

Music Communication Strategies in the Era of Digital Culture Industry: An Examination Centered on QQ Music Platform

Liu Jidong^{1,a,*}

¹*School of Art, Northeastern University, Shenyang, Liaoning, 110819, China*

^a*1287131160@qq.com*

^{*}*Corresponding author*

Keywords: QQ Music; Media culture; Digital Culture Industry; Music Communication

Abstract: The integration of the music industry and technology has become the main direction of the development of the domestic music industry, and the digital music industry derived from it has become a new mode of development of the music industry. Among the existing major digital music platforms in China, QQ Music Platform has undoubtedly become the leader in the operation of digital music industry because it has taken the lead in announcing profits. The article attempts to analyze the five existing business models of QQ Music, namely, "user audition and payment model", "music socialization model", "advertising and marketing model", "value-added service model" and "digital album sales model", in order to explore the music communication strategy in the era of digital music industry.

1. Introduction

Digital music industry refers to the Internet as a carrier, with music as the content, creation, production, dissemination and service listeners of a form of music, digital music has the production of digitalization, dissemination of network, service informationization and other characteristics. Since 2013, the digital music revenues of major music record companies have exceeded those of physical records[1], which marks the dominance of digital music in the music industry. Tencent's financial report shows that QQ Music made its first public profit in July 2016, becoming the first music service in China to achieve profitability, and these results have to be attributed to QQ Music's mature and available business model.

2. User Audition and Payment Mode

At present, QQ music service mainly provides users with free audition and paid audition two music modes [2], free audition to pursue the maximum social benefits, paid audition to pursue the maximum economic benefits, this mode to a greater extent to achieve the unity of the double effect of the Tencent music enterprise. If the QQ music audition users are categorized, they can be divided into two categories, namely ordinary users and green diamond users.

First, ordinary users. Ordinary users mainly refer to users who have not opened the green

diamond membership, that is, free users. Ordinary users can only listen to standard quality, can download standard quality and HQ high quality music. Ordinary users for Tencent does not mean that there is no income, users in the QQ music to listen to a song when the consumption of traffic, Tencent will be in other companies (mobile, Unicom, telecom) to get a share of the. The economic contribution of ordinary users to singer-songwriters should not be underestimated, and this model, which only requires songwriters to post their songs online to get a huge income, has made musicians and record labels to put their own songs into the QQ Music library, which now has a library of millions of songs. However, while this model increases the amount of songs, it also reduces the quality of music to a certain extent, because some musicians and record labels focus on the quantity, but neglect the quality. In the face of this phenomenon, the QQ Music platform has also strengthened its auditing efforts, aiming to improve the quality of the platform's music works. For example, QQ Music platform requires that the bit rate of the original music files in the library is 320kbps high-quality MP3 or lossless wav, and need to go to the MORP digital music copyright registration of national certificates. Driven by such measures, although the strict library requirements will appropriately reduce the number of songs in the library, the QQ Music platform has greatly improved the quality of the music in the library. This is in line with the contemporary notion of economic value, i.e., increasing the economic value of the platform by creating a shortage of cultural products. This kind of discipline and self-sacrifice necessary for cumulative growth in production ensures that shortages will eventually be overcome, and the needs and pleasure of consumers, as a result, will be satisfied [3].

Second, green diamond users. QQ music's green diamond membership refers to a model in which users pay 10 yuan per month so that they can enjoy a high-end music experience, i.e., a paid model. Users with Green Diamond membership can download two types of super quality music, SQ Lossless Audio Quality (APE) and SQ Lossless Audio Quality (FLAC). This is related to the recording of music, which has been successfully converted to digital form in the era of digital music industry [4]. The advantage of the digital form of recording is the clarity and the realism of every instrument and vocal compared to standard music. The green diamond model prompts musicians and record companies to produce high-quality music, music works in the QQ music platform uploading process, QQ music has two audits, one is manual audit, manual audit is mainly on the copyright information of the work; one is the platform audit, mainly on the quality of the music work itself, high quality can generate super quality sound, that is, you can carry out the green drill consumption. The quality of the music work itself is mainly audited by the platform. If the quality is low, it can only generate standard quality, then only for ordinary users to experience. In this way, the income of Tencent Music and the record company is also reduced. In 2015, QQ Music has strengthened its music auditing efforts and crackdown on music piracy in order to improve the quality of its music. Music works with low quality will not be included in the library, and unhealthy and pirated music works will be taken offline, which has improved the quality of music to a large extent. Copyright protection is a prerequisite for QQ Music's Green Diamond mode of operation. The United States is a country that emphasizes copyright protection, which has led to huge revenues from digital music in the U.S. Drawing on the success of Apple's iTunes store in the U.S., QQ Music, out of reference to the successful experience of Apple's iTunes store in the United States, which has gained huge revenues, currently attaches great importance to the copyright protection of musicians' works, and is also actively exploring new copyright protection measures, which, to a certain extent, safeguards the rights of musicians, and makes them seek cooperation with the QQ Music platform even more actively, thus guaranteeing that the QQ Music platform will constantly deposit music works into its own platform.

3. Music socialization mode

At present, network music socialization seems to have become an inevitable trend, network music service providers have optimistic about the value of social media, and gradually try to embark on the road of music socialization [5]. QQ Music, for example, is roughly divided into two kinds, one is the social media cooperation mode; the second is the "national K song + star concert" mode.

First, social media cooperation. Currently, there are three kinds of social media cooperation between QQ music and social media, one is QQ chat tool, the second is WeChat chat tool, and the third is Sina microblogging. QQ and WeChat are the products of Tencent, and the cooperation with QQ music is a matter of course, through the QQ chat tool, you can directly jump into the homepage of QQ music to listen to the song, which is not only convenient to the listeners, but also increases the amount of audition of QQ music. The QQ chat tool can also be used for live broadcasting, and by clicking on the live broadcast theme, you can jump directly to the QQ Music live broadcast, which has increased Tencent Music's revenue while boosting the fan economy. QQ, WeChat, and Sina Weibo have a direct connection with QQ Music in that they provide a shared platform for QQ Music, and QQ Music provides content resources for the three of them. Joint marketing approach, in this way, there is also competition between music sharing platforms, the competition of music sharing platforms, i.e., including changes from the market, but also from the pressure of competitors [6]. In the face of this situation, QQ Music deeply understands the characteristics of users of various social platforms, and adds Sina Weibo as an interface module, so that users can access Sina Weibo to share songs when logging in to QQ Music, and can also listen to QQ Music when logging in to Sina Weibo, which also increases the user utilization rate, and makes both companies profitable. Another use of social tools is that you can share the songs with your friends, using social platforms can increase its user base, making music come into thousands of households, which also proves that digitalization and the Internet make the democratization of the music industry possible from another perspective [7], thus expanding the public's music acceptance to a greater extent, which is conducive to improving the public's aesthetic taste.

Second, national K song + star concert. All K Song is a new section added by QQ Music in 2014, when listeners try to listen to songs in the song list, they can open All K Song and use the microphone to record the songs they are currently listening to. With more than 35 million daily users, Karaoke has become the largest online karaoke community in China. There are a lot of features in Karaoke, such as practice mode to repeat specified passages, friends' ring and other people's songs, a huge amount of accompaniment for listeners to choose from, fun tuning for voice changing fun interaction, social sharing to increase the fans, so that the listener more time to stay on the QQ music platform. The main way to profit from the karaoke platform is the consumption of virtual gifts by the audience. The audience buys virtual gifts through cash and then sends them to their favorite anchors, who can exchange the virtual gifts for cash. The virtual gifts purchased by the audience both profit Tencent Music and allow the anchor to receive a certain amount of compensation. The virtual gifts purchased by the audience both profit Tencent Music and allow the anchor to receive a certain amount of compensation. The QQ Music platform can be used to order tickets for star concerts. QQ Music cooperates with record labels, and users who have opened green diamonds are given priority to buy star concert tickets, which is a cooperative model that allows Tencent to increase the number of green diamond users, and also allows the users to learn about celebrity news in a more timely manner, so that star concert tickets can be sold in a timely manner. Online concert is, when the star in the real field of concert, QQ music on the exclusive live broadcast, so that those who want to see the star concert get a good visual experience, which also reflects the Guardian a reporter pointed out that: "Today's rock and pop performers must speak in a

multimedia way [8]." At the same time, viewers spend less on watching celebrities in online concerts than in live concerts, which increases the number of people who watch online concerts while ensuring an audiovisual experience for the audience. Especially in the epidemic era, the people's spiritual and cultural needs further increased, and due to the impact of the epidemic, many offline activities have pressed the pause button, people are in urgent need of pressure relief. QQ music platform deep insight into the user's favorite and preferences, control of social emotions, panoramic music live brand TME live into a purely online mode, re-release of Leslie Cheung's "hot - love" concerts and other online concerts. TME live has changed its panoramic music live brand TME live to a purely online model, re-releasing online concerts such as Leslie Cheung's "Hot Love" concert, which has seen the number of people attending the concerts continue to rise, thus creating a better life through music. Based on this, the QQ Music platform has increased its revenue while increasing the number of users.

4. Advertising and marketing model

The advertisements on QQ Music platform are mainly based on hard advertisements. By analyzing the location, form, content and characteristics of the advertisements on the music platform, the QQ Music advertisement marketing mode can be divided into two types, namely, "internal product advertisement marketing" and "external product advertisement marketing". "First, internal product advertising marketing.

First, internal product advertising marketing. QQ Music internal product advertising is mainly based on Tencent's game products, and by publicizing its own game products, it can enable users to listen to music and play games at the same time, so that while developing Tencent's music industry, it also drives the development of Tencent's game industry and meets the direct needs of users of the music platform. For example, Tencent's game product "King's Honor" hit a monthly water record of 3 billion, the game's soundtrack is conducive to improving the player's gaming experience, there is no doubt that the contribution of music to the game's water record should not be underestimated. Internal product advertisements are placed at the bottom of the QQ music player page, so that they do not affect the user's use of other features in the music platform, trying to minimize the impact of the advertisements, but this method also makes it easy for the advertisements to be ignored by the user. The form of advertisements adopts through-columns, these advertisements are like a website, using Flash technology to create a vivid game screen, with strong visual impact, so that the user can directly click on the advertisements with the mouse to directly enter the game screen, avoiding the trouble of linking to other places, thus facilitating the listener, and simplifying the program setting of the music platform, which is largely conducive to the operation of the elderly. As McLuhan said, "All media are positive metaphors in their ability to transform experience into new forms [9]." The subject of this "positive metaphor" is "human", which means that the function of the media should become an extension of human beings and serve them. Accordingly, QQ music platform to the greatest extent possible to meet the needs of listeners, and actively seek to meet the psychological fit with the listeners.

Second, external product advertisement marketing: QQ Music's external product advertisements mainly focus on daily necessities, and by publicizing hygienic, sports, food and other daily necessities, users can enjoy the music while earning advertisement fees themselves. However, compared with the colorful forms of Internet advertising, the QQ Music platform has a single form of advertisement and a lot of repetitive advertisements. For example, when you open the main page of a singer, a small piece of advertisement will pop up at the edge of the page, and most of these advertisements are the pop-up products of Jingdong Mall and the special products of Taobao store, as long as you don't change the page, it will always be this one advertisement. The content of the

ads is also sometimes vulgar, for example, some pictures of models selling underwear, and even popping up a well-known sneakers for only 19 yuan, which is obviously a cottage industry. This not only affects the user's impression of the QQ Music brand, but also has an impact on the market positioning of the QQ Music platform. QQ Music still has obvious advantages over other music players. The advertised goods on the QQ Music platform have the advantage of being brand names. For example, Adidas, Kraft and other brand-name products, which to a certain extent for the QQ music to establish a brand image, well-known advertisers to join, not only so that Tencent's image has been established, but also to get a more optimistic advertising fees. QQ music to provide genuine music, and seek to establish a super-quality audio source providers, will certainly attract more audition users, with the QQ music platform, the user rises, the well-known brand advertisers will also be more and more. As users of the QQ Music platform increase, advertisers of well-known brands will also increase their cooperation with Tencent. Tencent Music's reasonable charging mechanism, which varies in price according to the length of time an advertisement is placed on the platform, will also gain the trust of advertisers. In addition, in 2022, QQ Music has implemented the mode of "watching ads and listening to songs for free", which allows invited users to watch ads for 15 seconds and listen to songs for 30 minutes for free [10]. This model better realizes the unity of the economic and social benefits of the enterprise, the operation of cultural enterprises, the production of cultural products, need to take this as the bottom line [11]. When the cultural market is in trouble, the social benefit as the bottom line can play a corrective role in the cultural market.

5. Value-added service mode

The so-called value-added service refers to the provision of customized services to specific customers on the basis of basic services, which is a kind of extended activity based on customers' needs. QQ Music's value-added service model can be divided into two kinds, namely, personal demand recommendation and song debut recommendation.

First, personalized demand recommendation. Personalized demand recommendation refers to the QQ Music platform's analysis of big data to recommend to users music works similar to the type of such songs based on songs with a large frequency of personal audition in the platform, where the data refers to the music and the users. In QQ Music's library, each song has its static attributes. For example, the artist, the region of release, the time of release, and the reviews written by users for the songs they listen to. At the same time, each song also has its dynamic data, for example, the number of plays, collection rate, etc. The QQ Music platform analyzes this data to make personal demand recommendations. Recommendation by user's personal information is a way to keep the user in a passive browsing state, and different age groups favor different music styles, which is related to listeners' aesthetic psychology. Users of different ages favor different music styles, which is related to the aesthetic psychology of the listener. QQ music recommends songs according to the aesthetic psychology of listeners of different age groups. The songs recommended for different genders are also different, for example, romantic style works are recommended for girls, and inspirational type songs are recommended for boys. At the same time, QQ Music also recommends different songs during the day and night, for example, recommending powerful songs during the day and quieter songs at night. These can meet the user's enjoyment experience, it can be said that QQ music in the maximum to meet the needs of different users [12]. As a result, the range of listeners is expanded, thus increasing the number of listeners.

Second, song debut recommendation. Song debut recommendation is a free service that QQ Music cooperates with independent musicians and record labels. There are two types of song premieres, namely, the premieres of independent musicians' songs and the premieres of record company songs. The purpose of the premiere of independent musicians' songs is to obtain more

excellent music copyright resources, and the music works that can be premiered must be healthy in content and reach super quality in sound quality, thus encouraging musicians to create more excellent music works. The procedure for the premiere of an independent musician's song is: "Registering as a QQ Music user, authenticating the musician's identity, choosing the premiere date, uploading music and copyright certificates, and waiting for the song to be reviewed and premiered." The strict and formalized mode of entering independent musicians' songs not only enables the platform to obtain more high-quality music, but also safeguards the rights and interests of independent musicians. However, due to the relatively large number of musicians applying for premieres, the date of song premieres will be relatively shortened, which may have certain adverse effects, with good quality music works going offline before they are discovered by users. Tencent seems to have discovered the drawbacks and has taken positive measures to a certain extent, such as the musician help program. Record company song debut is divided into two kinds, namely, some smaller record company song debut and with the larger record company song debut. The premieres of songs of smaller record companies are generally shorter, and if you want to premiere for a longer period of time, you have to pay for it. Comparatively speaking, the larger companies in the industry have longer debut times, and the main purpose is to achieve a win-win situation between QQ Music and the record companies. This integration of online music resources is to adapt to diversified marketing strategies and business models, and to obtain economies of scale by integrating music resources [13]. In addition, QQ Music platform actively seeks cooperation with movie and TV producers about theme music of movie and TV dramas, and attracts the eyeballs of movie and TV drama producers through the singers' tunes premiered on their platforms, so that the tune may also be used as background music by a certain movie, thus further getting value added [14]. In this way, the value chain of the song is further expanded and the revenue of QQ Music platform is increased.

6. Digital Album Sales Model

Entity records are declining, and in the extreme lack of innovation in the profit model of the domestic digital music industry, QQ Music has taken the lead in launching digital albums to become an emerging business model favored by the industry [15], i.e., digital album sales and album sharing distribution.

First, digital album sales. Digital album sales refers to musicians transferring their upcoming music albums to the QQ Music platform for sale on its platform, and musicians will receive a share of sales from platform sales. In terms of digital album pricing, in general, an album of 10 songs is priced at \$15-20, with specific pricing affected by the singer's fame, the singer's willingness, and the cost of producing the album, etc. In 2014, Jay Chou's first digital music album, "Oi Yell, Not Bad Oh," began selling on the QQ Music platform, thus opening the curtain on the digital music era, and the album only sold 150,000 copies during the Christmas period. The QQ music platform in cooperation with Jay Chou's album, digital albums compared to the physical album released two days in advance, which to a certain extent to meet the audience's curiosity, at the same time, but also to promote Jay Chou's physical album sales. Subsequently, JJ Lin, Eason Chan and other singers have launched their personal digital music albums, have achieved good economic income. The emergence of digital album sales model caused other music platforms have to follow suit, the music industry has really entered the digital music industry era.

Secondly, album sharing distribution. Album shared distribution refers to QQ Music exclusively owns the copyright of digital albums, and through copyright sublicensing (at present, the copyright is mainly transferred to Tencent Music Group's Kugou and Koume Music), so that the digital albums meet users on more digital music platforms. With the maturity of QQ Music's digital album model, it has also led to more and more digital music platforms joining the ranks of the digital

album business model, such as NetEase Cloud Music, Coolmusic and other digital music platforms, which are working together with QQ Music to tap the value of music. According to authoritative data, QQ Music won 91.8% digital album share with its mature business model, becoming a benchmark for music album licensing and commercialization [16]. The sales of digital albums bring more than just revenue to the industry, and make musicians clearly realize that a good music work can be realized, which indirectly motivates the development of music works towards high quality.

7. Conclusion

At present, the traditional music industry is transforming and upgrading to the digital culture industry, and the digital music platform as the carrier of music is very important to music business operators. QQ Music has a unique development advantage relying on Tencent, and its operation is relatively mature in the aspects of copyright protection, section design, music content, profit distribution, etc., coupled with the "user download payment mode", "music socialization mode", "advertising and marketing mode", "value-added service mode" and "digital album" mode, which are the key factors for the development of the music industry. The five business models of "user download payment model", "music socialization model", "advertising and marketing model", "value-added service model" and "digital album sales model" are all in place. Coupled with the escort of the five business models, QQ Music has more obvious advantages than other music players in terms of dissemination, thus gradually building a new cultural ecosystem.

References

- [1] Li Zhenhao. *New features and outlook of the development of digital music services* [J]. *Art Technology*, 2016, (11).
- [2] Ji Qian. *Analysis of QQ music business model*[J]. *Contemporary economy*, 2014, (20).
- [3] Mike Featherstone. (2000)*Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*. Nanjing: Yilin Press, p. 30.
- [4] Xiong Chengyu. (2012)*Research on World Culture Industry*. Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, p. 26.
- [5] Fan Sancai, Yu bei. *A brief analysis of the development mode of internet music socialization*[J]. *Music Communication*, 2016, (03).
- [6] Li zhenhao, Chen Junyu. *Research on music creation and marketing service mode based on social network*[J]. *Science and Technology Wind*, 2016, (23).
- [7] David Hesmondeff. (2016)*Culture Industry*. Beijing: People's University of China Press, p. 266.
- [8] Angela Merkleby. (2001)*Postmodernism and Popular Culture*. Beijing: Central Compilation and Translation Press, p. 19.
- [9] Marshall McLuhan, (2000)*Understanding Media-On the Extension of Man*. Beijing: Commercial Press, p. 92.
- [10] Zu Shuang. *Tencent Music seeks a new way out* [N]. *China Business News*, 2022-01-27(006).
- [11] Fan Zhou. (2016) *Cultural Reflections in the Age of Screen Reading*. Beijing: Intellectual Property Press, p. 143.
- [12] Ma Dongli. *The way to create the characteristics of QQ music APP* [J]. *Media*, 2017, (01).
- [13] Ruan Ting. *Problems and countermeasures of digital online music industry*[J]. *Media*, 2015(13).
- [14] David Sorrowsby. (2013)*Economics of Cultural Policy*. Dalian: Northeast University of Finance and Economics Press, p. 28.
- [15] Lu Yang, Chen Lijun. *Online music borrows digital albums to make money fast* [N]. *Beijing business newspaper*, 2015-5-15(04).
- [16] Hao Lanzhi. *Digital music albums see blowout* [J]. *Board of directors*, 2016, (09).