audience will experience aesthetic fatigue and turn around without mercy. Therefore, it is necessary to explore more contemporary themes, activate the cultural psychological structure accumulated by the audience's collective unconsciousness deep in their hearts, and let them develop a sense of cultural identity and belonging. At present, the topic selection of micro-documentaries is more focused on the field of food, with more attention paid to the economic value behind it, while ignoring the social and cultural values that micro-documentaries aim to convey. Only by effectively combining social and economic benefits can truly valuable micro-documentaries be created.

In the face of homogenized micro-documentary creation, it is necessary to explore the value of the times and culture, and stimulate the audience's sense of cultural identity and belonging. CCTV Documentary Channel has launched a series of micro-documentaries on the fight against the epidemic, titled "Wuhan: My Diary of Fighting against the Epidemic". By showcasing the Vlogs of medical personnel, ordinary people, volunteers and other small figures, China's anti-epidemic spirit is highlighted. Through a micro perspective and ordinary yet warm visuals, more spiritual power is injected into the people. Micro-documentaries have also become an indispensable means of conveying the spirit of the times and showcasing national strength. Through the introduction of the 100 treasures of town enterprises by the guardian of the token, "The Century of the Token" aims to understand the development history of state-owned enterprises, to see people, things, and emotions, inherit the red faith, and strengthen ideal beliefs. This is the value carried by micro-documentaries.

5.2. Optimize Resource Integration and Achieve Multi-Dimensional Dissemination

At present, the audience is in a fragmented and fast-paced social life, and the demand for video has gradually turned to "short", "flat" and "fast". Therefore, targeted adjustments should be made for micro-documentaries in different communication channels. For traditional media such as television, the length of micro-documentaries should be appropriately increased, and broadcast in the

rest time and prime time of young groups. For mobile terminals, the length of time should be compressed to adapt to the fragmented reading habits of users, and use big data to push to target groups. Maximizing resource utilization and generating different forms of information products to meet the diverse needs of different audiences, micro-documentaries utilize their short and concise characteristics to adapt well to the fragmented reading atmosphere of current new media.

Tiktok and Kwai short video platforms have become important information communication channels in the new media field of vision. To broaden the communication field of micro-documentaries, we must strengthen the relevance between micro-documentaries and “three micro end”. The short and concise nature of micro-documentaries makes them more suitable for the dissemination of short video platforms. By utilizing the fission propagation and data push of short videos, they attract a large user base and utilize the bullet comments, likes, comments, and other functions of short videos to achieve user participation and provide timely feedback on creation. With the rise of new media, the combination of micro-documentaries and new media will inevitably produce a $1 + 1 > 2$ effect. However, it is also important to avoid lengthy narrative content and ensure that it is concise and concise, allowing users to obtain the maximum amount of information in the shortest possible time and meeting the psychological needs of the audience. Tiktok’s “Every Me” takes the form of half interview and half record to restore the real life state of the redundant and the characters like Sister Mao, Li Jiaqi, Li Xueqin, etc., to close the distance with the audience, and achieve effective communication through emotional resonance.

5.3. Integration of New Technologies and Forms into New Forms

As the seventh art, film and television art is the unity of visual art and auditory art. Film and television art not only needs to bring purification and sublimation to the audience’s soul, but also needs to provide them with aesthetic pleasure at the sensory level, in order to obtain positive rest and ways. Micro-documentaries innovate in form and use technology to empower audiences, which helps to break down stereotypes and achieve a “peak experience” beyond their original expectations. “China in Art” uses 3D technology to vividly showcase classic works collected by the art museum, allowing audiences to see Qi Baishi’s “Shrimp” come to life.

Secondly, the birth of short videos also means the arrival of the vertical screen era, and new film and television forms such as vertical screen variety shows, vertical screen micro-films, vertical screen documentaries and so on have come into being. Whether it is Tiktok’s biographical micro-documentary “Every Me”, the intangible cultural heritage documentary “Lost Immortals”, or Tencent Video’s “Queuing for Snacks”, vertical screen micro-documentaries can only present middle, close and close-up scenes due to screen restrictions, which is not conducive to showing a complete space and overall image, but it is conducive to making the subject more prominent, catching the audience’s attention, narrowing

the distance between the audience and promoting Emotional expression.

Furthermore, the new form of interactive micro-documentaries has also made users more participatory and proactive. “Not a Few” has added hyperlinks, allowing users to watch according to their own interesting segments. They can experience the stories of poverty alleviation workers in different regions and scenes, allowing the audience to experience the hardships and difficulties of poverty alleviation firsthand. “Not a Few” allows users to grasp the plot direction, and users are no longer bystanders, but more witnesses and participants, experiencing the results of poverty alleviation firsthand. The integration of new technologies and forms into new forms makes micro-documentaries more in line with audience tastes, increases user stickiness, and promotes the continuous development of micro documentaries.

5.4. Reserve Industry Talents and Improve Industry Supervision

At present, the development of micro-documentaries is in its early stages. There are certain differences in production between micro-documentaries and long documentaries, and they need to be combined with the characteristics of the new media field for production. Therefore, there are very few creators engaged in micro-documentaries. To motivate more people to shoot micro-documentaries, relevant micro-documentary competitions can be set up to attract more creators to create. From the current competition environment, for micro-documentary related competitions, only a separate micro-documentary track can be seen in documentaries or micro films, and there is no single and complete micro-documentary competition. Therefore, the competition settings related to micro-documentaries are not yet mature enough. Major platforms, relevant institutions, and university platforms should actively carry out competitions specifically for micro-documentaries, and attract more creators to pay attention to micro-documentaries by rewarding honors, especially professional students in major universities. They are the main creative force for the future development of micro-documentaries and reserve more professional talents for the field of micro-documentaries.

In addition to reserving professional talents, it is also necessary to improve corresponding regulatory policies for the micro-documentary industry. Relying solely on the review of micro-documentary platforms cannot distinguish the quality of micro-documentaries. Platforms often have subjectivity and arbitrariness, and platforms are more focused on profit and traffic, which makes more low-quality and homogeneous micro-documentaries appear in the public eye. To promote the healthy development of the micro-documentary industry, it is necessary to increase law enforcement efforts, introduce policies and theoretical norms for micro-documentaries, refuse to broadcast non compliant micro-documentaries, and promptly provide feedback to users and handle their demands. The focus should be on the “transmitter” to the “audience”, and the work should meet the aesthetic taste of users. Rewards and promotion should also be given to high-quality documentaries, so that more creators can create more high-quality

works.

6. Epilogue

The continuous development of technology and the continuous expansion of the market have enabled micro-documentaries to occupy a place. Overall, micro-documentaries have undergone continuous innovation in both form and content, but in order to occupy a share and gain more attention in the fiercely competitive market, continuous innovation and development are still needed. How can micro documentaries adapt to the fragmented and fast-paced social life of users while effectively combining their own social and economic benefits? How can they transform, innovate and develop in a full media perspective, innovate new forms, and use big data to complete agenda setting (Zhang, 2022). East China Normal University, 2022 to guide users, these are all things that micro-documentaries need to constantly explore and develop in order to achieve sustainable development and expand the influence of micro-documentaries.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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