Research on TCM Culture Communication and Education from a Cross-Cultural Perspective — Take the "Materia Medica China" as an Example

Ziqing Hua^{1,a}, Li Zhang^{1,*}

¹College of Humanities and Management, Shaanxi University of Chinese Medicine, Xianyang, Shaanxi, China

Abstract: As an indispensable part of China's long history and culture, the dissemination and education of Traditional Chinese medicine(TCM) play an important role in cross-cultural communication. Due to the cultural differences between Chinese and Western medical systems and philosophical ideas, TCM has encountered a certain degree of adjustment in international communication. This difference is not only reflected in the specific operational level of medical practice, but also affects people's understanding, cognition and education of the concept of TCM, limiting the wide dissemination and in-depth development of TCM on the international stage. Based on the cross-cultural perspective, this paper takes "Materia Medica China" as an example, and analyzes the achievements and deficiencies of TCM film and television works in the field of cultural communication and education. Through the analysis, this paper aims to explore how this kind of film and television works can cross the cultural boundaries, as a unique carrier to effectively convey the cultural inheritance and education of TCM.

Keywords: Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture; Film and Television Communication; Materia Medica China; Cross-Cultural Perspective; Traditional Chinese Medicine Education

1. Introduction

1.1 The value and educational significance of TCM culture communication

The dissemination and education of TCM culture is an important part of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, and its significance is closely linked to the grand goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In 2016, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and The State Council issued the Outline of the Healthy China 2030 Plan, which included education, TCM and international communication in the national strategic plan, and proposed to "strengthen health education" "give full play to the unique advantages of TCM" and "strengthen international exchanges and cooperation" in promoting the construction of a healthy China. In 2021, the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine's "Promoting high-quality Integration of TCM into the Development Plan of Jointly Building the Belt and Road (2021-2025) clearly pointed out that "deepening education cooperation and focusing on strengthening the construction of international talents of TCM", linking TCM education with the cross-cultural communication of TCM, echoing the national external development strategy. In 2022, the report of the Party's 20th National Congress also proposed to "promote the inheritance and innovation of TCM", and the lines are full of the Party's expectations for the development of TCM.

With TCM as the carrier, the film and television education based on knowledge, tradition and culture plays an important role in the cross-cultural communication. In the past few decades, the "sea "of TCM films and television works has popularized the precious knowledge heritage of Chinese civilization to all countries in the world, especially along the Belt and Road route, and realized the foreign education of culture and knowledge outside the traditional classroom. In 2017, the Guiding Opinions of the State Administration of TCM of the Ministry of Education on Deepening the Reform and Development of TCM Education in Collaboration with Medical Education emphasized "strengthening foreign exchanges and cooperation in TCM education" and called for "giving play to the promoting role of education in foreign exchanges and cooperation in TCM". Combined with the

^a2174879105@qq.com

^{*}Corresponding author

background of the Belt and Road development strategy, we should seize the opportunity of education communication and promote the transnational communication of TCM education.

1.2 Research status of the dissemination of TCM

With the development of economic globalization, science and technology and modern medicine, TCM, as a special and important resource, has attracted more and more attention from the global medical community. In today's world, where cultural needs exhibit a trend towards diversification and multi-level development, existing research has already focused on the dissemination of TCM through single-dimensional texts and languages. However, the spread of TCM culture carried by film and television works with characteristics such as audio-visual enjoyment, montage and story plot has received significantly less attention in academic research, and only a small number of studies have been initially devoted to it. Yuan Lan, Zhang Xing and other researchers discussed the difficulties faced by film and television media in the process of spreading TCM culture, and put forward corresponding suggestions for improvement. [1],[2]Wang Xiaoding and other researchers analyzed the changes in narrative expression of TV dramas and films on TCM in different stages since the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, reflected on the problems existing in the creation and dissemination of these works, and put forward constructive suggestions. [3]Yang Yidan explained the influence of film and television works on the narrative mode of TCM medical treatment, the overall health concept of society and the choice of medical treatment. [4]

Since the film "Li Shizhen" was released in 1956, which set a precedent for the theme of TCM culture in films in New China, films such as "The First Needle in the World" and "The Divine Doctor Bian Que" have won numerous praise for integrating TCM culture into the story plots of films and TV series. In recent years, excellent film works such as "Sincere Doctor", which are adapted from the life stories of doctors, historical anecdotes of TCM and medical cases, have been released one after another, promoting the visual influence and dissemination of TCM culture. Through an in-depth analysis of the narrative expression, technical application, audio-visual language and symbolic meaning of the documentary "Herbal China", Yao Lin leads the audience to fully understand the culture of TCM. ^[5]TV dramas about TCM culture, such as "The Medical Saint Zhang Zhongjing", have been created and processed in a deeper way on the basis of retaining the original historical appearance, so as to enhance the artistic appreciation of characters, anecdotes and plots related to TCM culture. In addition, TV dramas such as "Empresses in the Palace" and "The Legend of Mi Yue", which focus on palace battles, have gained high ratings because they involve many elements of TCM culture. The 2019 CCTV drama "The Old Chinese Medicine Doctor" also showcased the long history and cultural charm of TCM, which has attracted wide attention.

With the launch of the Belt and Road initiative, the craze of Chinese culture going overseas has continued, and in the post-epidemic era, it continues to promote cross-cultural communication through online dissemination. Based on the "encoding/decoding" theory, Huang Hua and Zhang Li explained in depth the causes of the lagging transmission of TCM culture in the post-epidemic era, and put forward corresponding solutions accordingly. ^[6]Zhao Yanqing and others discussed the current situation and challenges of TCM culture dissemination under the background of Belt and Road initiative, discussed the importance of film and television education in TCM culture dissemination, and put forward strategies for implementing film and television teaching of TCM culture based on the actual situation of TCM teaching at present. ^[7]

With the popularity of TV dramas and films on TCM culture and the continuous evolution of TCM media images, [8] some problems have also emerged in the creation of related works. For example, some works exaggerate the efficacy of TCM to make their plots more appealing to audiences, overestimate the role of medicine, and deify TCM; some directors or writers, due to a lack of understanding of TCM, arbitrarily fabricate drug names and effects, conveying incorrect knowledge about TCM to the audience; In some works involving TCM culture, they do not take TCM culture as the core. TCM knowledge often serves the plot, often used as a harmful tool, and doctors often show an image of fear of authority and profit. This kind of works has caused the audience's misunderstanding of TCM culture, which is contrary to the original intention of spreading TCM culture and seriously deviates from the established communication goal. Therefore, as an important carrier of the dissemination of TCM, film and television works should assume the responsibility of carrying forward China's excellent culture. [9]

In addition, the existing research map on the influence and dissemination of TCM culture also shows that macro data and theoretical models are dominant, while qualitative observations at fine granularity are neglected to some extent. Based on the theory of cultural transmission, pioneering

studies on related topics have introduced the ISM model [10], IP perspective [11] and 5W model [12] into the analysis of TCM cultural transmission. However, with the entry of technical elements in social science analysis, the situational study of film and television literature itself and the text analysis of plot lines have been neglected to some extent. Moreover, there is still a lack of interdisciplinary exploration of TCM and cross-cultural education in academia. In view of the above research status, this paper takes" Materia Medica China" as the entry point to provide a fine-grained case observation on the dissemination of TCM and cross-cultural education, and then draw different perspectives and conclusions from the existing research.

2. Interpretation of TCM culture in "Materia Medica China"

2.1 Interpretation of TCM culture in "Materia Medica China"

"Materia Medica China" is a documentary series on TCM, akin to "A Bite of China. "It uses warm and tangible visual power to uncover and document stories of TCM culture. ^[13]This interpretation of TCM culture in film and television is mainly reflected in three dimensions: TCM medical culture, dietary culture and health culture.

TCM culture refers to the sum of spiritual elements such as life view, disease view and material elements such as medical instruments formed and continuously inherited in medical activities. ^[14]In the episode "Time", it emphasizes that the harvesting and preparation of herbs should follow natural laws. ^[15]In the episode "Double Face," the idea of dialectical interdependence in drug principles is demonstrated. The medicinal value of the same herb will change significantly if different preparation methods are used. If the raw Polygonum multiflorum is soaked in alcohol, it possesses the characteristics of clearing heat and detoxifying. However, when processed, cooked Polygonum multiflorum helps to replenish essence blood and promotes black hair growth. ^[16]

In the Chinese medicine dietary culture system, many foods have medicinal value, and many drugs also have edible function, realizing the ancient wisdom of medicine and food are of the same origin. "[14]" Materia Medica China" fully reflects the core concept of food and medicine both in origin "in TCM. For example, in the episode "Time," it records how people living in Zhejiang, use monascus as an ingredient to cook dishes like braised pork; in the episode "Yearning," Deng Guiting finds lingzhi from the mountains to make lingzhi duck soup. According to the "Shennong's Classic of Materia Medicine", lingzhi can help those with weak constitutions.

TCM health culture includes knowledge and practice level, typical examples include the concept of exercise health care combining work and rest, tai Chi, and other health care activities. [14]In the episode of "Time", people living in the cloudy and rainy, damp and cold Yunnan-Guizhou region cleverly use the natural resource of gastrodia to alleviate diseases by cooking it in various ways such as stir-frying and stewing hot pot. "Medicine instead of tea"has also become a common choice for people to maintain health. For example, the tea made from frost mulberry leaves can dispel wind, heat and effectively treat wind-heat colds.

2.2 Cross-cultural communication effect

Since the documentary "A Bite of China" launched by CCTV in 2012 became an instant hit on the Internet, the field of TCM culture has followed suit. "Materia Medica China", which aired in May 2016, was the first documentary to be broadcast across multiple platforms in Chinese documentary history. It is reported that the first broadcast of the program reached 0. 83 percent, which shows that it has achieved excellent communication effect.

In June 2016, it was screened as a promotional video on the theme of TCM at the Second Forum of Health Ministers of China. In August 2017, the international version of the first season was broadcast successively in Southeast Asia, South Asia and other regions. This version presents the cultural charm of Chinese herbal medicine to overseas audiences from a new "international perspective", enhances the global audience's understanding of Chinese medicine culture. [17]

2.3 Advantages and disadvantages of dissemination

The success of "Materia Medica China" can be attributed to two main factors: first, the program reflects diverse values and is in line with the public's thinking. From the perspective of craftsmen, it

deeply explores the multidimensional charm of the spirit of craftsmanship, showing the inheritance of traditional medical concepts by pharmacists. The program records the story of the pharmacists and the herbalists, emphasizing their principles of following nature and respecting life, as well as the awe and respect for life embodied in practical activities. The second is to show the details of Chinese herbal preparation and record the charm of Chinese medicine with vivid lens language through careful shooting and publicity. The film is guided by a team of professional experts, and draws on the integration of online media and traditional media communication, which has been widely recognized and praised. [18]

While it has achieved success, there are still some questions worth thinking about. Firstly, in the context of new media, Firstly, in the context of the new media era, the production and dissemination mode of video makes its educational attributes and functions gradually weakened. Although the simplification of video content increases people's channels of information reception, it reduces their understanding of professional knowledge, which is easy to lead to the phenomenon of forgetting what they have seen. Secondly, the fragmented dissemination of TCM culture is easy to break the natural coherence of the public's access to knowledge and lack a systematic thinking system. In some specific episodes of "Materia Medica China", although it describes a single herb, and involves Chinese medicine formulas and different dosage forms, these single herbs and formulas are independent of each other and have no actual connection. Finally, in this era known as "everyone's media", everyone has the opportunity to become a communicator of TCM culture, but also has the responsibility to become an educator. However, if the publisher itself has insufficient knowledge of TCM, it is easy to lead to misinformation and ambiguous education. In the dissemination of some contents of "Materia Medica China", some descriptions may not be very accurate, which is easy to transmit inaccurate education to the audience.

3. Insufficiency of the cultural transmission of TCM film and television

With its rapid transmission speed, diversified forms of expression and the characteristics of not being restricted by strict time and space, film and television carriers have become one of the most rapid and widely used important channels in the field of TCM culture dissemination. On the one hand, it promotes the extensive dissemination and in-depth popularization of TCM culture, consolidates the essence and foundation of TCM culture in China; on the other hand, through the spread of film and television works, it accelerates the process of cultural exchange between China and the West, and lays a solid foundation for the international communication of TCM culture. While presenting historical culture, these TCM films and TV shows grasp the unique attributes of TCM culture, which is rooted in life and closely linked with people's daily life. However, the current spread of TCM film and television culture is faced with many problems, which are not only limited to the field of film and television communication itself, but also touch on the cultural conflicts encountered in the process of cross-cultural communication and the gap in talent education and training.

3.1 Lack of gatekeeping and evaluation mechanisms

Firstly, there are various kinds of film and television works, including TCM health programs, TV series, movies, documentaries and other forms, but their content quality and artistic standards vary significantly. Among them, some films and television works only treat TCM as an accessory to the plot rather than a core element when presenting TCM knowledge, resulting in the lack of necessary rigor and accuracy in the application of TCM terms and medical principles. It is easy to cause public doubts about TCM and produce a crisis of trust; Secondly, the dissemination of TCM knowledge has the risk of misleading, and blind following by the audience may cause health concerns. In different films and TV works, the same TCM theory or knowledge is given different functions and effects, and some descriptions are contrary to the real situation, which makes it difficult for the audience to accurately obtain the correct knowledge of TCM from films and TV works. In addition, some audiences are attracted by the magical efficacy of TCM in movies and TV dramas, and have an excessive worship of TCM. In the absence of professional identification ability, they blindly adopt and apply TCM to daily life, which has hidden health risks that cannot be ignored; Finally, in order to pursue visual effects and attract the attention of the audience, some works exaggerate the description of Traditional Chinese medicine and overstate the theory of "reviving the dead", misleading the audience's true understanding of TCM. [19]

3.2 The contradiction between theory and cultural view

As TCM is a knowledge system developed based on empirical theories, it has its uniqueness and experience, which is contradictory to the methodology of Western scientific theories which are tested by practice and tend to be close to truth, thus leading to some inconsistency between TCM and traditional scientific theories. ^[20]The differences between Western medicine and TCM culture make it difficult for the two to understand and identify with each other. However, TCM films and TV works cannot effectively solve such contradictions, leading to some people in China to question TCM and not identify with TCM culture. Thus, the foreign TCM culture is not transmitted. For a long time, the international community's understanding of Chinese traditional culture is relatively limited, which further aggravates the contradictions in concept, and becomes the main obstacle to the cross-cultural communication of TCM.

In addition, the differences in medical traditions also exist between TCM and other nationalities of medicine. Wang Jin and other scholars pointed out that under the "Belt and Road" initiative, the spread of TCM culture is also facing challenges from traditional medical cultures in countries along the routes. For example, Indian medical culture and Arab medical culture are similar to Chinese medicine culture at the philosophical level, which may lead to doubts and challenges to Chinese medicine culture in these countries to some extent, making it more difficult to communicate and spread Chinese medicine culture.

3.3 Lack of talent and education support

At present, the main promoters of TCM culture dissemination include government departments, TCM higher education institutions, TCM medical service units and domestic and foreign practicing TCM practitioners. However, in the actual process of communication, there are two major challenges: first, the lack of translation accuracy. Up to now, Chinese universities have not trained talents for the field of TCM communication in their Chinese as a foreign language education majors, and few students majoring in medical translation focus on TCM, let alone cultural communication. Under this situation, translators in this field often lack professional knowledge of TCM, which makes it difficult to accurately convey the terms and concepts of TCM, thus affecting the international communication effect of TCM culture.

Second, the limitation of bilingual teaching ability. Although most university teachers have a solid basic knowledge of medicine, they are short in foreign language communication and teaching, and cannot fully undertake the bilingual teaching task of TCM, which restricts the internationalization process of TCM cultural education. ^[21]Compared with western medicine, the internationalization degree of teachers in TCM education programs is lower, and students' employment direction is mostly limited to TCM industry in China. They pay little attention to cross-cultural communication, TCM film and television, etc. ,which leads to a lack of professionals with TCM education background joining such emerging fields.

4. Cultural communication strategies of TCM film and television

In the context of cross-cultural background, the following strategies are proposed to address the problems faced by the spread of TCM film and television culture in order to improve its communication effect.

4.1 Establishing the corresponding audit mechanism

Due to the lack of a special audit and evaluation system for the presentation of TCM knowledge in films and television, this phenomenon has led to the misuse and abuse of TCM knowledge, which has spread to the majority of audiences. The incorrect dissemination of TCM knowledge has not only failed to help the inheritance and promotion of TCM culture, but also introduced new challenges for the healthy development of TCM. Therefore, the censorship mechanism of film and television industry should respect history and culture, strictly checking the content of film and television works. [22] In order to ensure the accuracy of the application of TCM knowledge in film and television works, it is urgent for China to build a set of review and evaluation mechanism for the dissemination of TCM in film and television.

In addition, it is necessary to further standardize TCM terminology and the corresponding review

mechanism. In the process of creation, many costume dramas often incorporate knowledge of TCM. Whether the application of such knowledge is reasonable is the responsibility and problem that the TCM audit mechanism in the film and television industry undertakes. Due to the extensive coverage, huge audience and far-reaching influence of film and television publicity, any film and television works involving TCM elements should undergo a strict and thorough review process to ensure that the theoretical terms involved in TCM are accurate and improve the rigor and scientific nature of the content.

4.2 Treating intercultural differences correctly

The primary task of cross-cultural communication is to correctly understand and respect the cultural differences between countries. In this process, the first step is to discuss the cultural attributes of the target country and clarify its commonalities and individuality with Chinese culture. For target countries, TCM, as an alternative to western medicine, has significant advantages in disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment. In the process of communication, we should fully consider the local cultural customs and medical technology level, meet the needs of the audience, and adopt corresponding strategies according to local conditions. At the same time, the cross-cultural communication of TCM culture should be faithful to its unique cultural attributes and traditional values. In the process of building a global cultural community, we adhere to the core concept of harmony and difference, and pursue the coexistence and prosperity of cultures. Therefore, while deeply understanding the unique characteristics of TCM culture, we should maintain its distinct Chinese characteristics and local folk customs. In terms of content and form, it shows the unique customs and spiritual outlook contained in TCM culture, which is in line with China's image and local characteristics, so as to enhance the uniqueness of foreign communication content. [23]In terms of content dissemination, Chinese characteristic folk art performance, paper cutting, calligraphy and other forms can be integrated to enhance the attractiveness and radiation of foreign communication.

4.3 Strengthening talent training and education

As a classic linear communication process model, Lasswell's 5W model puts forward five core elements of communication activities:communicator, communication content,communication mode, communication object and communication effect. For the spread of TCM culture, we should first build a team for the film and television dissemination of TCM culture, actively encourage the active participation of various parties,and jointly promote cooperation and win-win results. Therefore,this paper suggests that relevant government departments and educational institutions should promote the establishment of education courses and even majors related to TCM culture, so as to cultivate high-quality professionals for the cross-cultural broadcasting of TCM. In addition, while cultivating and introducing professional talents, we should also pay attention to presenting professional knowledge in an easy-to-understand way and spreading the correct and realistic Chinese medicine cultural concepts.

5. Conclusion

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) films and TV shows serve as a crucial channel for disseminating TCM culture and an important medium for promoting international TCM education. This study, from a cross-cultural perspective, delves into the current state of TCM cultural dissemination through the documentary "Materia Medica China". It reveals numerous challenges faced by TCM culture in the realm of film and television production and proposes corresponding strategies accordingly.

From a cross-cultural perspective, the dissemination and education of TCM have achieved certain results but also face numerous challenges. Through continuous improvement and innovation, TCM cultural film and television works are expected to play a greater influence on the international stage and make greater contributions to the inheritance and education of TCM culture: On one hand, for TCM itself, cross-cultural communication helps preserve its unique value; on the other hand, for Chinese traditional culture, enhancing international education in TCM can further strengthen China's cultural soft power and expand the influence of Chinese traditional culture globally. In addition, using film and television culture as a carrier to promote the innovative development of TCM and the deep integration between Chinese and western medicine will be one of the important directions for the innovation and development of modern medicine and education. With its rich modes of creation, TCM film and

television works provide a viewer-friendly communication medium for the "cultural export" of TCM. This is not only conducive to the popularization of TCM education, but also conducive to the further development of TCM personnel training and education.

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