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SICAS Based Strategies for Nuo Opera Audience Engagement

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Abstract

This study aims to synthesized the Strategies for enhancing the communication effectiveness of "Nuo Opera" audiences based on the SICAS model, and to offer a guide for the development of Nuo Opera preservation and propagation. This research is qualitative. As for the qualitative data, document research was used to analyze and synthesize the data and then written a descriptive description. By analyzing the reasons, exploring the problems, and combining theoretical models. Propose optimization strategies and improvement paths and summarize the audience communication effect optimization model. The research findings revealed that: By integrating the five stages of the SICAS model—Sense, Interest & Interactive, Connect & Communicate, Action, and Share—we created a comprehensive strategy to enhance audience engagement with Nuo Opera. Each stage works towards strengthening the audience's perception, sparking deeper interest, fostering long-term connections, driving tangible actions, and ultimately leveraging social sharing to expand the reach of Nuo Opera. This model will not only improve the effectiveness of Nuo Opera but will also transform passive viewers into active participants, advocates, and loyal supporters of the brand.

Keywords: Nuo Opera, Communication Effectiveness, SICAS Model, Audience Engagement

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Introduction

Chinese Nuo opera was included in the first batch of national Nuo Opera list in 2006. In recent years, the Nuo culture has been paid more attention, and most areas have received corresponding protection for Nuo opera. But like other traditional arts, Nuo opera also faces the problem of adapting to the new cultural communication context.

The main problems of Chinese Nuo opera communication must to face:

Firstly, in the new cultural communication environment, due to the impact of new media culture, traditional Nuo opera culture has gradually lost the market. People choose to watch movie, network or play games to spend their time. As a result, the consciousness of traditional Chinese opera is decreasing and the audience of Nuo opera culture is decreasing.

Secondly, many Nuo opera plays and techniques are gradually fading away. Although some classic Nuo opera plays have been saved by digital technology, there are fewer and fewer Nuo opera plays that can be realistically displayed on site (Wang, 2018).

Third, the performance form and content of Nuo opera culture have not been updated in line with the times. With the development of modern technology, people's requirements for the form and content of culture are gradually increasing. The performance form of traditional Nuo opera can't meet the requirements of modern people, especially young people who are interested in and identified with Nuo opera culture.

Finally, the inheritance of Nuo opera is facing serious problems. With the continuous decrease of cast, many young people no longer have a sense of identification with Nuo opera culture, and they would rather choose other occupations. As a result, the Nuo opera actor team lacks young people and is aging.

In front of the above-mentioned series of questions and problems arising in the communication and protection of Nuo opera, we need to explore the deep reason and regulation, provide theoretical basis for practitioners, enthusiasts, researchers, governments and other preservation organizations, and work together to promote the development of Nuo Opera better (Lee, 2020).

In 2011, China Internet Data Center, an authoritative monitoring and research institution in China, proposed a new consumer behavior model - SICAS model, which is based on long-term, continuous and real-time consumer behavior tracking, consumption measurement, touchpoint analysis and digital insight. The SICAS model conforms to the consumption behavior characteristics of multi-point bidirectional perception connections in the digital age, aiming to describe new user consumption trajectories. The SICAS model, encompassing Sense, Interest, Connection, Action, and Share, provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing communication processes.

This study intends to summarize the Strategies for enhancing the communication effectiveness of "Nuo Opera" audiences based on the SICAS model, so as to summarize the experience, practices in the communication cases of traditional opera in China within communication theories, in order to provide universal reference for the preservation and communication of Nuo Opera in a wider range.

Academic Significance: This study attempts to offer a new exploration for enhancing the communication effectiveness of "Nuo Opera" audiences for the Nuo Opera communication research, and conducts possible empirical research for it in a feasible way.

Research Objectives

There are two objectives in this study.

First, it seeks to deepen audience engagement with Nuo Opera using the SICAS model, a framework that offers practical tools for building stronger connections.

Second, the work tries to map the realistic direction of the future. This is the way that we will conserve the art form. It also seeks to market Nuo Opera to ensure that it survives until the next generation.

Literature Review

1.Current research status

An assessment of existing literature represents an interesting trend. Within the last several years, the SICAS model has gained increasing interest. Now it has become more correctly appreciated. Doctors and academicians are finally taking their scholar work more seriously. To illustrate, Smith et al. (2020) developed a sample of articles that trace the evolution of the model in the last ten years. They scrutinized closely the way in which research groups around the model were formed. As from that, the discussion was expanded by Jones (2020, 2021). He would take an interest in the way the model could be used in a work environment. In this work the versatility of SICAS was more explicitly characterized. Specifically, Jones demonstrated its ability to translate into new and different trappings of expression.

2. Application in communication studies

SICAS model is also one of the models used mostly in communication. It has been found to be of use in other situations. Such as Johnson and Brown (2019) no longer analyze its application in organizations. They discovered that the model assists in the development of good communication strategies. On the other hand, Green et al. (2022) found it effective for updating communication tactics to keep pace with technology. Together, these studies confirm the model's broad and valuable applicability.

3. Related Research

In this regard, the extent of research on Nuo opera by Pan Guimin (2024) who highlighted its preservation and protection in Chinese context. This paper proposes the plan for the protection system of Nuo opera through the following three aspects: national policy leading, academic communication, and international cooperation. Therein, they not only enrich the theoretical limits of Nuo opera research but also offer good guidance for practical protection. On legal and cultural compatibility: Lei Yunyun (2023) argues that Nuo is one of the oldest culture forms of the world, combining folk beliefs, religious awareness and artistic performance, can be described as a primitive aggregation of human spiritual civilization. Jiangxi Province is one of the most important areas for this tradition, which bears its regional and ethnic mark. Thanks to the continuous evolution of hundreds of years, today, thanks to the free and continuous development, the mask art of Jiangxi Nuo opera is still very complete and with obvious variety and hierarchical structure. Aside from representing a central element of rituals and dances, masks are indeed a crucial bearer of traditional heritage, which occupies an invaluable place in the Nuo cultural system.

The survival and the development of Nuo opera is inseparable from group cooperation. Families, communities and schools jointly create the composite network of transmission. The dynamic adaptation of protection and development strategies through the active involvement of local communities is possible. This is especially vital within the context of today's fast-changing global times.

The SICAS model offers a new perspective and approach to the preservation and promotion of Nuo opera. Rooted in a communication framework, the model encompasses the entire communication cycle, from pre-planning to post-implementation evaluation, unlike traditional communication models, which often focus on specific steps. This holistic analytical

framework not only enhances the model's practical value but also provides a more comprehensive and powerful tool for communication practitioners and researchers.

In expanding the influence of Nuo opera, a strategy based on the SICAS model is crucial. This strategy first aims to raise public awareness of the art form, then foster deeper interaction and active participation. This focuses on building lasting and stable audience connections. Ultimately, this engagement will lead to measurable results. This systematic approach provides a clear and feasible plan for enhancing the effectiveness of communication and social engagement of Nuo opera.

Conceptual Framework

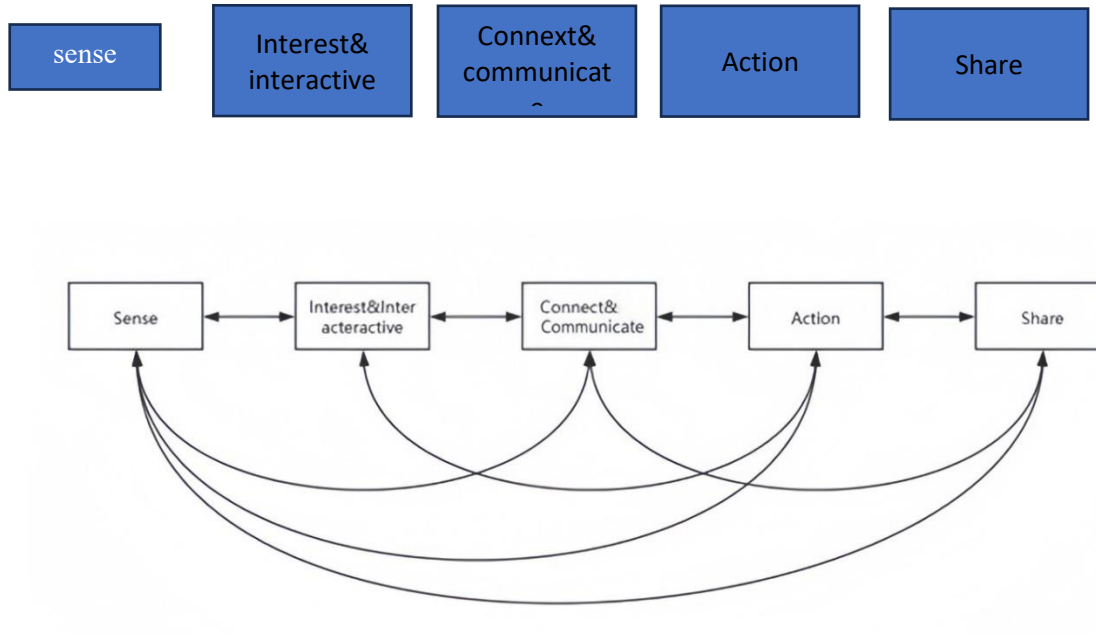


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This research is qualitative. As for the qualitative data, document research was used to analyze and synthesize the data and then written a descriptive description. By analyzing the reasons, exploring the problems, and combining theoretical models. Propose optimization strategies and improvement paths and summarize the audience communication effect optimization model.

Specifically, this study first evaluates the audience dissemination effect of Nuo opera by combining a large amount of literature research and ethnographic research, and obtains the result that the current audience dissemination effect of Nuo opera is not optimistic. On this basis, a large amount of qualitative data was further collected by combining literature and ethnography to investigate its causes. These qualitative data were put into the SICAS model for systematic analysis, and the five modules of perception, interest, link, action, and sharing were systematically sorted out to analyze the shortcomings of each module's development. Based on the above analysis results, targeted reinforcement should be carried out for each

weak link. Finally, under the SICAS framework, a wide range of application models and paths for improving the audience dissemination effect of Nuo opera are summarized. By implementing this holistic strategy, we will not only strengthen Nuo Opera's communication effectiveness but also build a lasting, meaningful relationship with the audience, turning them from passive consumers to passionate advocates. The steps are as follows:

1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research method, with the main objective of integrating strategies to improve the dissemination effect of "Nuo opera". The research focuses on understanding the current challenges faced by Nuo opera and proposing a systematic framework for improvement.

2. Data collection

The core method of data collection is literature analysis, which involves a comprehensive review of existing academic literature, research papers, and related publications. These files were selected to explore the historical background of Nuo opera, identify its current dissemination challenges, and understand the theoretical framework of the SICAS model.

3. Data analysis

A systematic analysis and synthesis were conducted on the qualitative data collected. This process involves: analyzing the root causes of communication problems among Nuo opera audiences; Classify and organize data into five stages of the SICAS model: perception, interest and interaction, connection and communication, action and sharing; Identify the shortcomings and opportunities in the development of each module; Based on system analysis and theoretical models, propose targeted optimization strategies and improvement paths.

Results

This study intends to synthesize Strategies for enhancing the communication effectiveness of "Nuo Opera" audiences based on SICAS model and provide a reference for the protection and propagation of intangible cultural heritage.

Based on the analysis of Underdeveloped Audience Dimension based on SICAS model, we find out the bottleneck of audiences from initial perception to final participation and sharing, and enhancing communication effectiveness of "Nuo Opera" should focus on the issues at every link from enhancing initial perception to final participation and sharing.

Based on the five stages of SICAS model: Sense, Interest & Interactive, Connect & Communicate, Action, and Share, we can formulate a strategy to enhance audience participation of "Nuo Opera". Each link is promoting customers' initial perception to final participation and sharing, enhancing audience perception and interest to interactive, establishing long-term relationship, promoting action, and utilizing social sharing to enhance reach of Nuo Opera. We believe that this model will not only enhance the communication effectiveness of "Nuo Opera", but also change passive viewers into active participants, promoters, supporters, and loyal followers.

1.Strengthening Initial Perception (Sense):

The first step is to enhance initial perception of "Nuo Opera" in the audience's mind through distinct visual elements, unique cultural stories, and emotional connection. Through the unique cultural symbols such as mask and costumes, and telling stories behind these symbols, we establish an emotional connection with the audience. Through social media campaigns focusing on visual storytelling, such as short videos or cultural teasers, we change passive viewers into interested individuals.

2.Sparking Deeper Engagement (Interest & Interactive):

Once the audience is interested, we should not stop here. We need to promote more people to participate and enhance their interest in "Nuo Opera" through interactive campaigns, such as Nuo Opera challenges, where audience can mimic these movements or designs. We should promote these challenges on various platforms to increase user participation. Encourage user-generated content, provide dynamic content according to their preferences, and utilize AR (Augmented Reality) technology to create virtual experiences. We will change passive viewer into interested individual, and then change interested individual into participant.

3.Becoming a Long-term Follower (Connect & Communicate):

In order to change interested individual into participant, we need to establish an ongoing communication with the audience. In other words, we need to establish an online community of Nuo Opera followers online and provide regular feedback opportunities. We encourage fans to contribute, whether it's artwork, reviews or event ideas. We will change passive viewer into active participant and cultural movement follower.

4.Converting Engagement into Action (Action):

The final step is turning the audience's engagement into a concrete purchase, i.e. tickets to a performance, attendance at a show, or a subscription to exclusive content. Provide audience with a solid incentive: discounts, membership privileges, early access to events, etc. Combine online and offline marketing efforts to make purchasing as easy as possible. Create a sense of urgency by offering a limited-term purchase opportunity.

5. Spread the Word (Share):

The final step is leveraging the audience's networks to extend the brand's reach. We'll have social sharing programs, where the audience's further engagement with the brand is rewarded. We'll encourage social media users to share their experiences, and showcase the best examples of user-generated content. Finally, we'll ask our cultural leaders and partners to share their experiences using the official hashtag.

Table 1 Audience Dimension Enhancement Model

Sense (Perception)	•Shaping cultural symbols (e.g., masks, costumes) • Emotional storytelling •Social media ads and visual communication
Interest & Interactive	•Social media interactive campaigns (e.g., challenges, polls) • User-generated content (UGC) •Multi-channel content customization •Virtual interaction experiences (e.g., AR technology)
Connect & Communicate	•Long-term community building & management • Regular feedback & interaction (e.g., surveys, Q&A) •Co-creation and creative activities •VIP fan clubs
Action	•Task-driven purchase incentives • Discount vouchers, bundled tickets, etc.

	•Cross-platform integrated marketing •Social proof for purchase decisions
Share	•Social sharing reward programs • Hashtag marketing & content dissemination (e.g., Nuo Opera Experience) •User-generated content display (e.g., experience sharing, reviews) •Influencer collaboration & brand expansion

Discussion

1. Sense (Brand-User Mutual Perception) Lack of initial awareness

Shallow perception: The result of layered analysis shows that audience's awareness of Nu Opera is very shallow. They may not be able to recognize the cultural connotation and feelings from their shallow perception of Nu Opera. This may be because the key values and cultural connotation of Nu Opera have not been communicated to the audience. So the audience's initial awareness of Nu Opera is very weak.

Insufficient sensory and feeling: If the promotion information cannot give audience strong visual or feeling, it will cause shallow impression of audience, so that the initial awareness of audience is not strong.

Lack of cultural and brand: Nu Opera is a kind of traditional culture performance. It has unique visual elements (mask, costume, performance way and so on) and cultural context (background, legend, spirit and so on) to make audience impression. If the elements are not enough or do not highlight in the communication process, it will cause audience to make shallow impression.

Culture collide and lack of resonance: In modern society, the traditional culture context collide with the modern culture context. If audience can't relate to the soul of Nu Opera, it will cause audience to make shallow impression.

2.Interest & Interactive Lack of deep interest and interactive

Insufficient interaction: The result of layered analysis shows that the audience's participation is very shallow, and the interaction between audience and the audience is very low. The audience does not participate in the process, which may be the reason why the audience's interest is not high.

Monotonous information: If the information is one-sided and monotonous, it cannot attract the audience to participate in the long run, and the audience's interest will weaken.

Lack of interactive elements: If the audience's participation in Nu Opera experience is more like one-way receiving (just watch the performance of Nu Opera or just listen to the lecture of Nu Opera) rather than two-way interaction, the audience will feel detached and uninterested. SICAS model emphasizes the interaction elements.

More use of social media: In the modern era, social media is very important to create interest. If not use social media effectively to communicate with audience (Q&A, Poll, Discussion, Interesting activity and so on), it will cause audience lose interest.

3. Connect & Communicate Lack of feeling

Weak feeling: The result of layered analysis shows that after audience participate in the activity, the audience will not communicate with the brand or Nu Opera in the long run. Although the audience will participate in the short term, there is no audience follow up in the long term, so there is no more interaction.

Low brand loyalty: There is no follow up communication with the audience after initial exposure.

Poor Brand Communication: If there is poor or no communication or follow-up (such as communication, FOMO, special content, etc.) after the event to the audience, they will feel that they are being forgotten and lose their emotional connection to Nuo Opera.

Lack of Emotional/Narrative Content: The SICAS model also emphasizes that emotions and storytelling are key components to establish an emotional connection with the audience. If there is no sharing of personal stories or historical narratives and emotional content, Nuo Opera will lose the audience's emotional connection.

4. Action – Low Behavioral Conversion

Low Conversion: Although the audience is engaged with Nuo Opera, they do not convert their engagement into behaviors (such as purchases, ticket buying, attending events, etc.). This means that the audience is not motivated enough to take the next step.

Lack of Clear Incentives: Layered analysis revealed that there is a lack of clear incentives or motivations for the audience to take the next step after engaging with Nuo Opera activities.

Lack of Strong Incentives: If there are no incentives or rewards (such as discounts, giveaways, exclusive access, etc.), the audience will not be motivated enough to take the next step (such as purchases, ticket buying, attending events, following the brand, etc.) long term.

Lack of Clear Conversion Pathways: If the audience is not given a clear path to take the next step (such as easy access to buying tickets, event information, exclusive access, etc.), they will lose interest and not take the next step.

5. Share (Sharing Experience and Word-of-Mouth) — Lack of Sharing and Social Spread

Low Sharing Motivation: The audience is not motivated to share their social experience with Nuo Opera on social media or with their social circle. As a result, the content does not spread widely among the social audience.

Limited Use of Social Platform: Although there are powerful social media platforms, the content is not optimized to be shared on social media, resulting in a lack of organic viral spread of the content.

Lack of Shareable Content: If the content shared by the audience is not engaging or does not provide value to their social identity, they will not share it with their social circle.

No Reward for Sharing: If there is no reward or recognition for sharing (such as social rewards, exclusive access, etc.), the audience will not be motivated to share and spread the word of Nuo Opera.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study adopts a qualitative research method, focusing on enhancing the audience dissemination effect of the national intangible cultural heritage "Nuo Opera". By combining literature analysis with ethnographic research, relevant qualitative data was systematically collected and analyzed. Based on this, the SICAS consumer behavior model (perception interest interaction communication and connection action sharing) was introduced to diagnose the main problems in audience transmission of Nuo opera from five dimensions, and targeted optimization paths and overall strategies were proposed.

Research has found that the current audience dissemination effect of Nuo opera is not ideal, mainly manifested in the following aspects: the initial perception of the audience is shallow, and there is a lack of in-depth understanding of cultural symbols and spiritual connotations; The mechanism for interest stimulation and interaction is weak, making it

difficult to achieve the transition from "watching" to "participating"; Lack of long-term emotional connection and community operation, resulting in low audience loyalty; The path of behavior transformation is unclear, and there is insufficient motivation for actual participation and consumption; Low willingness to share on social media and insufficient ability to self disseminate content.

In response to the above issues, this study proposes a systematic construction of an audience communication optimization system based on the SICAS model, consisting of five stages: perception reinforcement, interest stimulation, relationship establishment, action transformation, and sharing promotion. Specifically, it includes enhancing the audience's initial perception through visual symbols and emotional storytelling; Utilize social media challenges, AR interactions, and other technologies to enhance engagement; Establish online communities and collaborative mechanisms to strengthen long-term relationships; Design incentive strategies and convenient ticket purchasing channels to promote actual behavior transformation; Finally, by implementing a reward mechanism and collaborating with opinion leaders, we aim to motivate audiences to engage in social sharing and expand their reach and influence.

This model is not only applicable to the dissemination practice of Nuo opera, but also provides a reference system path for the contemporary dissemination of other intangible cultural heritage. Through this holistic strategy, Nuo opera is expected to transform passive audiences into active participants, supporters, and even cultural disseminators, thereby achieving a wider and deeper cultural inheritance and dissemination effect in contemporary society.

Recommendations

By combining the five stages of the SICAS model—Sense, Interest & Interactive, Connect & Communicate, Action, and Share, we can develop a comprehensive solution to enhance audience engagement with Nuo Opera. All five stages help to strengthen the audience’s perception, increase their interest in Nuo Opera, foster long-term connections, motivate the audience to take concrete actions, and ultimately encourage social sharing of the content. This model will not only improve the overall communication effectiveness of Nuo Opera, but it will also turn passive viewers into active participants, supporters, and advocates of Nuo Opera.

1. Sense (Perception):

During this stage, it is important to use visual materials to grab the audience’s attention and to convey our brand in a positive way. We will emphasize on 2 parts: (1) Select unique symbols of Chinese culture; (2) Transmit powerful stories behind those symbols to allow audience to find a connection with Nuo Opera as soon as possible.

In addition, for social media advertising and visual communication, we will make sure that the unique value of Nuo Opera is spread to as many people as possible and attract them to learn more about Nuo Opera.

2. Interested & Interactive：

After gaining the audience’s interest, the next step is to encourage the audience to interact more with our brand. To do that, we will organize interactive challenges, polls, user-generated content (UGC). We will also apply AR (Augmented Reality) technology to create virtual experiences. With those interactive activities, we are sure that the audience will interact with us more actively.

3. Connect & Communicate：

During this stage, we will focus on creating long-term relationship with our audience. To do that, we need to build stable community for each type of Nuo Opera culture and create

opportunities to get feedback from audience regularly. For example: Build an enthusiast club for Nuo Opera fans to discuss and interact with each other in online community. Create more interaction by building co-creation community for Nuo Opera (design contest, creative community).

4. Action:

To let audience take actions, we need to create opportunities for them to understand what actions they can do to get rewards. In other words, we will make it easy for them to complete tasks such as purchasing tickets, watching Nuo Opera by creating marketing cross platforms, task-driven reward (discount, access to exclusive content). In addition, social proof (review, recommendation) will be used to reinforce the decision of audience to take actions to interact with Nuo Opera more deeply, which lead to purchase.

5. Share:

At the last stage, we will create social sharing reward program and use hashtag marketing (Nuo Opera Experience). We will encourage audience to share their experience related to Nuo Opera. In addition, we will create user-generated content (review, experience), and collaborate with influencers or people with culture to help spread our brand. It will create a word-of-mouth marketing and expand our brand on social media.

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