

AN ANALYSIS OF CHINESE DOCUMENTARY

IN WE-MEDIA TIMES



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#### ABSTRACT

Since the emergence of Web 2.0 technology in the 1990s, the development of We-media represented by blogs has begun to sprout. At the beginning of the 21st century, the concept of We-media was first proposed. In nowadays society, where the Internet and electronic technology are developing rapidly, people are increasingly relying on smart mobile terminals, such as smart phones and tablet computers. The development of We-media platforms, such as Weibo and WeChat has sprung up everywhere. They are gradually used by people in their daily lives. Since the We-media times, it has provided a faster and more convenient way for traditional documentaries to be transmitted. The information exchange path from the media has changed the audience's position in the era of mass communication, and it has also changed the way people participate in social discussions. These changes have also had a major impact on the production and dissemination of documentaries. This article will explore the development of Chinese documentary films based on the forms of communication from the We-media times and the challenges brought to the Chinese documentary from the We-media times. At the same time, the author will analyze several popular Chinese documentaries, such as "A Bite of China", "The Tale of

Chinese Medicine” and so on. This article will explore and analyze elements and communication process of the popular Chinese documentary in We-media times, and have some personal reflections on the characteristics of the dissemination of Chinese documentaries in We-media times.

*Keywords: Chinese documentary, We-media times, Elements, Communication*

*Strategy*



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I hope this paper will not be the end of academic thinking.





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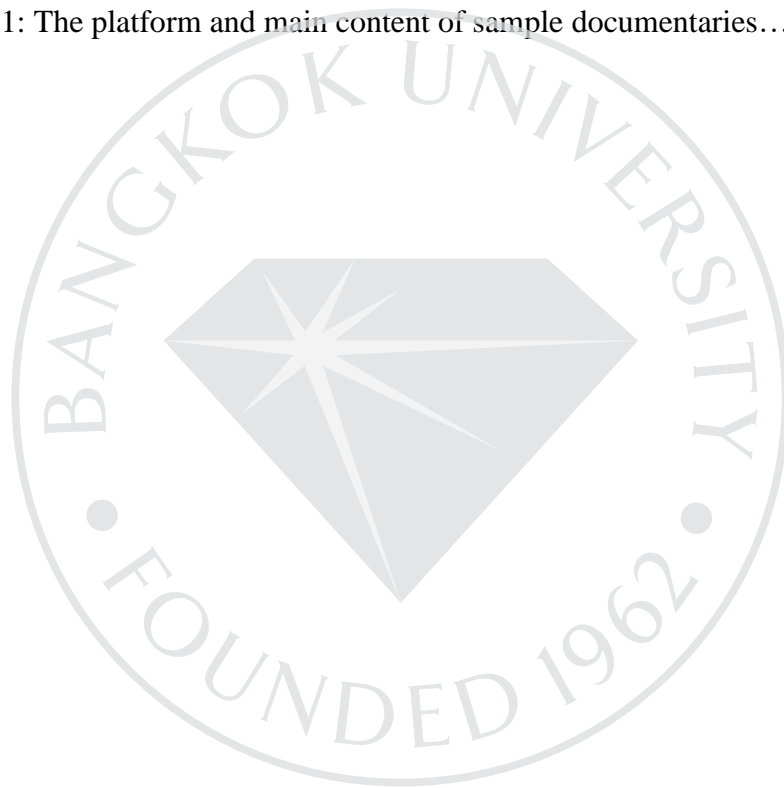
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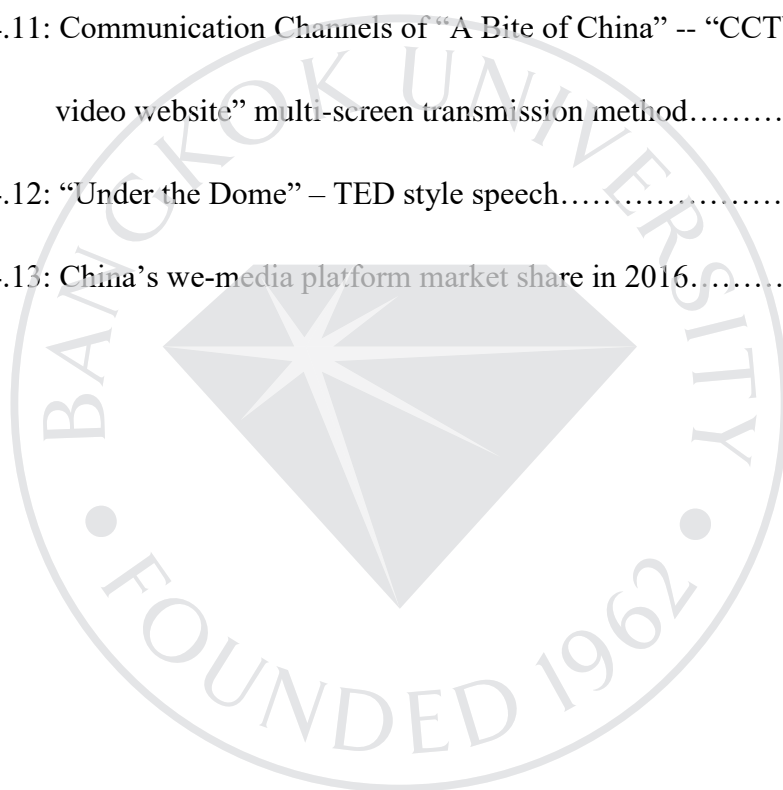


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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Research Background

Documentary is a film or television art form that takes real life as its creative material, shows the truth as the essence, and causes people to think with reality. The core of the documentary is real. The birth of the movie began in the documentary creation. From a technical level, almost all of the earliest films are documentaries. The filming of Chinese documentary began in the late 19th and early 20th century. The forerunner of documentary filming in China was foreigners. The documentary career in China began in the 1950s with difficulties in development. In the past, the mainstream documentary topics are more propositional essay, emphasis on humanities, history and other grand themes, they are not so close to people; or “Party A documentary” mode, that is, Party A to provide funds, the director documentary can’t think and create independently. The documentary has become a propaganda film at last. It belongs to the typical characteristics of WEB1.0 and the product of elite culture (Zhu, 2015).

In order to promote the development of documentary, in 2010 the State Press and Publication Administration of China introduced “Some suggestions on accelerating the development of documentary film industry”. Since the promulgation of this policy, policies and markets have formed a two-wheel-drive to promote the development of China’s documentary industry. The documentary of China has really

shifted its career development to industrial development. In addition, with the continuous development of science and technology, new platforms for communication have emerged, including We-media continues to grow and develop. With the mature development of the mobile Internet, people's lifestyles are changing: people use mobile phone to play videos during the waiting time, or use mobile phone to capture gossip and upload to the Internet microblogging, social transfer from real space to virtual mobile terminals. A lot of available time has become fragmented. Everyone is a media field, so that the information is no longer one-way circulation, and the audience is no longer simply a single side to receive information. Since We-media times has arrived, everyone has a microphone. Each audience is not only the recipient of information but also the creator and publisher of the content.

Since the We-media, the most active and popular carrier is video, the podcasts without counting of We-media as the main force's camp launched a violent shock to the traditional media. This emerging form of "Everyone is the media" pushed the audience which is in the news discourse boundary originally to the heartland of news production and transmission of power. Coupled with its originality and real-time, there is the direct impact and challenge to the documentary.

According to the survey, there were a total of 7.49 billion hits of internet documentary films in 2016, accounting for 0.95% of the total hits of the entire program, down from 1.02% in 2015 but doubling the total hits. This shows that more and more excellent documentaries have become the focus and discussions of the

Internet audience; “Internet +” model has made the Internet become an important channel for documentary dissemination; Policy support, popularization of technology and maturing markets have spawned a ministry popular documentary. Nowadays, the spread of documentaries has gradually infiltrated to the We-media, and there is the documentary which use We-media platform as distribution channel. Distribution channel of documentary transforms from traditional media to We-media platform. There are two modes: the first one is the 2012 broadcast documentary “A bite of China” as the representative, the release of the channel is not limited to the usual traditional media, but blended the We-media channel. It is enumerated that “A bite of China” series documentaries have more than 700 million hits on the CCTV integrated channel in a short period of time, and more than 10 million articles or comments on Weibo; Second is the “out-of-system documentary” launched only We-media platform. For example, The GMO documentary of Yongyuan Cui and the haze investigation documentary of Jing Chai. They put their own chips in We-media platform and dissemination of the final results shows that such a choice also achieved great benefits.

Documentary have been catalyzed and grown with the aid of “supernatural power” from the We-media platform in We-media times, showing a flourishing development trend and even setting the agenda in the field of public affairs. However, the documentary also faces multiple challenges. There are new forms of documentary films have emerged with the diversification of production themes and distribution

terminals, barriers to entry have been reduced, documentary professionalism has receded, such as the birth of mobile documentaries. While the media environment has brought more channels and potential audiences to the documentary, it has also distracted audiences from documentary attention due to the diversification of media products and information channels, coupled with the shallow reading mode from the We-media times, they bring impact which can't be ignored to the dissemination and development of documentary. Then, what are the elements of the Chinese documentary in We-media times? What are the advantages and disadvantages of Chinese documentaries in We-media times? These will be the issue to be explored in this article. This paper focuses on analyzing elements and communication strategy of Chinese documentary in We-media times, and provides a reference for the future development of Chinese documentary through the analysis of specific cases.

### **1.2 Research Objective**

The basic purpose of this study is to examine how dose different elements of Chinese documentary communicates to Chinese viewers. The specific objectives are:

- a. To analyze elements of Chinese documentary in We-media times, including narrative, cinematography, sound, mise-en-scène and editing.
- b. Specific analysis from the dissemination of content and channels of communication. How does it communicates to Chinese viewer.

### **1.3 Research status and significance**

The emergence and influence of We-media led to related research. Based on the

increasingly important influence from We-media, people are paying more attention to it. Therefore, there have been a series of researches on documentary in We-media times. Before launching the research, the author consulted and combed the status quo of the research on documentary in We-media times, and searched through the “accurate” matching method in the CNKI database with the theme of “We-media”, obtaining a total of 11,906 papers. Among them, there are 6,748 articles in the “News and Media” group by subject category. From a year point of view, research literature on We-media has been published since 2004, with 1 in 2004, 6 in 2005, 28 in 2007, 30 in 2008, 56 in 2009, 65 in 2010, 65 in 2010, 210 in 2012, 444 in 2012, 945 in 2013, 1,640 in 2014, 2,171 in 2015, 3,102 in 2016 and 3,085 in 2017.

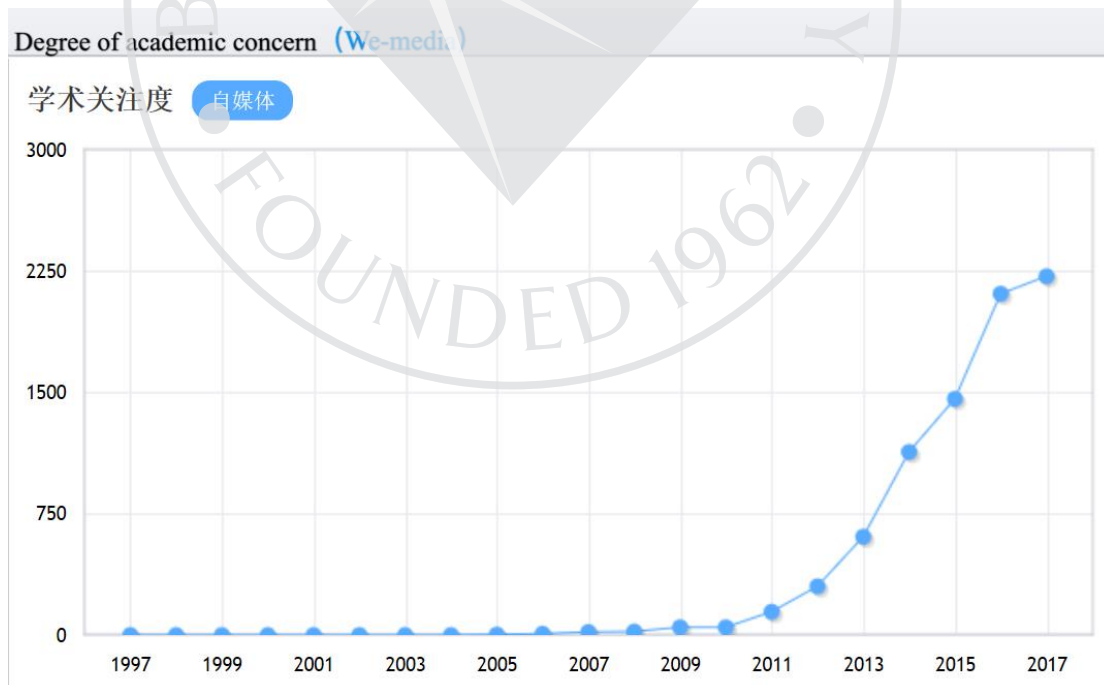


Figure 1.1: The degree of academic concern of keyword “We-media” (Figure from the CNKI academic trend search)

CNKI “academic trend search” column can form the number of keyword in the database trend, it reflects the academic concern of the key words from the figure. As can be seen from Figure 1-1, the number of “We-media” papers collected in CNKI database increased from the We-media research in 2004 to 2010 by year, and rendered blowout trend after 2011. Since 2010, the form of We-media has become more diversified. With the fiery of Weibo marketing (also known as virus marketing), the research of We-media has changing the blog as the main research subject into the Weibo as the main form. With the emergence of WeChat and microfilm, the research content of We-media become more diverse. The essay has been substantially and steadily rising since 2011. As can be seen from Figure 1-2, the academic focus on the keyword “We-media times” is increasing from 2011.

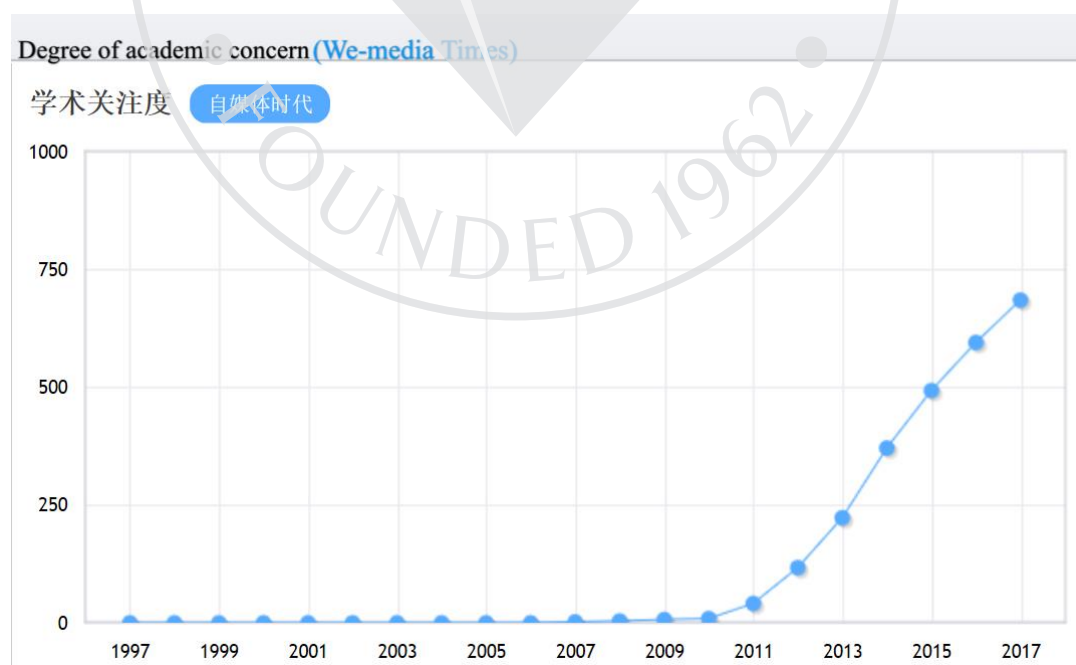


Figure 1.2: The degree of academic concern of keyword “We-media times” (Figure from the CNKI academic trend search)

A total of 3353 essays were obtained through “accurate” matching in the CNKI database with “We-media times” as the keyword, of which 1916 were classified into “News and Media” subject category and “We-media” and “Documentary” as keywords to search, a total of 22 papers.

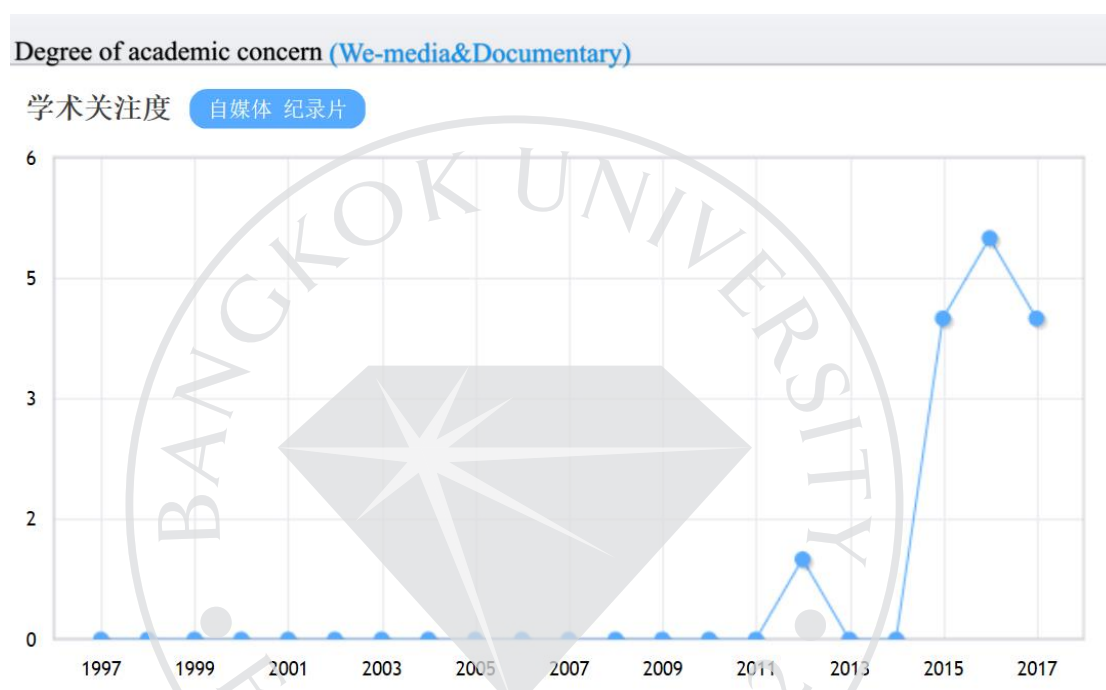


Figure 1.3: The degree of academic concern of keyword “We-media” and “Documentary” (Figure from the CNKI academic trend search)

As can be seen from Figure 1-3, the number of essays on “We-media” and “Documentary” in the CNKI database began to appear in 2012. This shows that China’s research on documentary in We-media times has just begun.

After reviewing and summarizing the research on We-media and documentary, the main research direction of scholars mainly involves the development characteristics and mode of documentary development in We-media Times.

## 1.4 Research Questions

In summary, the author believes that We-media environment has basically taken shape in the current period, but there are gaps exist in previous research about the new elements and communication strategy of Chinese documentary. Therefore, I think this article should mainly solve the following problems:

1.4.1 How does elements of Chinese documentary communicates to viewers in We-media times?

1.4.2 What is communication strategy of Chinese documentary in We-media times?

## 1.5 Research Methods

The research methods mainly used in this paper include literature research method, case study method, textual analysis and other research methods. The article further explores the combination of practice on the basis of inheriting the theoretical basis of predecessors and advanced theoretical results at home and abroad. In the study of issues involved in the article, through comparative analysis, observation and research were conducted on the characteristics of the research subjects and the current environment; Summarizing various theoretical results by reading various types of literature, analyze and compare differently, and further make the paper more theoretical

The authors of this article through textual analysis, in the case of demonstration, selected the most representative and contemporary Chinese documentary in We-media



times, so as to enable the research analysis to reflect the characteristics of the moment. Combining specific cases, in the process of practice, to study the influence of the background and media environment of the We-media times on Chinese documentaries, the changes of the characteristics of documentary transmission, and seeks strategies for the development of Chinese documentaries in the future.

The literature research method: it through reading new media theory, communication theory, books and related literature on documentary creation, literature and monographs on the theory of communication strategies, etc.; Using Baidu, Google and other search engines, China Knowledge Network and other databases to search, retrieve and read a large number of literature related to the research issues, after analysis and research initially formed a theoretical basis.

Case study method: it through observing the existing typical Chinese documentaries to collecting relevant data, and then analyzing and comparing, summing up existing experiences, further refining viewpoints, be able to analyze the communication characteristics and communication strategies of Chinese documentaries in We-media times.

## **1.6 Definition of Terms**

1.6.1 Documentary: The documentary is based on real life as the creative material, with real people as the object of representation, and art processing and display of it, in order to show reality as the essence, and use the real movie or television art form that causes people to thinking. The core of the documentary is real.

The birth of the movie began with the creation of a documentary.

Bill Nichols classify the documentary into six modes (or “sub-genres” or “types”) in the book “Introduction to Documentary”, they are: Poetic Documentaries, Expository Documentaries, Observational Documentaries, Participatory Documentaries, Reflexive Documentaries and Performative Documentaries (Nichols, 2001).

1.6.2 Chinese Documentary: This term refers to the documentary produced by the Chinese.

1.6.3 Elements of Documentary: In this study, the element of documentaries contained by narrative element, cinematography element, mise-en-scene element, sound element and editing element.

1.6.4 Communication Strategy: Communication strategies are a key part of bridging the implementation of the situational analysis and social and behavioral change communication program. Effective communication strategies use systematic process and behavioral theories to design and implement communication activities that encourage sustainable social and behavioral change (West & Turner, 2010, p343-358). In this study, it will be divided into communication content and communication channels for analysis.

1.6.5 Citizen Journalism: One or a group of citizens, positive actions to collect, report, analyze, and disseminate news and information, with the goal of providing independent, credible, accurate, and broad-based information that is needed for

democracy.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Documentary

“Nanook of the North (1922)” is recognized by the international film and television industry as the world’s first complete documentary. In January 1926, John Grierson used the word “documentary” in an article published in the New York “The Sun” commentary Robert J. Flaherty’s film “Moana (1926)”. Later, he made a clearer definition of the word: Record film refers to the film “creative treatment of reality”.

From the discussion of the nature of documentary narrative, it can be concluded that the definition of documentary should be: Documentary with record the actual events as the basic aesthetic feature, is a non-fiction and narrative film style. It combines cognitive and entertainment functions and is distinguished from cognitive-based literature archives and entertainment-oriented art dramas.

The documentary is based on reality and history, using real-life records and true reproduction techniques to restore historical truth, or to record real life and real people. Its greatest trait is truth. In most cases, documentaries do not require actors to participate. The people, places, and situations expressed in the documentary are consistent with reality and actual conditions. The documentary covers a wide range of topics, including fully documentary films reality shows.

The premiere of the Lumière brothers “The arrival of a train (1895)” marks the birth of the film. The works created by the Lumière brothers, both “The Arrival of a

Train (1895)” and “Exiting the Factory (1895)” are all recorded films. The film after the Lumière brothers is roughly divided into two, one of which is the feature film of the pioneers such as Mélière and Griffith. The other is a documentary about “father” of the documentary, represented by American director Flaherty. There are two important sources of documentary development, one is Flaherty, the other is the Soviet director, and the founder “Movie eyes send”, Vertov. Robert Flaherty is known as the founder and originator of the documentary film. Flaherty’s master work “Nanook of the North (1922)” has long tracked a family and used long shots to organize films to establish the form of the documentary. This movie is a miracle in the history of film. Flaherty used a documentary technique for filming, reflecting a unique aesthetic view and an independent film type. He did an in-depth understanding of the object during the filming process. This method of trying to express a living object is still being followed by many people. His shooting emphasizes the effect of the picture, not relying on montage. The use of montage in documentaries is often means accused of “propaganda”. With his intuition, Flaherty pioneered a relatively “pure” narrative approach. Another character, Giga Vertov, is an early recorded film explorer who has long been ignored by everyone. His documentary creation practice can be traced back to 1919 and was one of the first characters in the history of film to explore and influence documentary style. The difference between Vertov is that his exploration is carried out under the guidance of avant-garde theory. His documentaries have a strong theoretical and experimental. Vertov’s “kino-eye” theory

is completely different from the general fictional story film. It roughly includes three aspects: The theory about main body of the camera; the non-performance system; the composition system of the montage. Vertov regards the camera as the main body of humanity. His creations generally maintain two styles, one is a poetic documentary and the other is an experimental film. If we take into account all of Vertov's film styles, he has at least pioneered many of the documentary styles that are common today. For example, docudrama, documentary topics, political documentaries and poetic documentaries. His master work is "Man with a movie camera (1929)", it is very pioneering in the use and editing of the lens, and is greatly influenced by the Soviet montage school.

The most important thing in the 1920s was the avant-garde film movement. Under the influence of the thoughts of the First World War and the trends of cubism, impressionism, and Dadaism, the avant-garde film movement began with France, Germany, and the Soviet Union. It consists of five parts. The first is the Soviet Montage School represented by Vertov; the second is the "City Symphony Film" represented by German director Walter Ruttmann. The representative is "Berlin, Symphony of A Great City (1927)"; the third is The Dutch director Joris Ivens created "Bridge (1929)", "The Rain (1928)", etc.; the fourth is "Animal Recording Film", which is famous for Jean Painlevé's "La Pieuvre (1928)", "Les Oursins (1928)", etc. The last part is the left-wing movie. The representative work is the Soviet Union's "Tuxi Turksib (1930)".

In the history of the documentary, the period of time that must be separately raised was the British documentary movement of 1929-1951. A series of documentaries were created with the representative of John Grierson. In 1929, he was shocked by the “*Drifters* (1929)”. This has created a new style of “recording movies”. Since then, he has created the “The British Documentary Film School”. Grierson put forward the idea of “documentary” aesthetics. The establishment of this conception lies in “we believe”, and nothing else. He believes that recording movies is not a means of entertaining the public. Movies should bear the responsibility of educating people and propaganda. For today’s audience, the documentary is no longer a means of education alone. It is also a medium for people to recognize social participation in social affairs. People have the right to know the truth of the truth - not a certain “tendency”. He summed up the fourteen disciplines in practice and promoted it in the film organization he presided over, directly affecting the subsequent British free film movement, Italian neorealism, and even Chinese feature films, and carried forward the social function of the documentary.

The Second World War was also an important node in the development of documentaries, and a large number of documentary films appeared around this time point. The first was the “Promotional Film” that was launched in the 1920s and prevailed during World War II, including Leni Riefenstahl’s “*Triumph des Willens* (1935)”, and the Chinese director Junli Zheng’s “*Long Live the Nation* (1940)”, Frank Capra’s “*Why We Fight* (1942-1945)”, Hemphrey Jennings’s “*Listen to Britain*

(1942)” and so on. After the Second World War, the documentary film was divided into two parts, one of which was a documentary thinking about the war. The famous works included Alain Resnais’s “Night and Fog (1955)”, and Roma’s “Ordinary Fascism (1965)”, Claude Lanzmann’s “Shoah (1985)”. The creation of the documentary in World War II has not stopped now. The second is that some directors disappointed with war and death, so they turned to the nature and create a series of beautiful natural and animal documentaries, including Flaherty’s “Louisiana Story (1948)”, Swedish director Arne Sucksdorff’s “The Shadows on the Snow (1945)” and “The Great Adventures (1953)”, and Jacques Perrin’s “Le peuple migrateur (2001)”. However, the original intention of creation may no longer be a disappointment to the war.

Two famous documentary genres were born in the early 1960s: Cinema verite and Direct cinema. They all advocate recording real things, prefer long shots, never soundtracks, and recording the sound at the same time. The difference is that the cinema verite believes that the real need to be stimulated by the creators, so they widely use street interviews, master work are Jean Rouch’s “Chronique d’un Eté (1960)”, Pasolini’s “Comizi d’amore (1965)” and Chinese director Ying Ning’s “Railroad of Hope (2002)”. The other direct film believes that the movie machine is a fly on the wall, which should be recorded directly. The creator should hide it without stimulating it. It is represented by the Robert Drew’s “Chair (1960)”, the Maysles Brothers’ “The salesman (1969)”, Wiseman’s “Law and Order (1969)” and “At



Berkeley (2013)". At the same time, in the late 1960s, there was an intervention film, which was characterized by the use of movies to intervene in the historical events that are taking place. The master work are Ivens's "Loin Du Vietnam (1967)" and Ogawa's "Sanrizuka (1970)".

In the history of human image development, documentary as a unique art form, trying to seek the writing of the real world, reappearing or presenting human development and natural resistance in the form of images. Its criticality and sharpness to life gives mankind a reflection space in the process of rapid development.

## **2.2 Chinese documentary**

Documentary as a historical "stereoscopic file" and realistic "documentary note", in its own development, is also closely related to the background of Chinese social change as well.

Chinese documentaries not only have their own development trajectories, but also reflect the sociological, cultural, psychological, anthropological and philosophical aspects of life in each historical period. Since the advent of movie cameras, the first ones have been documentaries. Since the film was introduced to China, some people have begun to film documentaries in all aspects of Chinese society, which truly reflects the customs and social changes of modern China. Many important video and sound materials have been left behind (Tang, 2001).

It was a pre-liberation documentary in 1905-1949. "Dingjun Mountain (1905)" was the first film and the first documentary of China.

1949-1966 was the "seventeen-year" documentary period. Political propaganda was more than artistic, and emotions were often passionate. Its masterpieces include "The Victory Song of Southwest Song (1950)", "Long Live Friendship (1954)", "Conquering the World Summit (1960)" and so on.

In 1966-1976, although the documentary was frustrated during this period, it was still a famous documentary of "Red Flag Canal (1971)". At the same time, there were two Chinese documentaries of foreign directors during this period, one was Antonioni's "China (1972)" and Ivens's "How Yukong Moved the Mountains (1976)".

From 1976 to 1989, it was an extraordinary decade in the history of Chinese film and television, and during this period, China ended a decade of war. With the convening of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the rise of the ideological liberation movement, China's film industry, from closed to Open, from rigid to liberating, thus promoting the development of film and television in a multi-level and diversified direction. For example, the news documentary "Spring Breeze Blows Here (1983)", "Silk Road (1980)" and so on.

From the late 1980s to the early 1990s, Chinese society experienced a rapid transformation. The pace of reform and opening up in the national economic field is accelerating, the awareness of commodity economy has continuously penetrated into every corner of the social and cultural fields, and the social and economic system has

also undergone transformation. The socialist planned economic system that has ruled China for 40 years to socialism is the transformation of the economic system. In this social context, the pattern of ideology began to adjust accordingly. In the 1980s, the intellectual elite's elite consciousness was the most active and most prosperous. After the 1990s, the unified political and social ideals of intellectuals have been diluted, and the mass culture has gradually moved from the edge to the center, driving the marginal culture in the underground state to surface. At the same time, the national mainstream ideology still occupies an unparalleled advantage, and the diversified cultural pattern is gradually formed unconsciously. The documentary also shows a corresponding cultural pattern with the great migration of the cultural pattern, which can be roughly divided into: Mainstream cultural form, elite cultural form, popular cultural form, and marginal cultural form (Zhang, 2010).

The documentaries of these four cultural forms jointly constructed the cultural pattern of Chinese documentaries after the 1990s. The quality is different, the styles are diverse, contradictory and rich, and they become the record time and space of multiple symbiosis. During this period, there were mainstream documentaries such as major festivals, major events, or major leader anniversaries, such as the documentary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the return of Hong Kong, Mao Zedong and so on; using the perspective of humanistic care to find culture, society, artistic and anthropological landscapes that have been forgotten or ignored by mainstream culture, to discover the dignity and value that is inundated in life, and to

make an elite documentary of their own thinking, such as “The Last Mountain God (1992)”, “Three Sections of Grass (1997)”; The popular culture form is the most spectacular one in the Chinese cultural pattern in the 1990s. The corresponding documentary creation of this form has also become the main medium formation. In the eyes of ordinary people, the camera is aimed at ordinary people, “telling the story of the people themselves”, leaving a history of small people for the future, “focusing on the great changes of the times, recording the stories of life” is the documentary creation purpose of this period. The documentary film with the banner of CCTV’s “Oriental Horizon and Living Space” has led the trend of documentary creation in this period; the documentary of the marginal cultural form is a part of the popular culture that deviates from the mainstream consciousness, and is also contaminated with elite cultural characteristics, and has obvious non-mainstream ideology. For example: record 5 persons’ life experiences of “blind stream” artists born in the 60s in Beijing, “Bumming in Beijing (1990)” and “The Four Seas for Home (1995)”. In short, the Chinese documentary since the 1980s and 1990s has gradually shifted from the past instrumental theory to the ontology, that is, the documentary from the fascination with society and political to the pursuit of its culture and aesthetics, the art law has been fully attached, making the documentary in the creation of different styles and colorful, gradually mature.

In 2001-2003, the Chinese TV documentary still continued in the state in the late 1890s, maintaining a low ratings and low efficiency. The biggest feature is a wide

range of topics, such as: “Sun Yat-sen (2001)” (Xia, 2003); 2004-2005, the emergence of folk power, appeared many works that focus on social issues and real life, such as: “Kindergarten (2004)”; 2006-2011, a series of major events in China, such as the Beijing Olympics, Shanghai World Expo. Also experienced some important moments, such as the founding of the party 90th anniversary. From the perspective of the main body of the creation, the CCTV documentary team occupied the main position, and the works were mainly concentrated on the CCTV. There are many historical subjects, such as “The Rise of the Great Powers (2006)”, which has produced many documentary works; “Dream 2008 (2008)”, which recorded the Beijing Olympic Games. In addition, socio-economic works have also performed well during this time, for example: “Wall Street (2010)”.

With the growing exchange of Chinese and foreign TV cultures, in recent years, the creation of documentary films has become more and more active, especially in China’s documentary film industry, which has won a lot international award. The main reason for these successes is the diversity of documentaries. When discussing documentaries in the context of non-fictional narratives and cognitive entertainment, the documentaries are generally divided into four broad categories: On-the-spot report documentaries, propaganda documentaries, entertainment documentaries, and practical documentaries. As can be seen from the name of these four categories, the principle of classification is mainly based on the function of the documentary. Or it can be said that it is based on the different effects that the documentary can produce in

the audience. It can also be said that this is a classification based on the means of documentary production, because the function is a comprehensive description of the means and effects.

Driven by the theme of the “Internet +” era, the development of Chinese documentary films in the media environment has also undergone new changes. In May 2012, “A Bite of China” was broadcast less than three days, reaching nearly 5 million plays, and 7,000 interactive hot discussions, it quickly became a hot topic in the network. In the selection event held by Guangming Daily, the broadcasted of “A Bite of China” was voted by netizens as the most influential cultural phenomenon of China in the first half of 2012.

In order to promote the development of Chinese documentary films, in 2010, China’s State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television issued the “Several Opinions on Accelerating the Development of the Documentary Industry”. Since the introduction of this policy, policies and markets have formed a two-wheel drive to promote the development of the Chinese documentary industry. The Chinese documentary really turned from career development to industrial development, facing an unprecedented good time. In the following years, the policy drive was further multi-faceted and deepened, and the effects of the policy were further revealed and gradually transformed into market dividends. Driven by the policy, the documentary professional broadcast platform has formed a documentary TV broadcast headed by CCTV Documentary Channel, plus Beijing TV Documentary

Channel, Shanghai TV Documentary Channel, and Hunan Golden Eagle Documentary Channel as a “1+3” pattern. The expansion of the platform has increased the amount of strokes and continually stimulated demand. The policy stipulates that the documentary broadcast of the provincial-level TV channel should be no less than “30 minutes”, and the excellent domestic documentary will be broadcasted preferentially. In 2012, the “920 Program Band” was issued as “Limited Entertainment Order”. It means that the original TV drama period between 21:20-22:00 can only be filled by non-entertainment programs. January 1st, 2015, new policy “One drama and two stars” officially implemented, it means that the same TV series broadcasts up to two channels, and the number of broadcasts per night is no more than two episodes. They made the documentary more into people’s sight. In 2016, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television continued to select excellent domestic documentaries to give full play to the demonstration effect of excellent documentaries, and to reward relevant personnel through domestic documentary and creative talent support project awards (Liu et al., 2017, p29).

In 2016, China Central Television’s Documentary Channel launched a number of original documentaries to deeply explore the essence of traditional culture and restore the original Chinese story. For example, a multi-angle interpretation of Shi Su’s “Dongpo Su (2017)”, an aerial view of China’s “Aerial China (2017)”, Chinese herbal medicine culture as the core of “The Tale of Chinese Medicine (2016)”, at the same

time as the masterpieces, the popular documentary “Masters In Forbidden City (2016)”, which received the attention and love of young audiences, was triggered on the Internet. In addition to the video craze and extensive discussions, it was adapted to documentary movies on the big screen. In addition, China Central Television’s Documentary Channel also launched a major documentary on the theme of the witness era, for example: with “The Belt and Road” entered a comprehensive promotion period, and many documentaries with the theme of “The Belt and Road” appeared. For example, the first large-scale documentary “The Maritime Silk Road” with the theme of “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” (7 episodes × 50 minutes), “The Belt and Road” Construction Unit also affirmed the influence of “Maritime Silk Road”; documentary promoting the “The Belt and Road” initiative “Crossing the Silk Road on the Sea” (8 episodes × 48 minutes) and the documentary “Century Silk Road” (12 episodes × 30 minutes); Beijing TV station launched the “Silk Road Theme TV Program” project with the large-scale TV documentary “Discovering the Most Beautiful West”, and created four series of products with themes of documentary programs, reality shows, achievements, and extension cooperation; In order to promote the international communication and exchange of cultures of various countries, it is initiated by the Information Office of the State Council of China, and the countries of the Wuzhou Communication Center are jointly Media representatives, cultural envoys, and cultural institutions jointly established the “The Belt and Road” media communication alliance; On October 24, 2016, Zhejiang Satellite TV



broadcasted a large-scale documentary, “The Belt and Road” which was based on a comprehensive interpretation of the “The Belt and Road” concept. Taking the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” as the main line, the main content of the people along the line and the countries along the line have been brought about by the construction of the “The Belt and Road”. The story of more than 60 ordinary people at home and abroad and the “The Belt and Road”, using facts and examples to prove “The Belt and Road “ is not a Chinese solo, but the chorus of countries along the line, the grand theme of the current social development from the perspective of social development, highlighting the major pattern and backbone of the mainstream media. As a national strategy, the “The Belt and Road” is a powerful driving force for the development of documentary films. Its follow-up development in terms of subject matter, content and channels is worth looking forward to.

Today, in China’s documentary industry, policy dividends are further transformed into market dividends; Market players are more diversified; Chinese documentaries have achieved initial results in terms of typed and cross-border cooperation exploration; Internet and the cinema line as the important platform driver, have begun to show its potential; The dissemination and influence of Chinese documentary on international communication has been further recognized.

### **2.3 McLuhan media history**

McLuhan (1962,1964) and Quentin Fiore (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967,1996) claim that the media of an era define the essence of a society. They present four eras, or

epochs, in media history, each of which corresponds to the dominant mode of communication of time. McLuhan split history into four periods: the tribal age, the literary age, the print age, and the electronic age. In the early 1960s, McLuhan wrote that the visual, individualistic print culture would be go to an end by “electronic interdependence”: when electronic media replaces visual culture with aural/oral culture. In this new age, humankind will move from individualism and fragmentation to a collective identity, with “tribal base.” McLuhan called it as the global village. Today is the electronic era, it allows different communities in different parts of the world to remain connected (West& Turner, 2010, p.427-434).

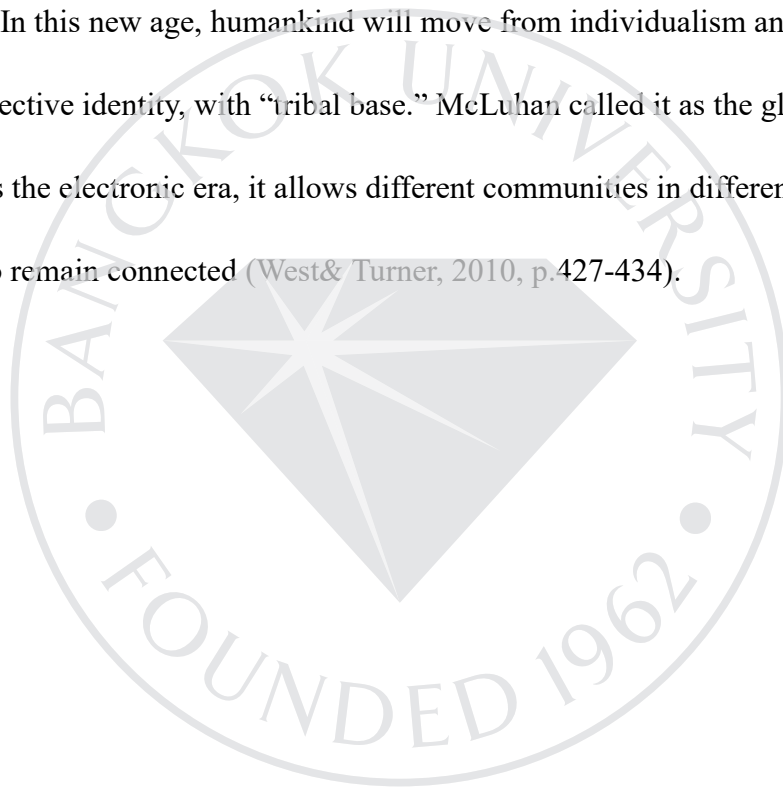


Table 2.1: McLuhan's Media History

<b>Historical Epoch</b>	<b>Prominent Technology/ Dominant Sense</b>	<b>McLuhan's Comments</b>
Tribal Era	Face-to-Face Contact/ Hearing	"An oral or tribal society has the means of stability far beyond anything possible to a visual or civilized and fragmented world" (McLuhan & Fiore, 1968, p.23).
Literate Era	Phonetic Alphabet/ Seeing	"Western man [woman] has done little to study or to understand the effects of the phonetic alphabet in creating many of his [her] basic patterns of culture" (McLuhan, 1964, p.82).
Print Era	Printing Press/ Seeing	"Perhaps the most significant of the gifts of typography to man [woman] is that of detachment and noninvolvement-the power to act without reacting" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 173).
Electronic Era	Computer/ Seeing, Hearing, Touching	"The computer is by all odds the most extraordinary of all the technological clothing ever devised... since it is the extension of our central nervous system" (McLuhan & Fiore, 1968, p. 35).

The We-media times that studied in this paper is in the electronic era of McLuhan media history. With the advent of the Electronic Era, the interface for audiences to receive news has gradually shifted to new technology tools, such as computers. However, the mode of dissemination of news at this time has not changed too much, and it still maintains the mode in which a small number of media disseminate news to most audiences. This is the new media. It is the “fourth media”; the point-to-point communication method of the network, plus the two major features of sharing and linking, creating tools such as blogs, and numerous “citizen journalism”. The writing of news no longer follows the “5W1H” specification. The authentic story is directly presented to the audience. More crucially, “the audience is not only passively and unilaterally accepting the news sent by the media, but also can actively become a news communicator—a model in which news dissemination is moving towards the majority of the mass media, and this is since the media”. (Dan, 2003, January)

From the development of the media, we can see that in the past media era, because of the monopoly of information, the monopoly of the right to speak; now with the development of the Internet, including the development of tools such as WeChat and Weibo, everyone can become a media speaker.

#### **2.4 We-media times**

The we-media times refers to the medium age in which individual

communication is the mainstay and modern and electronic means are used to convey normative and non-normative information to unspecified most or specific individuals. Everyone has a microphone, and everyone as a reporter, everyone is a news communicator. Based on its interactive and autonomous features, this media foundation has enabled the freedom of the press to increase significantly and the media ecology has undergone an unprecedented transformation. The method and characteristics of communication in we-media times can be summarized as figure 2.1:

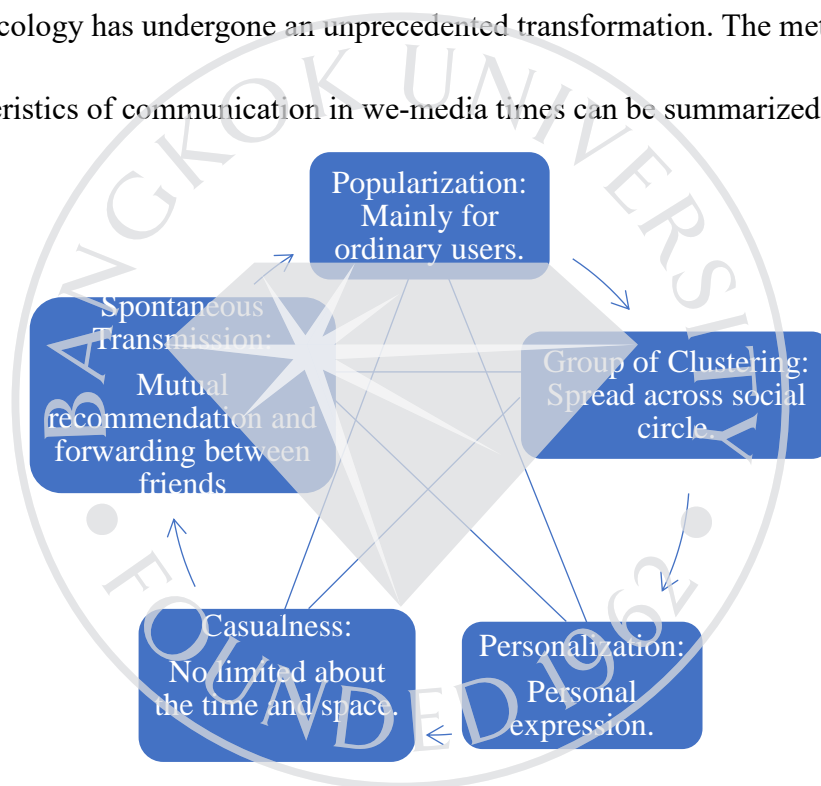


Figure 2.1: The method and characteristics of communication in We-media times

The term “We-media” has only been used for more than ten years so far. Regarding the originator and time of this term, the general view of the Chinese academic community is:

On September 28, 2001, Dan Gillmor, a US scientific writer and columnist, used the concept of we media when he defined the concept of “Media News 3.0”.

In July 2003, the Media Center of the American Press Institute published the “We Media” research report co-sponsored by Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis: “We Media is a way for the general public to strengthen their digital technology and connect with the global knowledge system, to understand how the general public can provide and share their own facts and their own news.” (Willis& Bowman, 2003).

Dan Gimmer published “We The Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People” in 2004 and explained the connotation and evolution of this term in detail. The book was published in Taiwan and mainland China in 2005 and 2010 respectively. Since “We Media” and “We The Media” are not exactly the same, the translator did not translate the title into “citizen journalism”. It was translated into “citizen journalism” based on the contents of the book. This also led to the subsequent mixed use of “We Media” with “We The Media” and “citizen journalism” in some writings and online articles.

After these processes, We Media, which is the term and concept of We Media, is widely disseminated and deeply rooted.

Summing up the previous theory, we can draw the conclusion that We Media refers to providing information for individuals to produce, accumulate, share, and spread content that is both private and open. We Media includes, but is not limited to, personal blogs, personal journals, and personal home pages. The characteristics of we-media are summarized as figure 2.2:

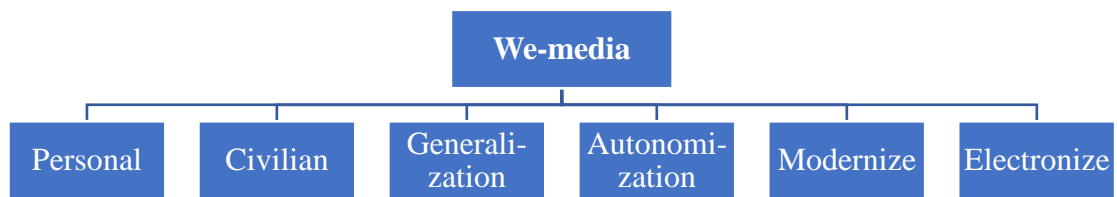


Figure 2.2: The characteristics of we-media.

We-media denotes personal, civilian, generalization, autonomy disseminator, using modernized and electronic means to transfer new media to non-specified mass or specified persons; it is called “Individual Media” as well. They are of multi form in recent time, such as: Bulletin Board System (BBS), Blog, Micro Blog/ Weibo, WeChat, Podcasting, and Group message, especially in the SNS (social networking services) the info is unlimitedly transferred.

The most representative hosting platforms are U.S. Facebook and Twitter, China’s Qzone, Sina Weibo, and Renren. The concept of “We Media” is essentially the form of “self-publishing”. The first generation of We Media should be a blog that emerged with the rise of Web 2.0: Register your own account on the BSP (Blog Service Provider), and publish original articles on the web, not via paper publications. After that, the readers (netizens) reached the articles, pictures, videos, etc. on the blog by direct click or search, which completed the closed loop of “publishing” in the traditional sense.

Blog is a typical application since the early Internet personal website. And to the peak of the Blog in 2008, China had 100 million bloggers. In 2009, Sina launched

Weibo and used its powerful media attributes to push Weibo became one of China's top internet applications. Sina Weibo reached its peak in 2011. Even today, no longer the glory of the past, it still has 60 million active users every day. It is another typical we-media application after the blog. In 2011, Tencent launched WeChat as a personal communication tool for interpersonal communication. In 2012, WeChat launched a public platform (Officially known as: Subscriptions), which immediately led to a large number of institutions and individuals to settle in and open their own accounts. In a sense, the blog that was defeated by Weibo was reborn on the WeChat public platform. Today, there are 8 million WeChat subscriptions, which is equivalent to having a subscription for every 169 Chinese. In the WeChat subscriptions, there are a large number of individuals we-media, and based on these we-medias, formed a we-media alliance.

Since the concept of We Media has been extended to the present, it has mainly been transplanted into social networks, that is, many people have summarized themselves as socialized self-media. With the timeliness and interactivity of SNS tools, information publishing and publishing of self-content have become more convenient. The proliferation of forces is also faster. Weibo and Wechat have become typical We Media platforms and modes of communication. It can be said that We Media is a typical representative of social media.

However, since the We-media times, it also has the characteristics of spreading fake news. Some false rumors will cause public panic. The rumor is not the



mainstream of the we-media, but its harm can not be underestimated. Since the We-media times, WikiLeaks has revealed the feat of the US military's abuse of prisoners, and there are also fake news that the kidney were cut off in the Internet cafes.

Communication scholar McLuhan has proposed a famous theory - the medium is the message. McLuhan believes that the media itself is a meaningful message. The most important role of the media is to "affect the habits of our understanding and thinking."

What is truly valuable to a society is not the content of communication, but the medium of communication tools, the possibilities it creates, and the social changes it brings. The emergence of the we-media is a complete subversion of news communication, the most significant impact is the collapse of the public opinion space. Groups are low-skilled, and they do not have the ability to think independently to conduct analysis and research of complex events. The group only believes in drama, they can't get rid of stereotypes, and each user of the we-media is just a disciple. They can only accept their own theory of violence from the we-media platform. They will continue to endorse their favorite media platform. Either change to another we-media platform that suits them. They don't care what the truth is, just find someone who agrees with their own ideas. It was not Hitler who created tyranny, but people who chose their own spokespersons to do what they wanted to do; Instead of creating distortions of truth from the we-media, people picked out their own spokespersons to give their opinions. Since the We-media times, we have more sources of information, more opportunities for voices, and many "reversals" in the

events of public impressions, because the media has the function of “self-purification”. The rumors of Yong Jin’s death on Weibo have led to a wide reflection of netizens. People are more rational and cautious when commenting and forwarding. The rumor that “Wuhan female college students were cut off the kidney” clarified the facts through the questioning and rumors of informed netizens.

## 2.4 Elements of Chinese documentary

### 2.4.1. Narrative:

In the documentary, the structure is the embodiment of the embodiment and the meaning of the documentary narrative. The narrative of the documentary must be able to express the creator’s aesthetic perception through a certain structure. The different expression techniques in the documentary narrative structure will produce different effects, and these different expression techniques include specific expressions such as rhythm, soundtrack and subtitles. In the audio-visual space of audio-visual-compatible documentary, the subjectivity of the screen is unquestionable, but the role of the commentary cannot be underestimated. It enters the sound image in the form of a text medium, which makes it different from the standard text medium, and takes into account the different screens, in order to give full play to their respective advantages. It explains the ups and downs in the documentary screen, the interpretation of history, the background, the narrative of the plot, the sublimation of the theme, the bursting of emotions, the ambience of the mood and the rendering of the atmosphere all play a

vital role.

#### 2.4.2. Cinematography:

The documentary is different from other films in the filming process. The documentary not only needs to strengthen the authenticity characteristics, but also select different shooting techniques according to the needs of the shooting content. Among them, the shooting skills have an important influence on the quality of the documentary. Cinematography of documentary is the act of capturing photographic images in space through the use of a number of controllable elements. These include the color, the lens moment, the lens shift, the depth of field and focus, some special techniques, the aspect ratio, framing and so on.

#### 2.4.3. Mise-en-scène:

Originally referred to as a technique for dealing with the position of actors in the theater stage. Mise-en-scène is cited in the art of film. Its content and nature are different from those on the stage. It is not only related to the scheduling of actors, but also involves camera scheduling (or lens scheduling). Mise-en-scène in a TV documentary means that in a specific scene, the photographer sets the position according to his own intention and performs scheduling to facilitate the performance of the content and the theme, creating a typical, generalized and expressive vision image, and try to make this picture representation more real and natural, creative, and

thus active and promote the audience's association and imagination to meet the audience's aesthetic requirements. Mise-en-scène includes: Scheduling in the screen task; Scheduling of the lens (Zhu, 2005, August). If more of the actors used in the feature film are the actors' scheduling, the feature films and documentaries use more of the lens scheduling, more respect for the facts, and more is the scene taken on site. Mise-en-scène surpasses the limitations of film and television screen space and screen, enabling viewers to freely move and observe in free time and space.

#### 2.4.4. Sound:

“The sound is dictated by the image, but by recording these sounds on set, the sound and image were equal from the beginning. It turned into a very emotional scene and it would never had happened if the sound wasn't such an integrated part of the shoot and the whole creative process” (Andersen, 2015, January 7). In fact, the analysis of the sound in the documentary from the perspective of film and television language is composed of three parts: The audio language (synchronous sound), literary language and music language. The audio language is also called the simultaneous sound (including interviews). It refers to the sound elements recorded at the same time when recording the living state, including the ambient sound, the background sound, and the interview language. It is the natural sound of the sound source in the interview scene. The same period is an important manifestation of the documentary style. The literary language in the documentary mainly refers to the

narration words, and the narration words can be said to be the core and backbone of the documentary literary language. “The role of the commentary is mainly to guide the audience and supplement the picture. It is absolutely impossible to replace the lens language and the interviewee. It is not a substitute for the viewer’s review” (Li, 2011, January). “The music in the documentary provides continuity, covers up edits, facilitates changes of scenes, provides mood, offers entertaining spectacle, allows for narrative interludes and montage sequences, and comments on the action” (Altman, 1992). The best soundtrack makes the picture an emotionally surrounded experience.

#### 2.4.5. Editing:

TV media people often refer to the planning script of a documentary as a first creation; when the filming is completed, the dubbing person dubbed it as a second creation; when the material of first creation and second creation editing on the non-linear device, it is called third-time creation. As far as a documentary is concerned, the montage was born in the literary script concept, embodied in the split-screen script, and finalized on the editing stage. Soviet film master Pudovkin once pointed out: “Whether the montage plan was made before or after the start of the filming, the filming work must be combined with the montage organically.” That is to say, no matter what the result of the editing is determined at the time, throughout the film and television creation process, there must be a “clip consciousness.” The editorial consciousness is a thought activity that surrounds the editing and editing of the

creative work. D. Livingston said: “All those who work creatively should have the knowledge of splitting clips.” The documentary’s editing is divided into two steps: First create a clip based on the existing material, this is a paragraph clip; Then it is done with the editing device according to the clip, which is the clip of the shot. The clip raises the reality of life to the truth of art, the birth of a true art work, and the editing effect is huge.

## **2.5 Communication as transaction**

“Communication is a transactional process. A process in which two or more people exchange roles, for example, speaker and listener, sender and receiver. Behavior of each person is dependent on and influenced by the behavior of other. The exact model of role exchange may differ in various communication theories. There are other important concepts, including feedback, noise, highly contextual concepts and context. The transactional model of communication (Barlund, 1970; Frymier, 2005; Wilmot, 1987) underscores the simultaneous sending and receiving of messages in a communication episode” (West & Turner, 2010, p12-15), as Figure 2.3 shows:

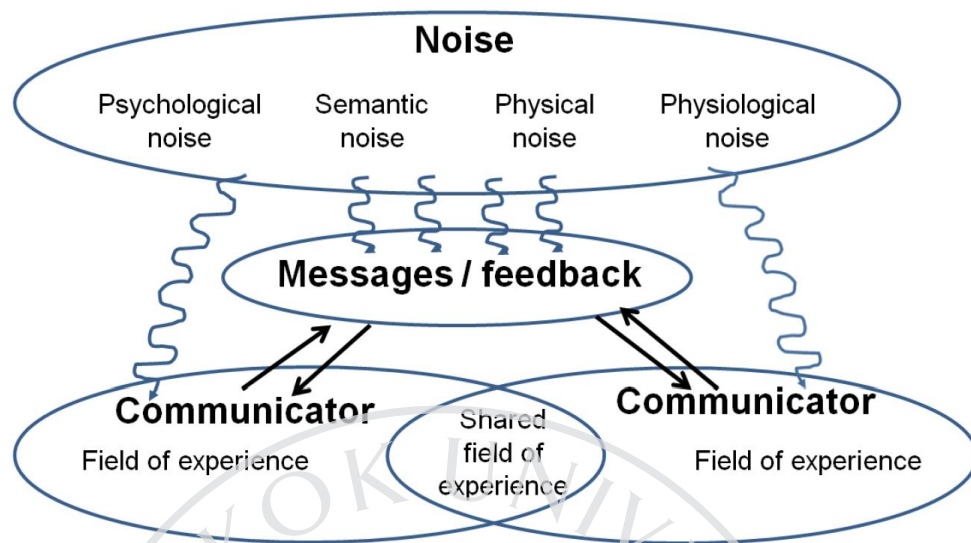


Figure 2.3: Transactional Model of Communication

Since both the sender and the receiver need to keep the communication alive in the transaction model, the communicators also depend on each other and the entire process cooperates with each other. For example, if the recipient does not listen to the sender, then transaction communication is not possible. In the linear model of communication, information is sent from one person to another; In the interactional model, information is realized by feedback from the sender and the receiver; In the transactional model, people jointly establish and share information. Transactional communication requires us to recognize the impact of a piece of information on a piece of information. Information is based on previous information. One message changes and the other changes. There are many factors that directly or indirectly affect the transactional model. These may be ambient noise or communication barriers. Environmental noise can be physical noise, physiological noise or mental

noise. There are interdependencies between the components of communication. The trading model links communication to the social reality of individuals or groups of people in the context of society, culture and relationships.

## **2.6 The narrative paradigm**

The dissemination theorist Walter Fisher created a narrative paradigm that contrasts sharply with the rational world paradigm. The rational world paradigm rooted in science points out that human beings are essentially rational beings; “It promotes the belief that humans are storytellers and that values, emotions, and aesthetic considerations ground our beliefs and behaviors in other words, we are more persuaded by a good story than by a good argument” (West & Turner, 2010, p343-358). “Fisher states that his use of this term refers to an effort to formalize and direct our understanding of the experience of all human communication “A narrative is, as I have suggested, a story, and stories tell about things that have happened or are happening to people, animals, aliens from outer space, insects – whatever.” (Burger, 1997)” Storytelling, as a means of disseminating information, is the simplest and most cohesive tool. On the one hand, the lively and bright story form helps the audience to recognize and accept the value concept in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere, so as to achieve better communication effects; On the other hand, the human life experience of the human life in the story is beneficial to the audience. Emotional transfer occurs, which inspires the audience to take action and produce the practical activities that the communicator hopes. Audiences with different cultural backgrounds, cognitive levels,



and personality temperament will make different choices about the story and produce different preferences. However, when individual choice preferences are placed in a more macroscopic social framework or a human mind framework, people's choice preferences present a universal character, forming a collective choice of aggregation. The pioneer of modern social choice theory, the famous economist Kenneth J. Arrow believes that the preferences of many members of society are aggregated into a final social preference. This brings two important inspirations to storytelling communication research: First, researchers do have the possibility to generalize the laws of commonality to answer why people "like this story more than the story" to provide for aggregated judgment. A rational choice basis; But the study of narrative communication is a process of reciprocating between individual preferences and social preferences, and the key combination is the narrative text that produces the effect of communication, which reflects the audience's individual choice is also the result of social choice. The narrative paradigm has the basic principles of coherence and fidelity. In many communication theories, the narrative paradigm is a theory aimed at exploring the choice of stories. Its purpose is to provide a feasible criterion for guiding narrative communication activities. Therefore, this article will explore the narrative factors of popular Chinese documentaries and the selection criteria of stories based on the narrative paradigm theory.

## **2.7 Communication strategy**

John Dewey said: "In all matters, communication is the most wonderful." The

wonderful thing about communication is that it is everywhere, and human society exists in transmission and communication, especially after entering the 21st century, it becomes the “most important feature of contemporary life” (Asante, 1987). For the general public, the existence of communication is often neglected communication in life. For communication scholars, the richness and responsibility of communication make it difficult to give a unified meaning to the word “communication”. Sarah Trenholm likened this dilemma to: “Communication has become a kind of ‘big suitcase.’ Like a suitcase, stuffed with all sorts of weird thoughts and meanings.” (Trenholm, 1991)

#### 2.7.1. Communication content

To achieve good communication results, people should organize communication information. Based on the communication object, audience analysis, their characteristics and needs, combined with specific communication goals to determine the main content of communication information and the structure of communication information.

#### 2.7.2. Communication channel

To achieve communication goals, people must also choose the medium that will help enhance communication. With the development of information technology, the medium for disseminating information has become richer, from the audio

communication channel with audio language as the medium to the visual communication channel with graphic and text. Studies have shown that in the channels of people receiving information, visual account for 83%, hearing for 11%, taste for 1%, and olfactory for 3.5%. Vision is the channel that receives the most information (Du, 2009). The advantage of visual communication is that its information can be retained for a long time, easy to copy, or spread on a large scale; Information content can be repeatedly refined and modified, and the logic is relatively strong and relatively strict. The Internet is currently the most commonly used communication medium.

## **2.8 Participatory communication**

Today's society is a society of participation for all people. Participation is the sharing of participation in any activity. People's participation identifies processes that prioritize people's perspectives when identifying and analyzing their problems and opportunities, as well as improving their situation through self-mobilization. Communication comes from the Latin word "Communis", which means commonality, sharing information, information and ideas. Participatory communication can be defined as the way in which all interlocutors can feel and be able to equitably communicate the means of expressing opinions, feelings and experiences. For participants, the most important part of participatory communication is to stimulate interest, motivation, and active participation; For organizers, it can provide time management, accurate information, take closer look at people and understanding the

problem; For both participants and organizer, it can provide the interaction quality and equal opportunity participation.

“Participatory communication helps to sustain the process of claiming those services and generate policy relevant- information via the participation of ordinary citizens in social mobilization, public debate and policy dialogue. The articulation of voice from ordinary citizens feeds into policy formulation processes as bottom-up advocacy processes. Participatory communication becomes a tool to monitor progress toward goals. A highlight of participatory communication is that it facilitates reflection and learning among local groups, providing opportunities for dialogue, learning and critique, which again becomes central elements of evaluating a project or program.

What is often not made explicit in participatory communication approaches, however, is the important role of media access, which is increasingly crucial considering the rapid changes in media tools, coverage and worldwide use. Thus, participatory communication is also about visibility and voice in the mediated public sphere”. (Tufte& Mefalopulos, 2009)

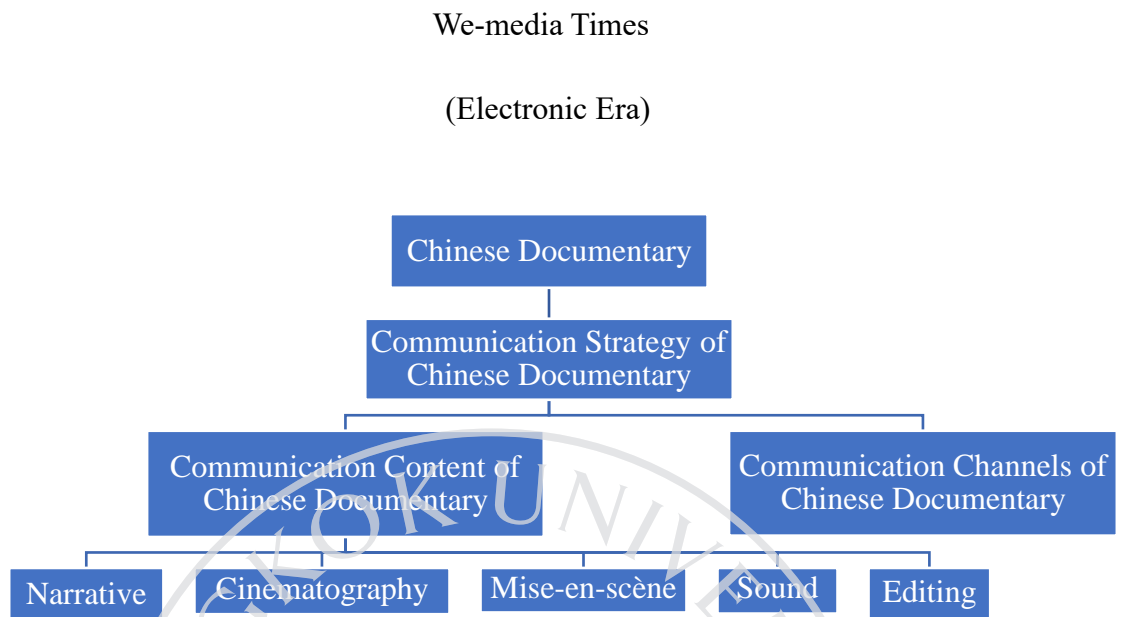


Figure 2.4: Conceptual Framework

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes research design, research materials, research procedure, data collection, textually analysis and reliability, validity and limitations.

#### 3.1 Research Design

This research will use qualitative approach. The selected research method is textual analysis. The author will analyze the elements of the Chinese documentary samples (including Narrative, Cinematography, Sound, Mis-en-scène and Editing) and their communication strategy in we-media times. The selected documentaries were analyzed using “The narrative paradigm theory” and “Communication as transaction” and “Participatory Communication”.

This study focuses on the We-media times, so the selected samples should be in the We-media times, because the documentary in recent years will be more representative, and from the “A Bite of China (2012)” sparked heated discussions in the We-media times, so decided to select the Chinese documentary after 2012.

The study includes five major Chinese documentaries and their promotional channels. Due to time constraints, all work included documentary selection, literature search and analysis, and the final discovery lasted for about five months.

#### 3.2 Research Materials

The CDRC Task Force, in conjunction with the Big Shadow Rubik’s Cube, conducted comprehensive statistics on the 2016 new media documentary data. In

summary, in 2016, there were popular documentaries such as “Masters in Forbidden City”, “In the World of Man” and “The Tale of Chinese Medicine”. Mainstream video sites (including Youku Tudou, Aiqiyi, Sohu, Tencent) data display, the total number of clicks on the whole network of the video was 800 billion, and the total number of clicks on the documentary was 8 billion. Inspired by the “artisan spirit”, the industry-based documentary has been continuously developed and upgraded. The number of Weibo readings of “The Tale of Chinese Medicine” reached 200 million times, and the number of Weibo discussions reached 131,000. The number of Weibo readings of “Masters in Forbidden City” was 23.326 million, and the number of Weibo discussions was 14,000. The survey found that in the documentary produced in 2016, the documentary topics welcomed by netizens were history, society, people, military, etc. As the Figures 3.2 shows (Liu et al., 2017, p175):

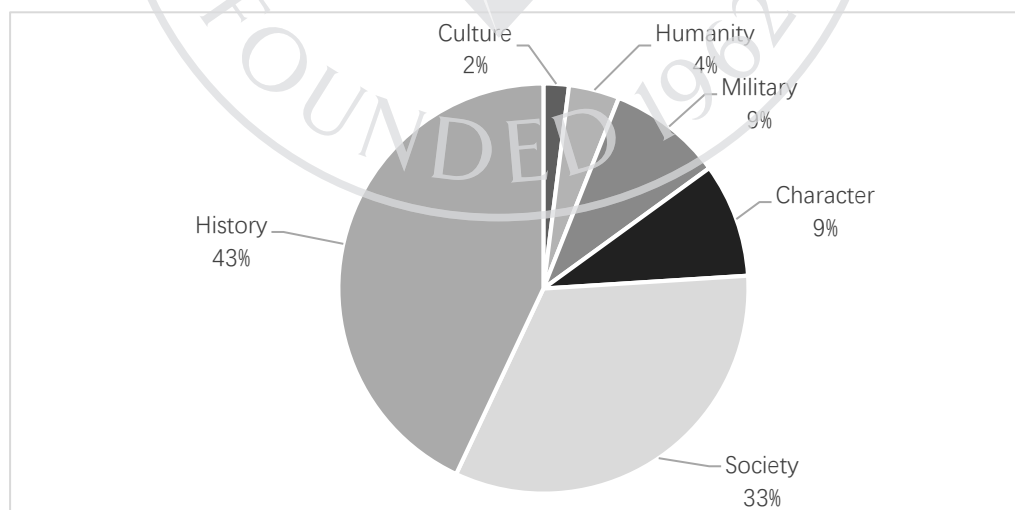


Figure 3.2: The proportion of documentary subjects welcomed by netizens

From the “A Bite of China” in 2012, the documentary boom has been launched.

Nowadays, many documentaries have been filmed in China, and the author have selected five documentaries. All the samples the author analyzed are documentaries that have been raise a heated debate and the documentary which has a large of click rate online since the We-media times. All the documentaries are representative, they played through different platforms, including the Weibo, WeChat, video websites and cinemas. They also have different producers such as CCTV, individual documentaries and so on. At the same time, the author also selected the different types of documentaries, including, humanities, environment and so on. They are “A Bite of China (2012)”, “The Tale Of Chinese Medicine (2016)”, “Aerial China(2017)”, “Under the Dome(2015)”, “Master in Forbidden City(2016)”. Appendix 1 lists details of the socumentary examined in this study.

### **3.3 Research Procedure**

This study is divided into three steps. First, the required research samples are screened by research needs. The second and most important part is text analysis. Find out the factors that Chinese documentaries have shown in the media era and how they communicate with the audience and get the audience’s favorite.

The first step is to select a documentary that is very popular and has characteristics from the We-media times based on the heated discussion on the Internet. For example, “A Bite of China” is a phenomenal work, which is popular among the audience and has opened a new stage of the Chinese documentary in We-media times; “Under the Dome” is chosen as a sample because of its unique way of



we-media communication.

The second step is to analyze the popularity of each documentary sample, starting from five aspects, including: Narrative, Cinematography, Sound, Mis-en-scène and Editing.

The third step analyzes the main communication channels, and then combines the channels which is the results of the second step analysis to derive the communication strategy of Chinese documentaries in We-media times.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Through the summary of five Chinese documentaries, roughly divided key elements into 5 dimension, the detail is shown into table 3.1. The research and analysis perspective are as follows:

Table 3.1: Five elements of documentary

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Research and analysis perspective</b>
Narrative	Narrative mode ( first-person or third-person narrative), Narration, Copywriting, etc.
Cinematography	Color, Lens movement, Lens shift, Depth of field and focus, Other special techniques, Aspect ratio and framing
Sound	Narration, BGM, Environmental radio, Tone
Mise-en-scène	Composition, Sets, Props, Actors, Costumes, Lighting
Editing	Editing method (including transition mode, content selection, etc.), Transition footage, Editing style

All of the above elements are the content of communication. Then through the analysis of the propaganda channels of the typical We-media times, combined with the communication characteristics of the We-media times, I will finally come up with the communication strategy of the Chinese documentary in the We-media times.

Table 3.2: The main content of communication strategy

<b>Communication Strategy</b>	<b>Research and analysis perspective</b>
Communication Content	Narrative, Cinematography, Sound, Mise-en-scène, Editing
Communication Channels	Platform, Audience, Influence, Coverage, CTR

### 3.5 Textually Analysis

Based on the above method, this study conducted a text analysis of the key elements and communication strategies of Chinese documentaries from the We-media times, trying to summarize its characteristics. The analysis method of this study is as follows:

1. Carefully observe the sample documentary and record information about Narrative, Cinematography, Sound, Mis-en-scène and Editing, study how they communicate with the audience;
2. Combining Communication as transaction and Participatory Communication to study the communication characteristics of the We-media times;
3. The research text can draw the preference of Chinese documentary content from the We-media times;

4. Analysis of the choice of communication channels of Chinese documentary in We-media times;

5. Summarize the communication strategy of the Chinese documentary since the We-media times and the meaning behind it.

### **3.6 Reliability, Validity, Limitations**

In quantitative research, reliability refers to the precise reproducibility of processes and results. In qualitative research with different paradigms, this definition of reliability is challenging and counterintuitive in epistemology. Therefore, the essence of the reliability of qualitative research is consistency. If the methodology and epistemology logistics consistently produce data that is similar in ontology but may have different richness and ambience within similar dimensions, then the range of variability of the results is allowed in qualitative research. Silverman proposes five ways to improve the reliability of processes and results: reflective analysis, continuous data comparison, and comprehensive data usage, including exceptions and the use of tables. Since the data is extracted from the original data, the researcher must verify its accuracy in form and background through continuous comparison, either alone or with peers (a form of triangulation). The scope and analysis of the data covered should be as comprehensive and inclusive as possible, with reference to quantitative aspects whenever possible. Using Popper's falsifiable maxims as the essence of truth and science, an attempt to refute qualitative data should be analyzed to assess reliability.

The validity of qualitative research means “appropriateness” of tools, processes, and data. Whether the research question is valid for the desired outcome, the choice of method is suitable for answering the research question, the design is effective for the method, the sampling and data analysis are appropriate, and the final result and conclusion are valid for the sample and context. In assessing validity of qualitative research, challenges can start from the ontology and epistemology of the issue being studied.

Qualitative research is not interested in causality, but is interested in the human belief, experience and meaning systems from the perspective of the people. The methods used are more subjective than in quantitative research and do not include statistical analysis and empirical calculation. The phenomena is viewed as a whole and in their social context.

“The main drawback associated with qualitative cultural analysis is that this process is very time consuming. The second potential problem with qualitative research is that a particular problem may be overlooked” (Bowen, 2006). “The researchers' explanations are also limited. Personal experience and knowledge influence observations and conclusions related to research questions. Since qualitative research is mostly open, participants have better control over the content of the data collected. Therefore, the researchers were unable to objectively verify the results based on the circumstances described by the respondents. Qualitative research requires labor-intensive analytical processes such as classification, re-encoding, etc.”

(Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) “Similarly, qualitative research requires experienced researchers to obtain target data from a population of respondents. Depending on the personal characteristics of the researchers, the same information can lead to different conclusions” (Maxwell, 2005). “Researchers have found it difficult to study the causal relationship between different research phenomena. Qualitative studies explain the differences in the quality and quantity of information obtained from different respondents and draw inconsistent conclusions that are not complicated” (Barbour, 2000). Qualitative research requires careful planning to ensure accurate results. There is no way to analyze qualitative data mathematically. This type of research is based more on opinions and judgments than on outcomes. All qualitative research itself is unique and therefore difficult to replicate.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

This chapter describes in detail the textual analysis of five Chinese documentaries in We-media times and analyzes elements of Chinese documentaries in We-media times how to communicate with viewers. By combining these elements and research communication channels, it can get the communication strategy of Chinese documentary in We-media times.

#### 4.1 Elements of Chinese documentary in We-media times

The China Documentary Film Research Center of the Communication University of China recently released a research report at the Shanghai TV Festival. From the perspective of the audience, China's "documentary boom" has been further enhanced from "The hobby of micro-individual" to "The prevalence of Macro society". Audience grows exponentially with diversified channels.

The data survey companies of Nielsen and Meiland have drawn similar conclusions on the ratings of Chinese TV documentaries and online attention data from January 2014 to May 2015. The audience of "25-34 years old" has become the most local, faithful and also the most demanding documentary viewers in China. In China, including satellite TV channels, special documentary channels, online broadcast platforms, etc., documentaries mainly attract high-education, high-ranking and high-income Chinese audiences (Xinhuanet, 2015, June 24).

#### 4.1.1 Narrative Element of Chinese documentary in We-media times

“The Narrative Paradigm promotes the belief that human are storytellers and that values, emotions, and aesthetic considerations ground our beliefs and behaviors. In other words, we are more persuaded by a good story than by a good argument” (West & Turner, 2010, p.343-358).

The idea that “Content is the most important” is still out of date in the production of documentaries, and the rich content can also highlight the conservation and depth of documentaries. Storytelling is the soul of the documentary. The documentary is also a genre of narrative by telling good stories. “The Tale of Chinese Medicine” evokes a vivid Chinese traditional Chinese medicine culture story, which evokes the audience’s high attention to the rural herbal medicine collectors, redefines the extensiveness of the herbal medicine, and revitalizes the grass. “The Tale of Chinese Medicine” begins with the most familiar virginity of Chinese medicine practitioners. It draws a theme from the story of a single character, and then connects all the individual stories through a theme. It screams to the audience through a magnetic narration. Under the clever story background setting, the audience seems to be able to feel the silent adherence and dedication of traditional Chinese medicine to the herbal medicine. “The Tale of Chinese Medicine” as a theme documentary, tells about various of Chinese medicine, and the story between Chinese herbal medicine and people. For most viewers, Chinese herbal medicine is a familiar but unfamiliar

subject. It is full of charm but also slightly esoteric. How to make interesting stories meaningful? This is the constant problem that is enduring for a long time. The production team links the seemingly esoteric Chinese herbal medicine culture with the lively characters and conveys the cultural connotations in the story. For example, in the first episode of “Time”, the production team uses the rhythm of time, month, season and year as the unit to vividly interpret and tell the safflower, saffron, red colouring agent, gastrodia, frost mulberry from different dimensions such as fast, slow, accurate, long, old and new. How the six-flavored Chinese herbal medicine of leaves and dried tangerine peels with the precision of time in the process of picking, storage and processing, the image is extremely impressive and unforgettable. “The Tale of Chinese Medicine” is not a rigid and old-fashioned introduction to the difficult theory of traditional Chinese herbal medicine, but the integration of Chinese herbal medicine into life and the transformation and ups and downs of individual fate. Because of the various stories that have occurred between the people and the medicinal herbs, the Chinese herbal medicine has been given more meaning and value.

“The Tale of Chinese Medicine” not only presents the grand narrative of Chinese herbal medicine, but also presents the virtues of Chinese herbal medicine people in the micro level. It tells more about not only the herbal medicine, but more importantly, it is to explore the people’s respect for life and the sincerity of the people behind the Chinese herbal medicine. What you see is not only the herbal itself, but



also the life sentiment and plot experience behind it.

The commentary on “A Bite of China” is simple, which can combine the thinking activities of the audience with the pictures, and can closely combine the direct information received by the audience visually with the indirect information of the logical development of the things reflected in the film. To make the content of the entire documentary sublimated, so that the audience’s information extension can be expanded, maximizing the expressiveness and visual impact of the image. The narrator is not unitary. It has an omnipotent spectator viewpoint and an individual viewpoint of the hero. The dual narrative viewpoint construction of “God’s voice” and “individual narration” makes the entire documentary narrative appear more realistic and vivid aesthetics. The paragraphs of each episode of the documentary adopt the two-line narrative mode of “food production + character story”, which makes the documentary narrative rhythm harmonious, rich in content, and more ornamental and appealing. It also uses the structural relationship of associated narratives. Generally speaking, similar foods are used together to tell the difference between different ethnic groups with different ingredients in different regions or in the same environment and geographical location.

Comparative analysis of several documentaries shows that popular Chinese documentaries use masculine male voices as narration to narrate stories. For example, the narration of the Chinese documentary A bite of China is the famous Chinese dubbing performer Li Lihong. His voice is deep, full of the charm of a wise man, and

he has also dubbed the movie Avatar. The audience liked this kind of voice as a commentary, convincing and a kind of auditory enjoyment.

Most of the documentaries are not only narrated, but also the self-narrative of the documentary hero. In this way, emotions can be conveyed more directly, and the audience can feel empathy.

#### 4.1.2 Cinematography Element of Chinese documentary in We-media times

“A Bite of China” has many movements of characters. The following figure 4.1 is to show the hardships of finding ingredients. The main character is Zhuoma. In order to highlight this point, Zhuoma is placed in front of her mother, resulting in a produces near-large and small convergence effects, resulting in approximate diagonal composition; At the same time, Zhuoma is always on the three-point line. On the left side of the scene is a ridiculous tree, on the right is a steep slope, the main character is on the path, the slope from the upper right point of the picture to the lower point of two-thirds, just parallel with the height slash of Zhuoma and her mother. The overall composition gives a rectangular sense of a combination of right-angled trapezoids and triangles. The photographer chose to slap the machine on his shoulders, and the swaying effect of the upper and lower sides also gave a feeling of steepness and unevenness. When shooting, usually one lens captures the middle of the person’s front, and place the person on the three-point line; The second shot takes the opposite step of walking; If need to perform hard, it can arrange to climb uphill and down to

the front. Climb the slope and climb up the person's leg. In either case, the subject should be placed on or around the three-point line. After determining the subject and setting the subject, it should consider how to set the background to create the environment, how to arrange the accompanying body to highlight the subject, and make the theme more fully expressed.



Figure 4.1: “A Bite of China” -- Zhuoma climbs the mountain to find ingredients

Close-up shot is the best technique to show the texture of things. The texture of the food is one of the important elements to attract the diners. Because the close-ups shot have an unparalleled advantage in the details, “A Bite of China” is almost full of close-ups shot when shooting each dish. Not only is the close-up shot of the finished product, but there are also many close-ups shot of the production process. The water vapor is filled the screen and the food's bubble before it's ready and so on. These shots will make the food look delicious and make the audience secrete saliva, causing

the audience to “want to eat” feelings. Weibo is one of the most important propaganda platforms of “A Bite of China”. One of the most frequent comments is “want to eat” and when author searched key words both “A Bite of China” and “want to eat” in Baidu search engine, there were 862,000 result (as of Dec. 5, 2018). The color of the food is fresh and the appetite is wide open. For example figure 4.2, the close-up shot of the fried matsutake, the ghee slowly melts, the heat of the matsutake, rolled up, and the delicate picture can cause people to appetite for the matsutake.



Figure 4.2: “A Bite of China” -- Close-up shot of fried matsutake

The long shots accompany the documentary from beginning to end, recording the close-up picture through the long shots, using the medium-view panorama to describe the character’s expression and the scene, reflecting the inner world of the character, thus explaining the realistic meaning. From the meaning of the long shots, we can see that the long shots as a single and complete fragment. If the long shots method

appears in a documentary, it will definitely bring a deep feeling to the audience because the long shots continues. The longer the time, the better the benefit is that the audience will have enough time to get involved, and the audience will feel real. For example, in “A Bite of China”, the process of picking lotus is used in the long shots method, and the whole process of picking lotus is photographed in a long time and lens. In this way, the audience can feel the hardship of picking lotus in the mud to earn money to support the family, if this is simply a description of the hardships of picking lotus, cut into some short shots, then it will make this narrative no emotional transmission.

Compared with the long shots approach, the montage technique is relatively short. It can be said that the use of montage techniques lies in the combination of multiple short shots and even patchwork, thus giving a patchwork of unreality. The relationship between long shots techniques and montage techniques is contrary. However, long shots and montages are part of the documentary filming method. Long shots are used to represent the true reproduction of documentaries, which can maintain the continuity and integrity of the event development. Montage techniques can be used to capture parts first and then integrate together, to express the overall effect of the matter, and in the documentary filming, the montage can play a role in strengthening the artistic sense of humanity. For example, in “A Bite of China”, at the end of each episode, the director always uses montage. The way to integrate all the characters that appear in this episode, the result is that in this rendering, we are

looking forward to a better episode, because the director has provoked all the taste buds of our vision and taste (although there are no taste buds in our eyes). Montage reflects a fast-paced style. In this documentary episode, there were as many as 800 high-resolution clips in the film in China's past documentaries.

The still shots serve as a filler between the scenes. They are important for good documentaries because they do serve as a reliable transition between real action and interviews. They will never be considered "fluff" fillers, but should be related to people, information or places.

Just as value is the essential attribute of a commodity, authenticity is the essential attribute of a documentary. The true reproduction technique is also called scene reproduction. It contains two aspects. On the one hand, the things recorded in the documentary must be objectively present; On the other hand, the documentary can bring real feelings to the audience. What the documentary writers have restored is what happened or is still happening now. For example, "A Bite of China" faithfully records the habits, living ingredients and cooking methods that exist in various parts of China, because these things are really exists in our daily lives, so this documentary has been recognized by the audience.

The documentary "The Tale of Chinese Medicine" crew adopts a shooting method similar to the BBC documentary. The new hero and background appear every few minutes, which can continue to attract the viewer's vision and attention. It uses film-level 4K photography equipment, aerial photography, time-lapse photography,

etc. Divided into 8 squads, it took two years, from the air to the underwater, from the south to the north. In the use of the lens, “The Tale of Chinese Medicine” broke the frequency of the use of close-up shots of traditional documentaries, such as stripping silk, cutting Tianma, striking through dried tangerine peel, etc., but in terms of quantity of uses close-up shots, it reached 70% or 80%. It is rare. “The Tale of Chinese Medicine” uses a large number of high-definition shallow-lens lenses to close the herbal, which greatly enhances the texture of the herbal, vividly depicts the details of the herbal, the texture, lighting, sound effects of the picture, everywhere and the exquisite and delicate Chinese traditional culture formed a sense of echo, the audience directly into the entire situation setting, resulting in a different experience. In addition, the composition of “The Tale of Chinese Medicine” is even a soundtrack, and the high standards of various details finally create a “visual feast” for the audience.

16 manned helicopters and 57 drones were used in the documentary “Aerial China”. The total itinerary was nearly 150,000 kilometers, equivalent to 4 laps around the equator, and a large number of precious 4k aerial images were accumulated. Each episode selects the most representative and ornamental historical, humanistic, natural and modern landscapes from all provinces and cities. With the airline as a clue, a storytelling narrative approach is adopted to present a beautiful and immersive audience of beautiful Chinese and ecological. Embodied a civilized China. The shooting of each province was carried out by a qualified film and television production company in the form of tenders, and finally the material was sent back to



the CCTV editing and production stage. It has a large number of prospects, making the picture particularly spectacular, allowing the audience to experience the great mountains and rivers of China and feel shocked.

#### 4.1.3 Mise-en-scene Element of Chinese documentary in We-media times

The subject of the documentary, the individualized object, the emotional expression, the rhythmic narrative and the style of the record, the full play of these techniques are inseparable from the skills of scene scheduling.

“The Tale of Chinese Medicine” made the bridge section of Chenpi especially exciting. The craftsmen used a knife to make three knives on the citrus peel. The fingers were slightly peeled off, and a complete orange peel fell into the hand, like a three-petaled flower; the flesh of oranges rolled to the ground in perfect condition, squeezing with hundreds of other oranges, golden and full. Those craftsmen are like knights with swords, with the rhythm of the background music, a few times, hit the key points accurately, and then take the sword into the sheath, never drag.

The documentary “Aerial China” mainly uses the lens scheduling in Mise-en-scene in the following figure 4.3 and figure 4.4. The figure 4.3 shows the tiger lens shot by the drone, which is used “Composite movement” in the drone shooting, shooting the moment that tiger rushed at the nearest distance, then the drone flies away in an instant, and also far away the lens shooting the figure 4.4, the high-altitude aerial tiger group.





Figure 4.3: “Aerial China” – Close-up shots of tiger



Figure 4.4: “Aerial China” -- The high-altitude aerial tiger group

“Aerial China” has many high-altitude overhead shots, as well as “ultra-low-altitude” shots close to the ground, and even direct pushes from inside and outside of the house are also very visually impactful. The horizontal movement of the lens

makes the sun's beam through the fog appear more agile as shown in figure 4.5.



Figure 4.5: “Aerial China” -- Sunlight through the fog

Close to the water, the description of the river's details is connected to the ground from the sky, so we have a three-dimensional impression from “macro” to “partial” like figure 4.6:



Figure 4.6: “Aerial China” -- Description of river details

Vertical motion in the three-dimensional space, we are habitually called its “Z-axis” movement. On this vertical axis, the distance of space motion determines its height. In the spring, the low clouds in Jiangxi are only highly 150 meters, which is easy to be penetrated, shown as the figure 4.7, the sun above the cloud, and then jumped down to see the sleeping village, it can be said that nature provides us with the most beautiful imagination.



Figure 4.7: “Aerial China” – The sun above the clouds and the village under the clouds

#### 4.1.4 Sound Element of Chinese documentary in We-media times

As an important part of the documentary, sound has become an important artistic element, narrative element and aesthetic element. Sound conveys emotions, pictures convey information. Chinese film composer Yunjie Wang said: “The music in the film

not only an artistic role, it also gives the picture a vivid and natural impression; The music gives the picture an atmosphere and a third sense of space.” Music plays an important part in the soundscape of documentary films. Soundtrack or music is very important. It sets the tone for a good documentary. The correct music must be selected and then edited by the music editor. This move the documentary film one step closer to greatness.

Each episode of the documentary “The Tale of Chinese Medicine” has its own music and is associated with the theme of this episode.

The music of “Aerial China” is simple and interesting. The music at the end of the song is soothing and soothing. The pursuit of aerial Chinese music is the expression of love and love for the earth.

The music of “A Bite of China” consists of two parts: Copyright music and 19 original music. Each time a detailed picture is displayed, relatively gentle music is used; In the scenes showing the growth of all things and the completion of food fermentation, the magnificent music is generally adopted; The music expressing the success of the workers is a cheerful and melodic melody. Concisely and clearly shows the protagonist’s happiness after receiving hard work. The narration is performed by Lihong Li, a famous Chinese dubbing performance artist. His voice is thick and full of magnetism, which makes us fascinated and evokes appetite. Freehand brushwork is also an important method of music creation in film and television works. Freehand brushwork can express the richest connotation with the most concise narrative. The

most common freehand audio in film and television works is to use exaggerated techniques, or to show the sound that we can't hear in the real life, or the original small sound to enhance the amplification, or add delay, reverberation and so on. The use of sound can give full play to its role in the film, symbol, metaphor, description, and can be fascinating, the artistic effect of this atmosphere. In addition to the introduction of Li Lihong's narration, the documentary "A Bite of China" also contained sounds generated during the processing of food. It was also an indispensable sound element of the entire documentary film, which greatly enhanced the audience's curiosity about the film. These voices are all voiced by the later period. In addition to sound and background music, the sound effects often allow the audience to be on the scene, but they can't make a difference. After the passage of the "deaf" people, the audience was able to sit comfortably in the performance of the music and look at the scenery behind the food, and relaxed acceptance of the stories in the works. "A Bite of China" shows the "fizz" of the fried food in the process of cooking, shown as 4.8, and the sound of the stewed of "purr" is presented to the audience with a simple and bright sound treatment. The Zongzi has a fresh taste of leaves, a fragrant smell of glutinous rice, but the appetite brought about by the stickiness of glutinous rice, we will not pay special attention. When the temporal lobe is separated from the glutinous rice, it is also a manifestation of appetite. When the sound of the separation of the temporal lobe and the scorpion is heard, shown as figure 4.9, the visual and auditory interactions are synchronized, and the sound and



picture are synchronized, giving the maximum authenticity.

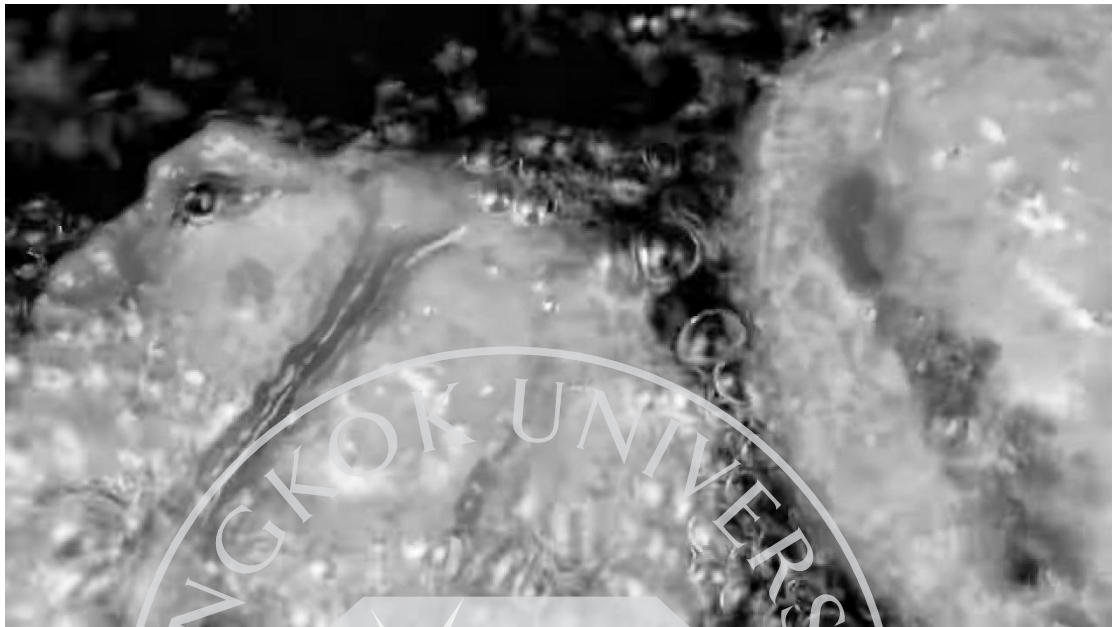


Figure 4.8: “A Bite of China” -- “Fizz” of the fried food in the process of cooking



Figure 4.9: “A Bite of China” -- The sound of leaves separated from glutinous rice when peeling the Zongzi

#### 4.1.5 Editing Element of Chinese documentary in We-media times

The similarity transition is to find two objects or stories with similar characteristics that are connected together. The transition of this method uses the commonality of two kinds of foods. When they look for the same from the different species, the audience will see the same view. The coherence of shadow thinking, there will be no feeling of broken chain. The design of the cover figure 4.10 is “Ink and Bacon”. It means that “one mountain, one water, one boat, one chopstick, one clip and one bacon” not only has the poetry and painting of Chinese traditional painting, but also fully reflects the theme that the film has to show.

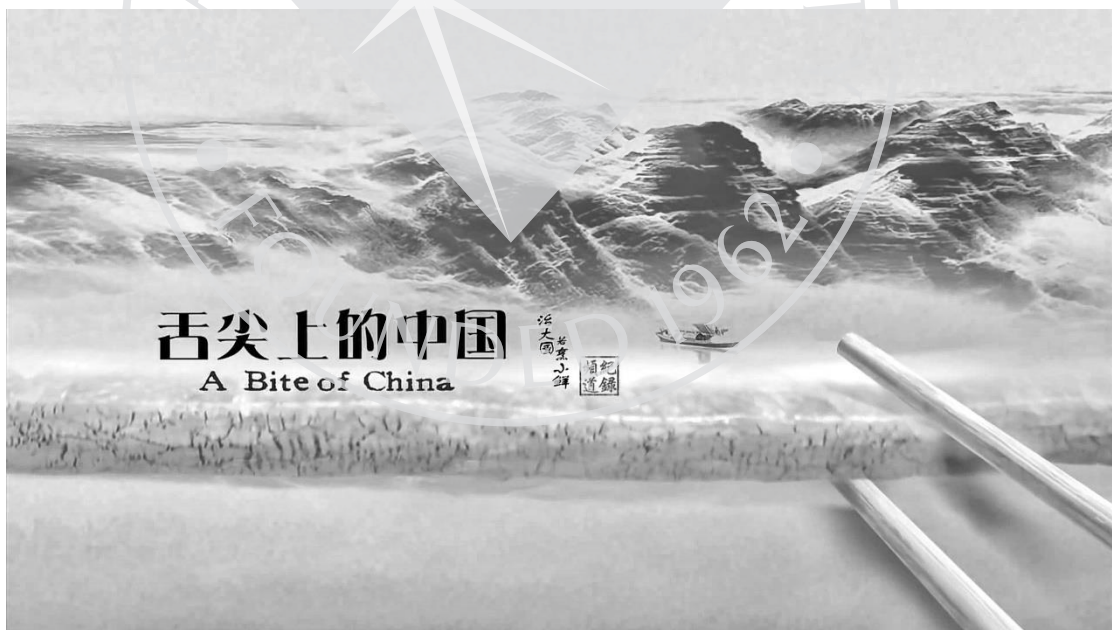


Figure 4.10: Cover of “A Bite of China”

Most Chinese documentaries will use lenses or special effects such as ink painting or full of Chinese elements. They attract Chinese audiences with the elements most understood by the Chinese people. They are also attractive a large

number of foreign audiences who is like or want to understand Chinese culture.

The editing of “Master in Forbidden City” combine multidisciplinary knowledge, techniques, and popular elements with a contemporary sense of the times. Director Jun Ye believes that he faces two key issues when editing “Master in Forbidden City”: one is massive material, and the other is how to tell this story. In the vast amount of material, the way director Jun Ye’s handles is to find out the key points, remove the waste, and find useful materials to re-arrange and combine. He found inspiration from the chapter structure of *The Water Margin*, one of China’s four famous masterpieces, *The Chapter*, an external narrative of ancient Chinese novels. It is characterized by dividing the book into several chapters called “back” or “section”. Cut the film by writing novels, solve the relationship between fields and stories, arrange the appearance and shaping of the character. Each chapter describes different process groups and then interleaves. Each story has its own clues, and the whole film has a big clue. Director Jun Ye also emphasized the rhythm of the documentary. He skillfully used metaphor to explain: “It’s like designing a school, not all stones and houses, but also the need chairs to rest, need birds and flowers, need water to adjust.” And he put a lot of “waste” in “Master in Forbidden City”, such as playing with the cat and chatting in the spare time, and these things with life quality make the documentary more touching.

#### **4.2 Communication channels**

In recent years, the ratings of the traditional TV industry have declined, and



documentaries hard to enter the theaters. In this situation, the documentary must find more ways, and the new media platform is a good choice.

It can be seen from the various elements of the documentary from the We-media times that today is the era of “Snackable content”, and content is the most important. The documentary must attract good attention from the audience and must have good content support.

Previous documentaries were mainly distributed through traditional print media and electronic media. In the We-media times, print media, electronic media, and new media such as the Internet and mobile phones have become platforms for documentary dissemination. Among them, especially the network’s ability to spread is the most spectacular. For example, Figure 4.11 shown is the broadcast and promotional channels selected by the documentary “A Bite of China”.

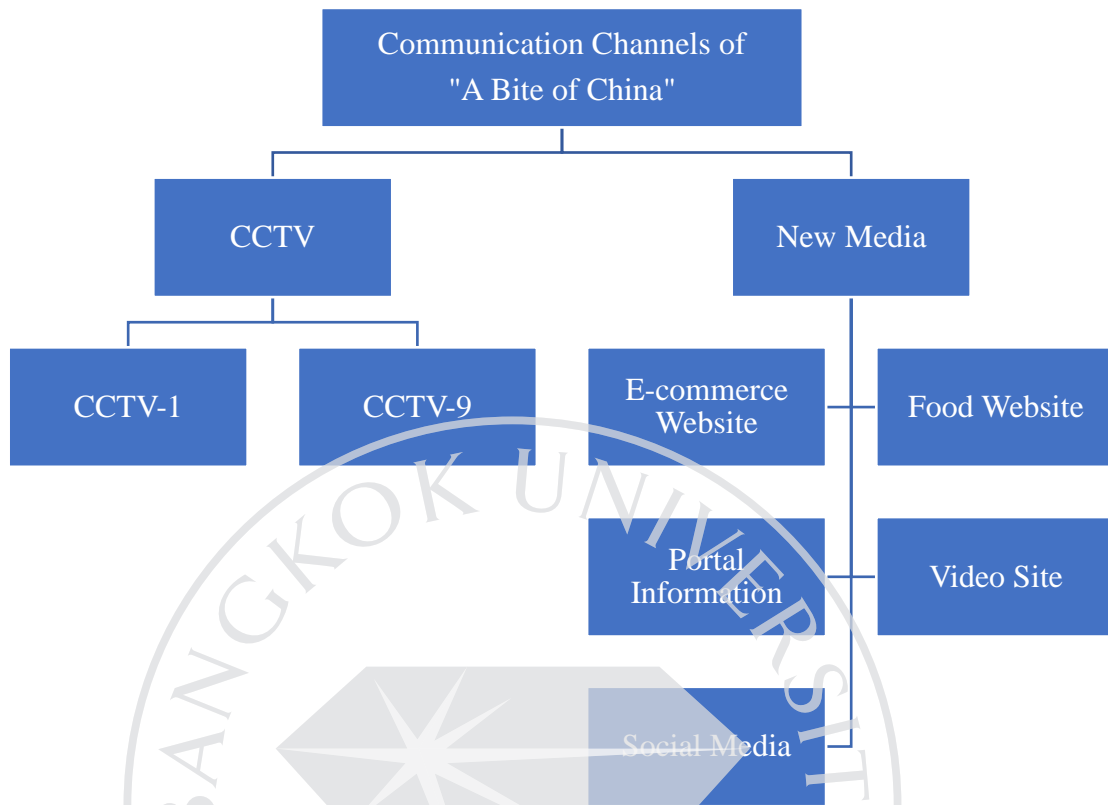


Figure 4.11: Communication Channels of “A Bite of China” -- “CCTV + mainstream video website” multi-screen transmission method

The table 4.1 shows the playback platform and main content of the documentary samples which selected in this study. I will select several popular platforms and other typical platforms for introduction and analysis.

Table 4.1: The platform and main content of sample documentaries

<b>Documentary</b>	<b>Platform</b>	<b>Content</b>
A Bite of China season 1&2	We-Chat, Aiqiyi, Youku, CNTV, Bilibili, Tencent	Humanities, Food
Herbal China	Aiqiyi, Tencent	Humanities, Traditional Culture
Aerial China	CCTV, Mango TV, Aiqiyi, Youku, Tencent	Environmental
Under the Dome		Environmental
Masters in Forbidden City	We-Chat, Bilibili, CCTV-9, Youku	Humanities, Traditional Culture

The documentary “Under the Dome” has been banned from mainland China and can only be seen on overseas platforms, so it will be presented separately here for analysis.

The documentary “Under the Dome” is a serious work that captures the most concerned topic of most Chinese audiences today - the smog. Jing Chai visited a number of polluting sites to find the root cause of smog, and went to many countries to film the pollution control experience. This investigation on smog is considered to be “the most authoritative source of non-institutional and non-journal journalists, the

most reliable information, the most open-minded, the most versatile, and the smog survey with a sense of action.” The work is well-made. At the scene of the exchange, Jing Chai used TED-style speech, live demonstration, video display and network communication those four major problems to analyze the coal and fuel oil that brought serious air pollution to China, shown as figure 4.12. In addition to the ingenious use of comprehensive means of communication, the content, fair and unbiased attitude are the core factor for the rapid spread of this documentary in a short period of time.

Many traditional media have devoted a lot of effort to the environment and smog, and have made many professional and exclusive reports, but they are not so good as the “under the dome”. “Under the Dome” is more personalized and slightly better in the application of new media technologies. In addition to the content creation from the media, through the explosive chain of social networking sites, coupled with the diverse presentation of new technologies, such as Jing Chai’s TED-style speech, information visualization, Flash animation, shift-axis photography, science fiction movie effects skills, etc., all reflect the sense of sight brought about by the new style of communication in the We-media times.



Figure 4.12: “Under the Dome” – TED style speech

As a representative of we-media communication, the author of “Under the Dome” began to tell from the birth of her child, which has aroused the resonance of countless parents. The author substitutes the expression of the first-person of the narrative subject and the non-traditional third-person of journalist, and adopts the TED-style humorous and humorous speech. The big screen replaces the small screen of the traditional newspaper print era, and the live audience is no longer the foil of the show, but the person in the real “scene”. This more impactful approach, whether off-site or on-site audience, can gain real feelings, reinforce the audience’s resonance, and carry out independent communication through the we-media. Since the we-media has high requirements for content, although many media have already reported on the theme of smog, Jing Chai’s “Under the Dome” is from the data chart to the interview copy to the video speech from the author and her team. Originality can attract so

much attention.

The popularity of “Under the Dome” made the we-media creators feel the opportunity coming in We-media times. At present, there are more and more online video platforms in China, and WeChat, Weibo, Youku, Sohu, etc. have joined this we-media war.

Next, I will introduce and analyze WeChat, Weibo, official website of each documentary, Aiqiyi, Tencent video documentary channel, Youku, Phoenix documentary channel, Sohu channel, and Bilibili how to promote the documentary.

#### 4.2.1 WeChat

The 2017 China New Media Industry Panorama Research Report mentioned: “In 2016, China’s major we-media platforms, the WeChat public account led the media industry with an absolute advantage of 63.4%.” As the figure 4.13.

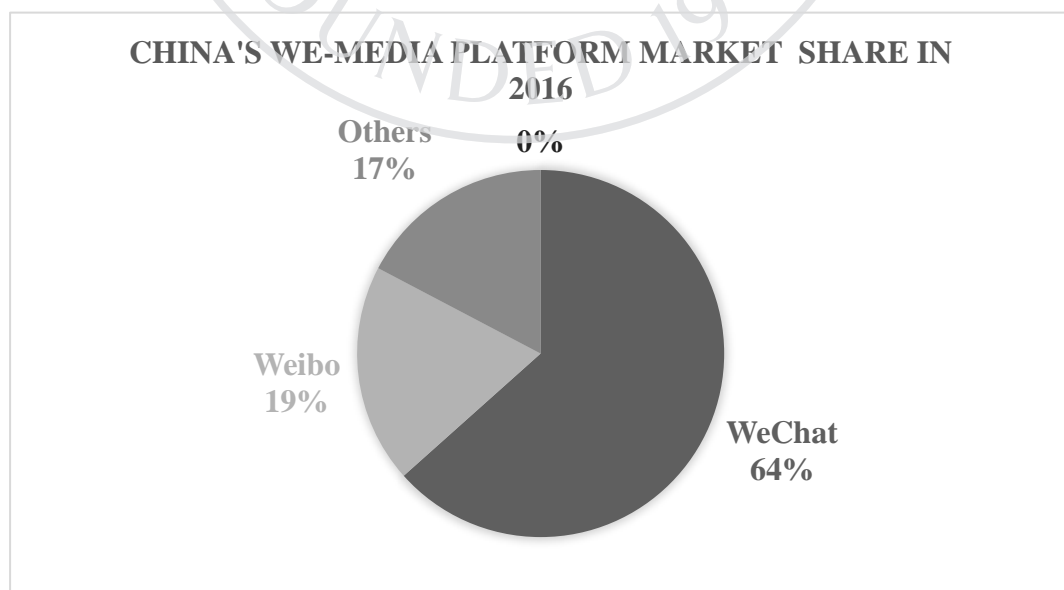


Figure 4.13: China’s we-media platform market share in 2016

WeChat is a humanized tool. Users can pay attention to the public account according to their personal preferences or needs. In addition to accepting information push, they can also customize the content. WeChat users can also post topics, participate in discussions, and interact with other audiences timely through the Moments (The moments of life recorded by the user, such as: text, photos, sharing links, etc.); At the same time, the technical means are constantly improved, and WIFI, convenient mobile power bank, and large video screen can be connected everywhere, which is convenient for using WeChat. WeChat pushes a single message with images, titles, and part of content. If it push a few messages at the same time, only the title and image are included, and users can get richer and more comprehensive content after clicking. Fragmented content that is unconnected is presented at the same time, saving users' reading time and only selecting some information for deep reading (Wang, 2015). For example, the documentary "Masters in Forbidden City" has a WeChat public account, and strengthening WeChat publicity can increase the number of fans. The existing WeChat propaganda means to pay attention to the official public account by scanning the QR code of the official WeChat, or to add attention by searching for the name or account. The same name movie of the documentary "Masters in Forbidden City" is through the WeChat publicity for crowdfunding, making the movie version meet the audience quickly. In order to gain the choice and recognition of the audience, it is essential to actively communicate with the audience. A major function of the WeChat public account is to release the program content and related

information according to a certain frequency. The public account will inform the audience of the content actively, so that ensure the audience can watch the news through WeChat and watch the program on time. The WeChat public account will also respond to the user's feedback in a timely manner, understand the audience's needs, and gradually win the user's recognition and trust, and then the program which channel broadcast will win attention. Video playback has certain requirements for devices and networks. Currently, most users use WeChat on their smartphones. The use of WeChat webpages is still not too much. There are still limitations on the complete play through mobile phones. With the influence of WeChat, the complete documentary needs to be edited, and the highlights or previews will be pushed to the audience to meet the needs of the audience for shallow reading, and the short segments will evoke their desire to watch.

#### 4.2.2 Weibo

Weibo is a very popular new media in China. Similar to Facebook, the number of Weibo users is extremely large, and there are many "celebrities", including well-known entrepreneurs, celebrities, famous athletes, and so on. Here I will combine the "A Bite of China" to study the communication strategy of Weibo. "A Bite of China" column has opened a certified official Weibo account and selectively publishes information that it knows and wants to know about the audience, so as to achieve a specific communication effect. It is the application of the agenda setting theory in



communication studies. According to the theory, “mass communication often cannot determine people’s specific views on an event or opinion, but it can effectively influence the facts and opinions that people pay attention to and the order in which they talk about it by providing information and arranging related issues.” Every important propaganda node will post the latest news on Weibo, which will play a very good role in propaganda and boosting. Through the official Weibo account, the agenda setting of the one that was carried out quickly conveyed the message to the audience on time, and the attention of the program was improved. In addition, Weibo also launched a discussion on the topic of “A Bite of China”, and also got the active participation of netizens. There were 550,000 related discussions in a week. The large amount of discussion on the topic made this topic quickly appear on the Sina Weibo micro-topic list, and was pushed on the Sina Weibo homepage of each user, getting more people’s attention. In most cases, celebrity’s Weibo plays a role of public opinion orientation and plays the role of opinion leader. The opinion leader is the general term for “a person who proactively provides information to a person and gives a subjective judgment to the attitude of the communication”. In the network communication of “A Bite of China”, there is no shortage of opinion leaders. In addition to the official Weibo account and celebrities’ Weibo, ordinary users also used the platform of Weibo to express their views on “A Bite of China”. In such an era where everyone is we-media, every Weibo user is a propagator and promoter of information, and every release and forwarding plays a role in promoting “A Bite of

China”. With the transformation of the media, digital technology and network technology have further developed, and many new media have emerged, forming a pattern of competition, mutual integration among radio, television, newspapers and other new media. As a popular emerging media, Weibo’s efficient dissemination of information and the integration of multiple media resources make Weibo communication a part of the communication process.

#### 4.2.3 Official website of each documentary

During the documentary dissemination process, the website has made the communication method more diversified through the integration of multi-party resources, and it has also increased the efficiency and convenience of publicity. At present, website promotion has become an important way to promote documentary.

“A Bite of China season 2” also has an official website, the website has sections such as, “Home” page, “Video” page, “Comment”, “Behind the Scene”, “A Bite of China season 1”, “CCTV-9”, “On-the-spot record”, “Library”, “Food documentary” and “About us”. Under the “Home” section, there are “Diversity Contents”, “Comment Summary”, “Masters talk about ‘A Bite of China’” and other sections, as well as videos of “A Bite of China season 2” and “A Bite of China season 1”. The website is rich in content and diverse in form. Under the “Behind the Scene” section, there are columns such as “‘A Bite of China’ Information”, “Exclusive Watch” and “About Director”. The main focus is on the creation team of “A Bite of China season

2” and the presentation of the footage. It is a piece that is easy and lively. In addition, the “Comment” section mainly provides multi-party comments. The “CCTV-9” section allows the audience to understand the program settings and content of the recording channel. The “On-the-spot record” and “Library” sections allow viewers to quickly find their own interesting documentary.

#### 4.2.4 Phoenix Documentary

In 2016, on the one hand, Phoenix Documentary Channel focused on the introduction and operation of “high-quality” and “high-traffic” documentary copyrights, and on the other hand to create original short-video original programs, while promoting “multi-terminal access”. Getting through the background of “Phoenix account” and “Yidian zixun”, it facilitated the entry of the we-media, objectively improved the exposure of the “record content” from the we-media; The five-end integration continued to strengthen the Phoenix TV APP, Phoenix TV News APP, Phoenix Video PC Edition, and Phoenix mobile phone, it promotes the three-dimensional communication effect of “record content.” In terms of community linkage, the Phoenix documentary channel realizes the “click-and-mortar” community interaction, creating a program fan group and a Phoenix documentary fan group, holding a record screening salon and so on. At the same time, the Phoenix Documentary Channel actively participated in the documentary industry exchanges and advocated “case sharing and IP sharing”. In addition, the Phoenix Documentary

Channel was further cooperation with “Visual China”, “Second Shots”, “XiaoKa Shows”, “Yi Live” and “Meitu Shots”, the cooperation of the five leading platforms in the industry will strengthen the operation of the whole media and realize the comprehensive opening of the product background, which is convenient for the audience to watch videos through the mobile terminal and ensure the short video has a leading position in the industry.

#### 4.2.5 Aiqiyi

The Aiqiyi video portal was founded by Baidu. Benefiting from the consumption habits that video websites have cultivated over the years, Internet users are now accustomed to paying for an ad-free, ultra-clear viewing experience, and users are willing to pay for premium content. As the first platform to open the model of pay to watch documentary, Aiqiyi has made active explorations in the commercialization of documentaries. The Aiqiyi documentary channel focuses on key IP for quality operations, which not only enhances traffic and revenue, but also enhances brand value. They use the amount of video playback to judge the popularity of a project. “A project can be considered as a phenomenon level if it plays more than 100 million on a platform and in a certain period of time; if it exceeds 10 million, it can be regarded as a hot documentary; if achieving a million it may be a regular documentary content.” Whether a content has traffic, the most important evaluation point in their view is the subject matter of the content, the second is the narrative and content of the

story itself, and finally the promotion and operation of the platform. Because the platform is based on products to do recommendation and promotion, helping users find the points they like, it is difficult to push a narrow-minded, but narrative documentary through the resources of the platform.

Combining documentary playback with pay-per-view, because of the high academic and high-income characteristics of documentary audiences, makes it possible for buyers to pay for bills instead of advertisers. In the context of the gradual maturity of the payment model, high-quality content is the core of retaining users, and users are willing to renew their fees for a long time. The channel will spare no effort in the selection and introduction of high-quality content. The Aiqiyi documentary channel is more concerned with social hot issues. On the homepage of the channel, four thematic links of “Earthquake”, “Disaster”, “Diaoyu Islands” and “China Carrier” were set up. This is also the choice made to fully consider the male audience’s high attention to current events.

#### 4.2.6 Tencent

In 2016, Tencent’s Documentary Channel continued to gather the advantages of the platform, focusing on the introduction and operation of the world’s classic documentary. The channel has achieved a 3000-hour solo broadcast of “National Geographic” and has achieved cooperation with global quality content such as BBC, US-translated channels, German-French channels, and NHK.

Resource replacement is another way to provide some resource location to replace the broadcast rights. The other modes are also divided according to the amount of video playback and the number of members. At the same time, on the basis of the high development of the platform, the user coverage flow is improved. For example: “The Great Tribe 2”, a successful operation case, using the method of profit sharing of video playback amount, taking the content as the core, the work and the business are both pay attention, and finally successfully commercialized and explored a path of documentary commercial operation.

Third-party data shows that from April 2016, Tencent’s Documentary Channel reading coverage ranks first in China’s entire network. The Tencent Documentary Channel has certain advantages in content distribution, reach users, and media form. In addition to focusing on global boutique documentaries and creating original self-made documentaries, the channel also focuses on multiple developments online and offline, and conducts offline communication activities to enhance its influence. In the beginning of 2017, Tencent began to produce documentaries. They focused on four directions: natural geography, food, social reality, and a combination of history and reality. The powerful guiding ability of Tencent’s products will bring better promotion effect to the documentary.

#### 4.2.7 Youku

As the most self-made documentary on the whole network in China, Youku

Documentary Channel insists on the development of original and self-made content on the basis of maintaining its own content and purchasing copyright, calls on the whole people to participate in video recording. In recent years, Youku has continuously launched a number of high-quality and market-oriented original online record series. Its “National Participation” and “College Work” columns have also created their own characteristics. Documentary works from folk and colleges, although not comparable to the professional documentary team’s work, but it has its own unique perspective of the society and the way of recording, telling the life of the people, the audience will resonate after watching with the freshness. At the same time, the Youku Documentary Channel tried the documentary’s we-media “cross-border”. The Youku Documentary Channel has “completed” more than 30 documentaries in the form of webcasts. For example, for 10 consecutive days, recording Minhong Yu’s study tour documentary --“Hong Ge’s Sleepwalking”, there are 2 million interactions, and an average of more than 1,000 comments per minute was only 2 days on line. The combination of live broadcast form and record style has also become a breakthrough point for online documentary (Liu et al., 2017, p181).

This year, Youku set up a “pan-documentary center” to develop the documentary content as a whole. This is a high-architecture and ecological input. And we can see the entire Youku system’s re-recognition of the documentary content industry. Youku has a lot of resources, and these resources have very strong liquidity. Jibing He, the CEO of Youku, believes that “in the current content of the ocean, the documentary

likes a small fish, it needs to evolve and reproduce, and it will die if it does not evolve.” Through the theme of “Our Evolution”, he detailed introduced some of the things that Youku is doing or about to do on the evolutionary path. He said that “The changes in the four forms of production methods, platforms, cooperation methods, and profit models are actually a need to create a system from content to consumer, and then to commerce. In this way, a full-link transformation is made and formed a complete ecosystem. The producers, platforms, users and customers form a common evolution together to win the war.”

#### 4.2.8 Sohu

The Sohu Documentary Channel belongs to a sub-channel of Sohu video. It is divided into ten columns: “Sohu’s Big Vision”, “Vision”, “History”, “Military”, “Nature”, “Society”, “Tourism”, “Finance”, “Technology”, “Culture”, and “People”. Among them, “Sohu’s Big Vision” is Sohu’s self-made documentary. Its column locating words write: “‘Sohu’s Big Vision’ is China’s online video site’s first high-end self-made documentary”. Since its launch in 2011, it has broadcast 252 episodes and broadcast more than 700 million times. This shows that the documentary has a large audience in the network. The Sohu Video Index Center is tailored to market feedback. Through it, we can clearly see the ratings and viewing characteristics of each column. Taking “Sohu’s Big Vision” as an example, we know its users’ 24-hour distribution, as well as the distribution of people and the distribution of the region.



These clear data not only provide an important reference for the positioning and development of the columns and content creation, but also can be targeted for advertisers (He & Liang, 2013).

#### 4.2.9 Bilibili

In the past, the public's impression of Bilibili may be a "two-dimensional space (MAG, Manga, Anime and Games)" or "Barrage". But now in Bilibili, young people create and produce a multicultural trend that encompasses animation, games, fashion, life, technology, music, and dance. The documentary is one of the most active categories of content, which is inseparable from the attributes of the Bilibili users.

Bilibili has two characteristics. One is younger. The daily active user of Bilibili is 80 million, of which 81.2% are young people after 90s and 00s. The second is two-dimensional space. This is the most important content product of Bilibili, but recently, the investment of Bilibili in documentaries was getting more and more, and the company was using the documentary as a key development area.

To some extent, the Bilibili user represents the future of the documentary. Bilibili represents a group of young users with the best education and the highest quality in China. They are Internet generations, have a superior material, a good aesthetic foundation, and they are full of curiosity about the world. Most importantly, for good content, young users are willing to spontaneously spread and strongly recommend. "Masters in Forbidden City" and "Looking for Craftsmanship" after being highly

praised by users at Bilibili, quickly spread to social media and mainstream media. The Bilibili users promoted the excellent documentary content to play the “counter-attack” effect in the market. In addition, a good community atmosphere and barrage are also important factors in the chemical reaction between the Bilibili and the excellent documentary. The barrage transforms the original one-way information transfer into two-way, greatly expanding the boundaries of the content. In the barrage of Bilibili, netizens not only shared knowledge and feelings, but also created a special atmosphere and resonance.

At present, there are three modes of documentary operation in Bilibili. The first is to purchase some excellent documentary broadcasts; the second is to produce with some excellent documentary production organizations; the third is to produce documentaries as the main producers.

Shengzhao Zhang, head of the Copyright Department of Bilibili, believes that users are increasingly eager for excellent documentary content and promote the documentary culture to become a trend in Bilibili. Therefore, Bilibili launched a special documentary support program. On December 12th, the 2017 China International Documentary Film Festival was held in Guangzhou. The major documentary organizations and creators in China gathered to discuss the latest developments in documentary development. For the first time, Bilibili released the documentary “Looking for a Plan”, which will “seek” more excellent documentary content for users of Bilibili, and at the same time support the creators in the whole

industry chain. This summer, Bilibili launched its first documentary, “The story of chuaner”, which was the main producer. It touched the mind of Chinese about barbecue and quickly became a hot documentary. It also got a high score of 9.0 in Douban. This documentary also represents the direction of Bilibili documentary production in the future, which is a documentary that young people like. “Young” and “new” will become the key words of the Bilibili documentary.

#### **4.3 Communication strategy**

Through the analysis of the above several platforms, the Chinese documentary in We-media times is the accurate positioning of market feedback and data support. In the field of “Internet +” communication, the characteristics of digitalization, fragmentation and omnidirectional information have made information dissemination no longer confined to a single top-down communication mode of information dissemination into the All-media and We-media times. The documentary from the We-media times is the accurate positioning of market feedback and data support. Identify the audience and use the interactivity of new media to create better documentaries that the audience prefers to see. As a kind of image communication medium that expresses the essence of reality, the documentary reflects the life of every corner of the society and records the changes of history. In this era, the documentary market continues to expand, and Internet technology innovations have also created important interactions between documentaries and we-media.

The participatory news of We-media times will not disappear soon.

Communicating, collaborating and sharing personal hobbies have always been the core of the Internet. According to Scott Rosenberg, managing editor of Salon.com, what Weinberger reminds us is that “every Website, every Internet posting matters to the person who created it -- and maybe to that person’s circle of site visitors, whether they number 10 million or just 10.” “Individually, these contributions may be crude, untrustworthy, unnoteworthy. Collectively, they represent the largest and most widely accessible pool of information and entertainment in human history. And it’s still growing. (Bowman & Willis, 2003)”

Documentary propaganda works online with viewers through the we-media. These interactions are as important as narratives, perhaps more so. Because they are created and owned by the audience. The propaganda model from the We-media times has established a more loyal and credible relationship with the audience. Listening to and cooperating with the audience helps create better, more compelling and more accurate stories. A documentary from pre-selection, filming, production to post-promotion, attracting viewers to participate in creation, commenting, verifying facts, feedback and subsequent publicity contributions will give them a sense of ownership. However, the audience participating in the process will be more demanding than the audience who passively accept the information.

According to Web usability expert Jakob Nielsen, online interactive experience is more memorable than static experiences such as newspapers. Participation will have a stronger feeling than just watching. Through the We-media platform, viewers can

transmit a large amount of information, they are more active, comments and self-promotion. For example, when we see a good documentary, we will want to tell others that they may also tell others. A good documentary are inherently infectious. Talking about and sharing it is a natural extension of the experience.

Another benefit of using a we-media platform to promote, increase interactivity and promote audience participation is to attract more young viewers. Today, Internet users are younger. Young people want the media to provide a two-way communication channel. They will not tolerate one-way media. They want to be able to manipulate media content. They hope to gain their own unknown and interesting. In We-media times, the viewers of the documentary are relatively young because they seek or participate in the creation of their own interesting and unknown documentaries, and they promote their own and favorite documentaries through online channels, so the documentary will have a huge influence among young people. Think of this as a case involving a target customer group, so it will be successful.

The participating audience can be regarded as a scalable virtual staff, from participating in the selection, shooting, providing advice and helping to promote. As long as there are people and network, through the mutual promotion of the audience, the documentary can be promoted to places that some media cannot reach. Since the We-media times is equivalent to the era of universal record, the number of production entities has increased significantly. There are many independent documentaries of private organizations or individuals. It is very likely that each audience is an

independent documentary producer, which is more conducive to the development of documentaries. But it is inevitable that most documentary art performances and thinking depths become shortcomings, and it is also possible to form a documentary market chaos. Therefore, in We-media times, we must pay more attention to the management of documentaries and the introduction of relevant policies and systems.

Since the advent of the We-media times, it represents the birth of a new media communication platform, which is characterized by high efficiency, flexibility, speed and wide. The innovative model, which is based on the crowdfunding model of we-media documentary, cooperate between we-media and documentary, has greatly reduced the threshold for the production of traditional high-quality documentaries, so that every film-shooting enthusiast has the opportunity to become a traditional documentary investors, creators, and communicators. At the same time, under the crowdfunding innovation model of self-media documentary, adopting a more open crowdfunding method, raising funds through the Internet, relying on the power of the public, it also greatly reduced the investment risk and created more for the public to realize their dreams.

With the continuous improvement of the lens of mobile electronic terminal devices such as mobile phones, mobile phone documentaries have sprung up, and mobile phones have become the most common and convenient shooting tools and recording devices. At the same time, the extensive coverage of 4G networks in China allows documentaries to be transmitted in real time over the Internet. This has led

some new documentary filmmakers to abandon the traditional camera equipment, using mobile phones as shooting equipment, while reducing production costs and improving record timeliness, but also formed their own unique documentary style.

The documentary's innovative workshop model is to create a director-centered filming method, and to attract successful people and entrepreneurs in the society to invest in the establishment of a documentary creation foundation, to unite the social forces, and to combine the we-media from the traditional documentary. The promotion and application not only can provide financial support for traditional documentary films combined with we-media technology, but also help citizen journalism realize the dream of creating documentaries. It gives them the opportunity to create a documentary with a strong style and provide an inexhaustible driving force for the development and innovation of the documentary.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter draws conclusions on the research findings, and puts forward some aspects about the development and the need to improve and take measures of Chinese documentary in We-media times. The limitations of this study were explored and suggestions were given to researchers who continue to do related research in the future. I hope that this research will help the development of Chinese documentaries.

#### 5.1 Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to observe and analyze Chinese documentaries from We-media times and discover the popular elements and communication strategies of documentaries in this era. The method is to select the five most popular and representative documentaries from We-media times to analyze the factors, to explore how they convey information to the audience, and researching the channels through which they are broadcasted and some of the typical we-media channels of today, combining the previous content to study the communication strategies of Chinese documentaries in We-media times.

We have reasonably answered the two questions raised in chapter 1:

Research Question # 1: How does elements of Chinese documentary communicates to viewers in We-media times?

In We-media times, Chinese documentary preference story narrative, using the structure of the feature film, consciously constructing the story, shaping the



characters, designing suspense and climax, editing in a dramatic way, making the event development have a certain comedy effect or cause and effect relationship.

Chinese documentaries have entered the “story” period from political theory. These documentaries pursue storytelling, pay attention to suspense, character shaping and plot twists and turns. Not only on-the-spot record style documentaries began to tell stories, but even docudrama and political documentary began to focus on narrative storytelling, placing characters in specific historical environments and presenting major historical events through stories. The Chinese documentary commentary in We-media times is vivid, concise, and beautiful, which can bring endless charm and beauty to the audience. The humorous documentary commentary not only expresses the creator’s sentiment and sentiment, but also conveys the information and feelings that the picture language can’t express clearly. It also allows the audience to obtain the “aesthetic expectation” in another “aesthetic space.” Today’s popular documentary commentary is close to prose in style, and the use of language pays more attention to emotional bursting and poetic injection. Chinese traditional art creation pays great attention to impressionistic style, focus on artistic conception. Through a keen observation of things, a deep understanding of life, an insight into the depth of society, and a reflection on the rationality of life, the documentary reveals a universal meaning and eternal value beyond reality. Different occasion uses different background music, which directly affects the audience’s feeling and renders emotions together with the scene.

One of the major difficulties in the documentary is the absence of realistic scenes and the unreproducibility of historical scenes, resulting in the lack of means and auditory performance of documentary. In the traditional documentary, the method of “ruin + physical + image lens + individual narrative” is generally adopted. The Chinese documentary in We-media times prefers “True reproduction”, and the creator will perform the objective world through the way of relocation. Expressing what has happened in the objective world, what may have happened, or the inner world of the character is affected by the activity. Using subjective shots, props, light and shadow, sound, scene simulation, actor performance and other expressions, create past time and space, reproduce historical truth, make historical narrative more vivid, more dramatic and more visually expressive.

Another feature of the Chinese documentary since We-media times is the use of high-tech means, which provides a broad space for the entertainment of the documentary. High technology breaks through the limitations of recording reality, breaks the boundaries between reality and fiction, creates incredible image wonders, and brings the most direct sensory stimulation to the audience, thus affecting people’s psychological emotions. The audio-visual impact is inseparable from the specific technical conditions. It is equipped with photography, lighting, recording and special effects lenses, and advanced special shooting equipment, through sports, lifting, aerial photography and other means, through fisheye lens, microscope head, aerial photography, underwater photography, high-speed photography, animation and other

special cinematography, through advertising, music and television and other film and television language, through editing, non-linear editing, three-dimensional animation, computer production, recording synthesis to realize.

In We-media times, documentary production is no longer restricted by technology, capital, and institutions. Everyone is a recipient, communicator, creator, and life recorder of information. Everyone can record according to their own wishes. Any moments and details in life make the Chinese documentary present a diversified feature in the topic selection, such as non-mainstream themes, marginal themes, and unpopular subjects that are difficult to appear in traditional documentaries. Since life in normal life often has not many stories, ordinary characters and events are often lacking in entertainment. Therefore, many documentary directors are willing to shoot unusual stories and choose the “unusual” marginal person as the hero. This trend has led to two extremes in the subject matter of the documentary. One is the abnormality of the recording environment. Adjust the narrative strategy, record the unconventional state of normal people, put the characters in an abnormal environment, and deliberately create drama. Instead, record the marginalization of objects, select the marginal characters as the object of recording, and choose to stay away from realism and bizarre themes to satisfy the audience’s curiosity. A major trend in new media is the mobilization of receiving terminals, both from PC connectivity to mobile internet. The microscreen of the mobile terminal inherently requires a change in the picture language of the video. “In this case, the documentary creator wants to shoot a

documentary that is played on the mobile phone. The main character's picture should be based on close-up shots, otherwise the audience will not be able to feel the emotional expression and revealing of the protagonist in the documentary, let the audience feel the texture of the objects captured by the documentary creation" (Fei & Cao, 2012).

Most Chinese documentaries in We-media time contain a large number of ink painting style animations or shots, and more freehand brushwork, with a strong Chinese element. "A Bite of China", "Aerial China", "The Tale of Chinese Medicine", "Under the Dome" and "Master in Forbidden City", all these popular documentary samples are about China, Chinese cuisine, Chinese landscape, Chinese quintessence, Chinese culture, even the issue of China. People can get a strong sense of national pride from such a documentary, and know more about their country. They also show that the people are surplus and begin to care about national events.

Snackable content makes it easier for documentaries to excel in documentaries as long as the content captures the hearts of the viewers. As people's lives become more and more busy, they are used to reading or browsing information using fragmented time. The micro-documentation of documentary films is also imperative. Micro-documentaries make it easier for people to choose to click and watch during the fragmented time, and it easier to grasp the hearts of the people, so micro-documentation is also one of the elements of the Chinese documentary in We-media times.

Research Question # 2: What is communication strategy of Chinese documentary in We-media times?

The mode of communication from we-media is different from that of traditional media. Its mode of communication is a form of two-way feedback, and communication and interaction can be carried out simultaneously. In this all-participating society, people can collect news by themselves, and spread new things around them through the media, and become “citizen journalism”. They can write travel notes, record their moods, and communicate within their circle of friends. They can also forward and share information to achieve group interaction. In we-media, everyone is the producer of information. With the continuous improvement of mobile terminal technologies such as mobile phones and the popularity of 4G networks, people can independently collect information at any time, use real-time mobile phone lenses to record the new things happening around them, and spread the short films on the Internet through the network, communicate with the online audience. Through interaction, the form of we-media communication presents diversified characteristics and breaks the limitations of the traditional communication mode’s interaction and poor communication.

The documentary in We-media times is both original and real-time characteristics. It’s easy to understand in the dissemination of content. On the we-media platform, the boundaries between the communicator and the audience are often vague. Everyone can be the producer and communicator of information, and can also

be the audience. In the interaction and role transformation between the communicator and the audience, a lot of new information can be generated. Since the threshold of we-media is low, unlike the traditional media, there are too many strict restrictions, which has caused the proliferation and fragmentation of we-media information. Many information is often drowned in the ocean of vast we-media information because of lack of highlights or network pushers. At the same time, we-media information is less constrained in content. This aspect makes the content of the we-media documentary easy to understand, and on the other hand leads to the spread of some documentaries with obvious bias or unhealthy content.

The communication channel of we-media is different from the traditional media, it is not a one-way, one-time communication, but is a combination of multiple channels and multiple links. Therefore, the communication channels of we-media are constantly being repeated, and the key is the mutual cooperation between the whole media. We-media's communication channels are not operated independently, they generate resonance through all-media fusion, communicate with each other, infiltrate each other, and promote each other. With the development of the Internet era, media resources abound, no longer a scarce resource, the Internet is a popular medium, and the structure of the Internet is discrete and has no centrality. The increasing number of we-media, as well as the interactivity and decentralization of we-media itself, has accelerated the development trend of fragmentation of media resources.

We-media completely subverts the traditional media “one-to-many” single-item

information dissemination model, it has formed a communication mode in which the audience receives information anytime and anywhere, and actively chooses which information to receive, and can also comment, forward, and share the information they have received. Therefore, the opinions of the audience can be timely feedback to the documentary producer. On the one hand, the producer can adjust the documentary content according to the response of the audience; on the other hand, through a large number of user surveys, the producer can understand the demand of user about the documentary, prompt the producer to create a more suitable documentary for user and form a virtuous circle.

Communication method of Chinese documentary in We-media times involved construction of independent websites and vertical portals, opening of documentary channels, increasing investment in documentary channel construction, broadening the channels for documentary dissemination, and patents for documentary films are no longer only traditional media and related institutions. The portal can produce more based on the elements of Chinese documentary in we-media times and providing a wide variety of resources for documentary filmmakers and documentary enthusiasts. The advantages of documentary in providing knowledge and helping people to understand the world are being recognized by more and more people. It is difficult to develop in traditional media because of the small group audience. However, under the impetus of online video, it can be aggregated multi-users; on the other hand, video content sharing comments through the network, affecting more people, forming a

virtuous circle.

Using social media for brand marketing. Major traditional media have settled in social media such as Weibo and WeChat. Using social media to enrich content and interact with users while increasing the influence of media brands. On the social media, the documentary can exchange information with the audience in time, breaking the limitation of the traditional communication mode interaction and poor communication.

Nowadays, mobile phones are the first terminal of network video. In the near future, it will become the norm for users to watch videos through mobile phones. Therefore, documentary development of independent APP and large-scale shooting of micro-documentaries are the only way for self-development in we-media times. Enable people to watch micro-documentaries anytime, anywhere, during fragmented time.

The development of the media has provided powerful potential users for documentaries in we-media times, providing new development space and survival methods for the development of documentaries, broadening the channels for documentary dissemination and promoting the birth of new styles.

The Chinese documentary in We-media times is more sophisticated in content production and more able to withstand scrutiny; The subject matter is more controversial, which can lead the audience to think and discuss more deeply on the problems reflected by the documentary; Its rapid and extensive dissemination has



more social significance and can even promote social progress; Its communication is relatively more persistent, and its dissemination effect is more extensive and deeper.

## 5.2 Discussion

Although the Chinese documentary has shown various positive phenomena in We-media times, it is constructing a positive normal. However, the cluster of problems in Chinese documentaries is still an old problem that has been plaguing the development of documentaries. It involves a wide range of issues and deep problems.

Although the country has a series of policy measures, the overall top-level design, functional sections, role positioning, type boundaries, and control scope of the documentary industry still lack overall collaborative planning, this has led practitioners to be less clear about the overall direction and pattern of documentary development. In addition, under the situation that the film and television products are constantly being refurbished, the definition of the documentary ontology cannot keep up with the practice development, and the new style of commercial vitality (such as the definition of the real-life reality entertainment show) cannot be returned, which lead to investment and talent is difficult to include in statistics.

Since We-media times, the threshold for people to express their opinions is low, and the freedom of platform selection is large, which will increase the possibility of grievances and make it difficult to manage and control. The low threshold and inclusiveness of we-media environment is a double-edged sword. While achieving mass storage of documentaries, citizen journalism production, and mass

communication, it is also easy to shape the situation of uneven works and disorderly dissemination channels. The problem with the documentary in We-media times is that the relatively free market provided by we-media platform has made the we-media documentary's "checking" on itself still insufficient. On the one hand, it has affected the quality of its content to some extent, and on the other hand, it causes the lack of media responsibility. On the we-media platform, the audience can conduct open and liberal discussions, and also play a role in screening the we-media documentaries. The intentional works can stand out and cause a sensation. On the contrary, irresponsible content often cannot withstand scrutiny, and eventually fades out of people's attention. Although it can promote the progress of the we-media documentaries on high-quality and sophisticated roads, it is not enough to rely solely on the "market" for "checking" and mediation of we-media documentaries. We-media documentaries also need perfect review procedures and customs clearance systems.

With the development of information technology, the we-media born on the basis of Internet technology has caused great impact on some traditional media. However, traditional media still plays an irreplaceable role in information authority, credibility and content construction. Traditional media is also a very important means of information dissemination in We-media times. We should fully recognize the importance of traditional media to the spread of Chinese documentary, increase the emphasis on traditional media, integrate media resources, use the advantages of traditional media to achieve effective convergence and integration with we-media.

Exploiting the role of traditional media to maximize the spread and development of Chinese documentaries. For example, the TV media in traditional media has a very fixed and huge audience, and the improvement of TV performance and quality can bring viewers a more perfect audio-visual experience and stimulate the audience's interest in TV programs.

### **5.3 Implications of the finding**

#### 5.3.1 For audiences:

Through the study of Chinese documentaries in We-media times, the audience was informed of the impact of We-media times on Chinese documentaries, and the development and progress of Chinese documentaries, recognizing that the we-media plays an important role in promoting it.

#### 5.2.2 For documentary maker:

This study analyzes several major factors of the popular documentary since We-media times, which can provide a direction for the subsequent selection of materials, and has certain reference value for future documentary production. The research on the documentary communication strategy in We-media times also provides a reference for the future selection of documentary channels and methods, which will help to expand the coverage of documentary propaganda.

### 5.3.3 For researcher:

With the rapid development of the contemporary world, the documentary industry has become more and more popular and important for people. But there are still few studies on Chinese documentary in We-media times, and they still stay on the surface. This research has filled a little few research gap and has important value for further research in the future.

### 5.4 Limitation of the study

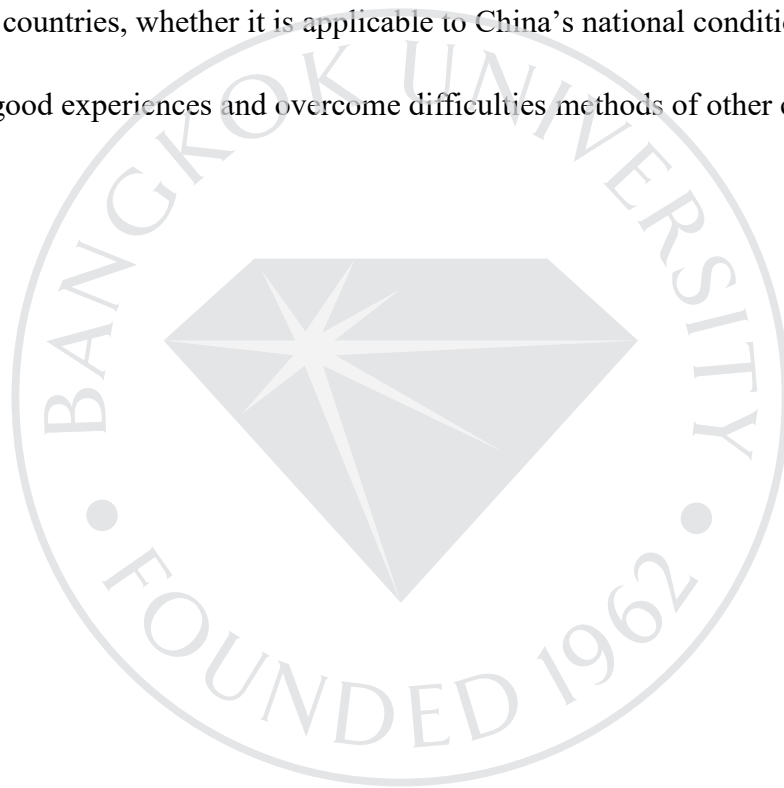
Although this study has some conclusions on the research issue, there are still some limitations. Part of the documentary element, it just a small number of documentaries for research. is not comprehensive enough. This study selects five elements for research. If any researcher can study more elements, it will be more helpful for the results.

The external influence is that many documents are only available in Chinese, and there are many Chinese proper nouns. Even there is no accurate translation in the international community. It can only be translated by myself. The meaning of communication may not be as accurate as Chinese. The selected Chinese documentaries do not have English versions in every part, so there are certain difficulties for non-Chinese researchers in visiting and understanding.

### 5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

The suggestion for future research related to this research is to study a larger

number of different samples and analyze the reasons why they are accepted by the audience from multiple perspectives. The research direction can be extended to the development and management of we-media platforms, reducing the phenomenon of Chinese documentary which is good and the bad are intermingled in We-media times. It can also be compared and analyzed through documentary communication strategies in other countries, whether it is applicable to China's national conditions, it can absorb good experiences and overcome difficulties methods of other countries.



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## APPENDIX

Outline of Five Selected Chinese Documentaries:

### 1. A Bite of China, (2012)

Directed by: Xiaoqing Chen

Plot summary: “A Bite of China” is a food documentary broadcast by China Central Television. The main content is the food ecology around China. Through various aspects of Chinese cuisine, it can show the culture of rituals and ethics brought about by food to Chinese people; See Chinese foods and a series of elements related to food and constitute the unique temperament of Chinese food; Understand Chinese food culture’s exquisite and long-lasting.

### 2. The Tale of Chinese Medicine, (2016)

Directed by: Chao Gan

Plot summary: The film crew under the guidance of the Chinese herbal medicine, from south to north, from west to east, from Guangdong’s pummelo peel to Northeast’s wild ginseng, from Tibet’s rhodiola to Chongming’s saffron, from Xinjiang’s safflower to Inner Mongolia’s licorice, exploring the moving stories of Chinese herbal medicine and their practitioners which hidden in different areas such as mountains, highlands, gobi, and deserts. “The Tale of Chinese Medicine” adopts thematic diversity, and the theme “Asking medicine” includes 10 episodes such as “Boundary”, “Time”, “Division”, “Meeting”, “Double Side”, “Year”, “Up and Down”, “Deconstruction”, “The Map of Chinese Herbal Medicine”, etc. Each episode

is organized around an established theme, from the perspective of modern human life, to find relevant Chinese herbal medicines that meet the connotation.

### 3. Aerial China, (2017)

Directed by: Le Yu

Plot summary: The large-scale aerial series documentary “Aerial China”, which overlooks China from an aerial perspective, involves 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, 4 municipalities and 2 special administrative regions, covering the topography, climate, and natural ecology of six provincial administrative regions are different from China’s east, west, south, north and middle. The filming lasted for one year, using 16 manned helicopters and 57 drones, with a total journey of nearly 150,000 kilometers, equivalent to four laps around the equator, accumulating a large number of precious 4k aerial images.

### 4. Under the Dome, (2015)

Directed by: Jing Chai

Plot summary: “Under the Dome” is a documentary with a duration of more than 103 minutes, which is mainly about the smog investigation conducted by Jing Chai herself. The documentary “Under the Dome” is a way for Jing Chai to turn a dull, rhythmically smooth documentary into a “story” through this live speech. The live speeches and videos, pictures and animations alternate and cooperate, so that the audience can’t feel bored and heavy when watching. The children are the future of the motherland, and the future should not be viruses, tumors and smog!

### 5. Master in Forbidden City, (2016)

Directed by: Jun Ye & Han Xiao

Plot summary: The first episode of “Master in Forbidden City” tells the story of the restoration of bronzes, palace clocks and ceramics. The second episode is the repair story of wood, lacquer, treasure, and embroidery. The third episode is the restoration of calligraphy, painting, copy and ancient imperial seal script. For the first time, the film presents the world-class Chinese cultural relics restoration process and technology, showing the original state and collection status of the cultural relics; The first close-up of the inner world and daily life of the cultural relics restoration experts; The first complete compilation of the historical origin of Chinese cultural relics restoration; For the first time, through the interaction between the “official” and the “civilian” in the field of cultural relics restoration, it shows the inheritance passwords of the class of “Artisan” which is the only inheritance orderly in the four major classes of “Scholar, Farmer, Artisan, Merchant”, as well as their beliefs and changes.

**BIODATA**

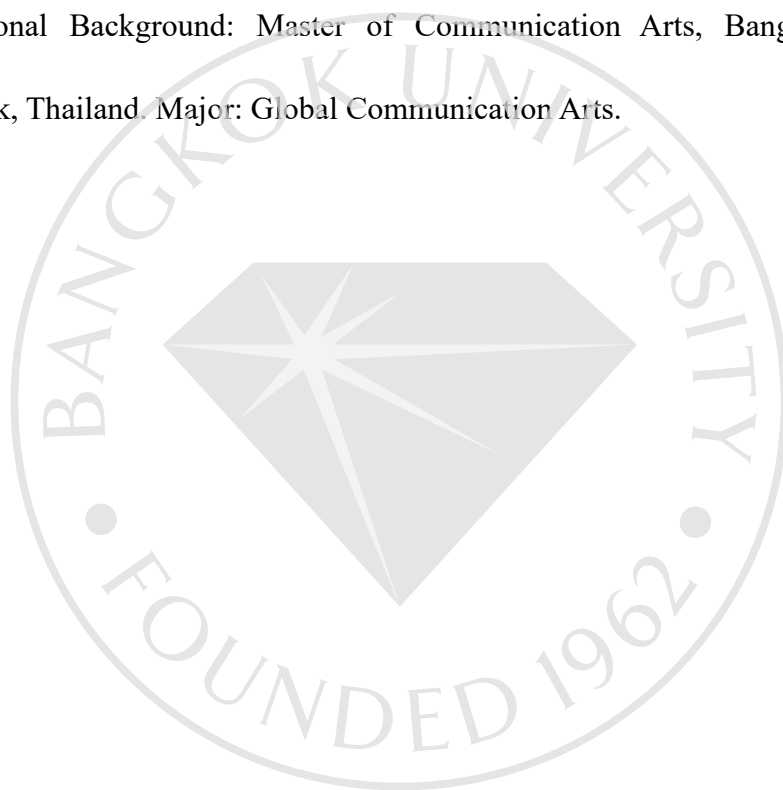
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