

# Exploring the Marketing Communication Strategy of Li Ziqi's Self-media Brand Based on SWOT

Yao Yao\*

Cardiff School of Journalism, Media & Cult'l Stud; Cardiff; CF10 3UP; The United Kingdom

\*Corresponding author: YaoY31@cardiff.ac.uk

**Abstract.** The arrival of the digital media era has led to the development of the new media industry, which promotes the innovation of business models. More and more consumers are more accustomed to using media platforms. Li Ziqi's unique style of ancient Chinese cuisine and the unique natural environment of the countryside not only relax and satisfy the viewers mentally but also provide a lot of inspiration for other self-media and media companies. This thesis took the Li Ziqi network platform account as an example, and explores the development situation and problems faced by Li Ziqi in brand marketing on the basis of SWOT analysis, and conducts in-depth analyses of these problems, and gives some marketing strategies with practical value. video content, low frequency of interaction with viewers, lack of data analysis, lack of clear and definite operation planning, and misalignment between video communication channels and brand communication channels. This paper put forward suggestions in terms of enriching the form of content for brand communication, improving the efficiency of traffic conversion, enhancing brand influence, setting up a brand image communication team to improve the live broadcasting ability, and broadening the way to build a lasting brand, etc., so as to fully explore the maximum cultural communication potential and brand marketing influence of "Li Ziqi's" food videos in a theoretical manner.

**Keywords:** SWOT analysis, new media, marketing strategy, cultural communication, brand marketing.

## 1. Introduction

Developed Internet technology has made electronic devices a necessity in people's lives, and their reliance on electronics has driven the media industry to grow. The involvement of new media technologies is crucial for sharing information with each other, developing creative content, creating brands, and more. Its presence also influences people's behavior, enabling them to interact online and create online communities, making the technology socially attractive. Therefore, the interactivity of media platforms is crucial in the communication of new media technologies [1]. Various forms of media including social media, self-media, etc. utilize creative marketing to get valuable content out there or use video bandwagons and other means of merchandising so that viewers can see the product from all sides, resulting in a win-win situation. Li Ziqi's videos have exploded in popularity around the world to a degree that is visible to the naked eye. The content of the videos she presents consistently generates interest among netizens in Chinese food, traditional crafts, and the environment. Li Ziqi is also known as the "Oriental Food Lifestyler" for her account, which set a Guinness record for the "most subscribed Chinese YouTube channel" in 2021 [2]. Therefore, an in-depth discussion of the videos posted on social media platforms and the brand of Li Ziqi can provide a learnable experience for other video-based self-media. It is also very helpful in exploring how self-media brands can make favourable marketing strategies in social media platforms in the new media era. Food videos are very popular on the internet. People get mental relaxation and satisfaction by watching other people's cooking process under the pressure of life. In a large number of highly homogeneous food short videos, Li Ziqi develops a new road with ancient-style food, on the one hand, to meet the audience's personalized spiritual needs, on the other hand, based on the release of the video through the dissemination of multi-marketing channels to achieve the refinement of the marketing, to maximize the benefits of marketing. In such a hot background, the application of the marketing strategy of Li Ziqi's short videos on food has also become an issue worth exploring. The

authors believe that the study of his marketing strategy is necessary to provide some reference and inspiration for other short video creators in the use of marketing strategy.

At present, the competition in the field of food short videos continues unabated, but accounts with distinctive features and strong brand IP are extremely rare, whether in the era of traditional media or new media, the essence of "content is king" has not changed. For example, after signing a contract with MCN, Li Ziqi, who is popular for her idyllic style, has produced video content of higher quality in terms of both the layout of the screen scenes and the arrangement of the content, and her account features have become more distinctive, and she has been loved and recognized by a lot of people. The trend of short food videos is loved by all and has captured the hearts of a large number of audiences, and the development of technology and the lowering of the threshold of short video production have brought a new opportunity for it. However, how to meet the needs of the audience, continue to produce high-quality content, and effectively realize the huge traffic is still a long-term problem faced by the creators of short food videos.

This paper will start from the perspective of self-media brand marketing and communication strategy to discuss why Li Ziqi can be liked by audiences all over the world, why Li Ziqi's brand is almost completely cut off from the word of mouth of her social media platform account, why Li Ziqi has been in a stagnant state of development in recent years, and how Li Ziqi and her brand will have the opportunity to be improved in the future, and how to realize the value of more influence. In the process of discussion, this paper discusses and analyses the issue of marketing strategy in the case of Li Ziqi based on a large amount of literature, including a variety of professional theories and knowledge such as communication science and marketing.

## **2. Status of the 'Li Ziqi' Brand**

### **2.1. Introduction of 'Li Ziqi' Brand Development History and Brand Culture**

In 2015, Li Ziqi opened a Taobao shop, which was not selling well, and started working on self-filming and self-directing food videos in order to attract fans. At the initial stage, the short videos shot by Li Ziqi were all done by herself, from conception to filming to post-production editing. However, due to outdated equipment and low levels of post-production, it resulted in simpler content and not good results, but because of the creativity of its ideas, it boasted an objective click rate on social media platforms. Li Ziqi short video ushered in a major turning point is the "Lanzhou Beef Noodles" she filmed, due to the fact that in this short video, she showed people the whole technical process of making beef noodles, and as a result, the video has more than five million views, which has made her gain a lot of attention on the Internet, and also won her a large number of fans. In May 2016, Lee began looking for a new team to shoot more and more specialized content [3].

In 2016, Li Ziqi shifted his main focus to Weibo and became a Weibo contracted self-publisher. She signed a contract with Hangzhou Weinian Technology, which is responsible for the product and operation, and Li Ziqi's videos are constantly updated, thus Li Ziqi has a large number of fans on different websites, and Weinian Technology is the biggest pusher behind her, which lays a solid foundation for future development. In August 2018, she reopened her Taobao shop, and during the 2019 shop celebrations sales broke 20 million, with 270,000 copies of snail powder sold in bursts. In the same year, Li Ziqi founded Sichuan Ziqi Media, registered online trademarks such as "Li Ziqi", "Ziqi", "Seven", etc., and promoted Li Ziqi's brand to the business model, and Li Ziqi's official shop was also formally open for business and realized the flow of traffic cash on the e-commerce platform.

As a highly regarded internet celebrity, Li Ziqi has faced the pitfalls of business partnerships behind her success. Since the end of 2021, Li Ziqi has stopped updating her short video content, and she herself has been embroiled in a dispute over the company's equity. On 27 December 2022, Weinian posted a notice on its social media platform stating that the company and Li Ziqi reached a settlement under the mediation of the Mianyang Intermediate People's Court. The shareholding of Hangzhou Weinian Brand Management Co. Ltd. in Sichuan Ziqi Culture Communication Co. Ltd.

was reduced from 51 percent to 1 percent, and the shareholding of Li Jiajia Li Ziqi was increased from 49 percent to 99 percent.

## **2.2. The Current Status of Competitors' Brand Communication for the Brand 'Li Ziqi'**

Li Ziqi, as the top stream in the field of life food short video, during the suspension period, all kinds of food bloggers have entered the game, trying to get a share in the life food short video. Li Ziqi disappeared more than a year still did not appear as an awesome competitor of the same type, affected by the epidemic, people are yearning for the idyllic life, Li Ziqi shot with the world's short video is exactly what the market needs at the moment. Compared to other food videos on most online platforms, "Li Ziqi" has a more accurate and distinctive positioning.

## **3. 'Li Ziqi' Brand Self-media Layout and Communication Logic**

The 4P theory, as a classic theory of marketing, is regarded as the theoretical cornerstone of modern marketing, which was proposed in the 1960s by American marketing scholar Jerry McCarthy. It connotes the desire to market through the four areas of Product, Price, Place and Promotion [4]. From the 4P marketing theory to analyse the marketing strategy of "Li Ziqi", its marketing strategy can mainly have the following aspects.

First is a product strategy that incorporates culture. Positioning is what a We-media company or brand does with its intended customers [5]. Li Ziqi's positioning is "Ancient Style Rustic Life": "Ancient Style Rustic" refers to the real and simple rustic life in ancient China, far away from the bustling city and independent from the world. In Li Ziqi's video, she wears a Chinese dress, holding farming tools, traveling through the fields to cultivate crops, or making tomato sauce at home, from the characters' costumes to props, and then to the scene, all of them are in a unified style of the ancient route. For example, in the video of Li Ziqi's microblogging push on 15 June 2019 to make shiitake mushroom sauce, she wears a hanbok and walks to the woods with a basket on her back to pick wild mushrooms, and then returns home to process the shiitake mushroom stuffing after sifting, cleaning, slicing, stir-frying, baking, and other processes. In the process, Li Ziqi conveys to the audience a value concept and product characteristics of natural, handmade, old-fashioned, natural, and back to basics.

Secondly, the price strategy of flexible change. "Price gradient" for shop items. For example, in the Li Ziqi shop goods, the same snail powder set three kinds of prices: 13.9 yuan a packet, 39.7 yuan 3 packets, 89.7 snail powder 6 packets free 2 cans of mushroom sauce; Two prices are set for the same Lotus Root Powder: RMB 59.7 for 350g and RMB 89.7 for 700g. This method of setting the price gradient of goods provides consumers with more consumption choices, which not only improves the consumer experience but also effectively promotes purchasing power, improves overall sales, and increases turnover. For example, in a microblog message on 20 October 2019, the activity "Retweet + message draw 10 people each to send a ticket to the 2019 Asian New Songs Chart" was also launched. The tweet received 184,000 likes and 28,000 retweets.

Thirdly, the multi-pronged channel strategy. Li Ziqi's video, in multi-platform fission spread, in microblogging, WeChat, Beili Beili, small red book, and other platforms have brand promotion and content operation. There are 20 million followers on Weibo, 2,243,000 followers on Bilibili, 315,000 followers on Xiaohongshu, and 418,000 likes and favorites. According to the fission propagation method, the propagation rate of each platform is exponentially increasing, which can improve the exposure rate, increase the breadth of information dissemination, and pool the traffic with greater probability. The popularity harvested through fission spreading on these social platforms will continue to accumulate into social assets, which will be converted into purchasing power and generate economic benefits through a stable fan base and highly loyal users [6].

Fourth, the promotion strategy of cross-border cooperation. Li Ziqi, who is known as the 'Oriental Gourmet Lifestylist', is not only a gourmet cook, but also a traditional culture expert in Shu embroidery, tie-dye, Xuan paper production, and movable-type printing. The 7th Chengdu

International Non-legacy Festival invited Li Ziqi to participate and awarded her the status of Chengdu Non-legacy Promotion Ambassador. Li Ziqi not only actively participates in non-legacy activities in China, but also goes abroad to be interviewed by 'Vietnam Youth Intellectuals Newspaper', which specializes in introducing and promoting China's non-legacy culture and other traditional cultures, attracting tens of millions of readers in Vietnam; As a 'post-90s', her efforts for the promotion and exchange of Chinese culture have gained the goodwill and support of netizens. At the same time, Li Ziqi also co-branded official brands.

## **4. Brand Communication Strategy**

### **4.1. Strengths**

From the point of view of brand communication, "Li Ziqi brand" has achieved unique advantages of success:

One is the ultimate embodiment of Chinese style in the context of China's dividend. Li Ziqi's popularity is inseparable from the strong Chinese style. In the era of Chinese style dividend, the use of Chinese style is obvious to the brand. In addition, with the extreme importance of health, such a topic can attract everyone's attention and resonance to a great extent.

The second is the brand's explosive claim. Every ingredient in Li Ziqi's video is the most original, the pork is the neighbor's freshly slaughtered home-grown pig. Potatoes, tomatoes, chickens, eggs, and all other ingredients are freshly planted and picked, with pictures to show viewers that all the ingredients in the video are purely organic and green.

Third, online marketing, is a combination of multiple marketing tools. With the instant effect of jittery voice and fast hand, combined with the follow-up of WeChat and Weibo content marketing, Li Ziqi does content marketing to build brand awareness on the platform of voice, fast hand, WeChat, and Weibo. She has achieved the marketing effect of doing traffic in TikTok and Youtube; and content deposition in WeChat and Weibo. Each of Li Ziqi's products has a well-produced video, which presents product scenes, product usage, and product efficacy in a very concrete way, effectively stimulating consumers to recognize and buy her products.

Fourth, systematic and rapid creative production capacity. Li Ziqi in the hot period, showing its brand's continuous creative ability, its video content, and creative ability to update quickly, and constantly use new ideas to catch people's attention.

### **4.2. Weakness**

#### **4.2.1 Low content traffic interaction**

Through watching Li Ziqi's short video found that Li Ziqi seldom interacted with the analysis in the comment section of the work, for the analysis of the message and the questions raised, there is no reply, did not cause much interaction. Therefore from this point of view, this study concludes that Li Ziqi has the problem of low interactivity of content flow in his brand communication strategy.

#### **4.2.2 Lack of brand protection awareness**

On 23 September 2020, a consumer claimed that American knife blades were found in a 14 September 2020 batch of conch fritters. Although the brand immediately conducted a self-inspection and self-correction of the product line, it did not offer any compensation to the consumer and even characterized the incident as a malicious smear campaign. Finally, the brand has so far failed to make the truth public, and Li Ziqi herself has never released any statement on social media platforms. This incident has seriously affected the communication of Seven Li's brand, and neither the brand nor Seven Li realized the serious consequences it could have on the brand.

### **4.3. Opportunities**

Li Ziqi's videos were never intended for a global or overseas audience from the start, and to this day her videos have no subtitles other than Chinese, so much so that some overseas audiences have

set up subtitle groups to translate Li Ziqi's videos into English for a global audience. In a traditional sense, this is inconsistent with the fashionable character and strategic lines of China's foreign media strategy. Cultural output is not customized, nor is the relationship between domestic and foreign audiences separate. Quality cultural and content products must have value across borders. For a global audience, Seven Lee's content represents a high-quality product category that transcends cultural boundaries. Overall, Li Ziqi's content has a clear anti-industrial and anti-modernisation personality model, and to a large extent touches on the simple emotions of post-industrialised people, which resonate internally beyond national and cultural boundaries. Globally, it is an overall reflection and backlash against a modernized and commercialized culture [7].

#### **4.4. Threats**

##### **4.4.1 Lack of personalised research on different self-publishing platforms**

Statistics found that the videos published by Li Ziqi on several different platforms were the same, not divided for different user groups on different platforms, and lacked personalized research. There is no effective judgment for the user attributes and user preferences of different platforms. For example, there are more middle-aged and old-aged users on the fast-hand platform, more young people on microblogging jittery voice, and most of the user groups of 'small red books' are women. At the same time, Li Ziqi's current short video marketing team has not developed and matured and has not yet formed a better scale of development, and its business capabilities have not reached a uniform standard.

##### **4.4.2 Lack of effective management practices and a professional brand image operation and protection communication team**

As a self-media marketing blogger, Li Ziqi needs to have full control over the content of the short videos as well as the production, video marketing, and many other aspects. Judging from the current media operation and marketing situation of Li Ziqi, both of them lack a certain degree of professionalism, and it is difficult to carry out orderly and systematic marketing activities in the face of larger business invitations. Inability to select and produce products according to customer requirements; failure to establish its own product market; lack of thinking and organization of business operations.

#### **5. Suggestions**

##### **5.1. Formation of A Communication Team for the Brand Image**

###### **5.1.1 Enhancing brand quality**

The quality of the product itself is the decisive factor for its Internet reputation. In addition to continuous investment in product packaging, "Li Ziqi" also needs to control product quality. Only by improving the price-performance ratio of the product and ensuring that the product meets the public's taste can the brand's quality be improved.

###### **5.1.2 Dealing with negative word-of-mouth**

In order to respond to online reviews about the poor value for money of their products, "Li Ziqi" must find ways to increase brand awareness and reduce negative word of mouth, so that the brand can enter into sustainable development. On social media platforms such as Weibo, Taobao, TikTok, Youtube, etc., if brands want their audience to stay tuned to them, they should make use of all kinds of effective ways to appease consumers in a timely manner and reduce the impact of negative word-of-mouth on the brand.

###### **5.1.3 Focus on user feedback**

Paying attention to consumers' reactions, listening to their needs, and marketing strategies to them accordingly at the right time [8]. Using data for in-depth research gives brands and companies a better

understanding of their customers' needs and preferences. In Li Ziqi's shop, the highest sales rankings were Liuzhou snail lion powder: price of 39.7 yuan, monthly sales of 400,000; lotus root powder: price of 58.7 yuan, monthly sales of 100,000; jujube tea: price of 39.9 yuan, monthly sales of 95,000; toast sauce: price of 39.9 yuan, monthly sales of 45,000; the price of each item is less than 100 yuan, and in the 60 yuan or more of the products in almost every kind of monthly sales are only about 10,000 [9]. In a sense, this shows that its users have a certain demand for the product. Therefore, "Li Ziqi" needs to make good use of the data generated by the self-media platform, from the user's point of view, to explore more information, to change their products.

## **5.2. Broadening Pathways to Build Lasting Brands**

### **5.2.1 Building brand IP for sustainable development**

The goal of personalised IP is to make the user feel its warmth and to make it interact with the user. "Li Ziqi" this character IP, and their own target users have a lot of connections, every time she sends a small short video, will be through their own microblogging message, to get more feedback from fans. Occasionally, Li Ziqi will also post some of his daily life in short videos to express his inner thoughts, so that readers can experience "Li Ziqi", a character full of human warmth [10].

### **5.2.2 Strengthening multi-party co-operation for brand communication**

Li Zi Dye and Beijing Palace Cuisine were held in Beijing on 24 May 2018, where the official collaboration between the two parties was launched. The Forbidden City itself has accumulated thousands of years of history and tens of millions of precious relics, of which the cultural connotations that can be developed and used are well known. The content published under the "Li Ziqi" brand has a high humanistic connotation and is very popular among young people. Therefore, the cooperation between the two companies can achieve a win-win situation and make young people aware of their values. The cooperation between "Li Ziqi" and the cross-border IP can not only achieve the corporate goals but also make it have a higher social significance.

## **6. Conclusion**

This paper puts forward suggestions from various perspectives and makes a theoretical exploration for more fully exploring how self-media brands can maximize the potential of brand communication and brand marketing influence on media platforms. Through the above analysis of "Li Ziqi" brand content marketing, it can be seen that only high-quality, unique content can attract the attention of consumers, and the most important thing is to establish the brand's unique values, so that the user and the brand to produce effective communication between. In order to do a good job of brand marketing, it is indispensable to have an accurate grasp of the product and fine production, a flexible grasp of the price and regulation, the correct choice and distribution of multi-faceted channels, and the capture of unique promotional methods and opportunities to grasp. The most important thing is to improve product quality and brand connotation, the formation of their own brand culture and characteristics, in order to serve consumers while achieving brand goals.

At the same time, the 'Li Ziqi' brand wants to occupy a place in the market, still need to make continuous improvement. Her brand also required a series of changes in the level of professionalism in brand operations, user interactivity, and customer experience. The future of short video marketing is a new challenge to the user not only claiming benefits but also humanistic care, so that the user and the brand to produce further exchanges and contacts, on the basis of the expansion of public opinion, earn media for secondary dissemination. In addition to this, brands need to ensure the quality of their products if they want to be profitable for a long time.

The process of researching the case of Li Ziqi in the environment of the rise of new media provides inspiration and suggestions for self-media and media companies on how to balance the relationship between brands and accounts on media platforms. The research on how to do deal with the

development, communication, and other issues faced by brand marketing on the self-media platform is analyzed in depth, giving some marketing strategies with practical value.

In conducting the literature review and research, considering the relatively limited perspectives and conclusions of the literature, it is also important to keep in line with the current development of the media and read more relevant academic articles, reports, and data information. The more effective the data is, the more favorable it will be for the research in this direction.

## References

- [1] Thompson K. Main characteristics of new media. *ReviseSociology*. December 13, 2018. Accessed 8 Oct. 2023. Available at: <https://revisesociology.com/2018/12/13/main-characteristics-new-media/>.
- [2] Zhan E. Li Ziqi breaks YouTube subscribers record for Chinese language channel. *Guinness World Records*. 2021. Accessed 8 Oct. 2023. Available at: <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/2021/2/li-ziqi-breaks-youtube-subscribers-record-for-chinese-language-channel-647202>.
- [3] Matei A. Country life: the young female farmer who is now a top influencer in China. *The Guardian*. 28 Jan. 2020. Accessed 12 Aug. 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/jan/28/li-ziqi-china-influencer-rural-life>
- [4] McCarthy E.J. *Basic marketing, a managerial approach*. HathiTrust. Homewood, Ill.: R.D. Irwin. 1960. Accessed 13 Dec. 2022. Available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/inu.30000041584743?urlappend=%3Bseq=1%3Bownerid=13510798895920215-5>
- [5] Quey J. What is positioning? How does positioning help my startup? *www.growthramp.io*. 2019. Accessed 8 Oct. 2023. Available at: <https://www.growthramp.io/articles/positioning>.
- [6] Sadhu A. Embracing a full funnel marketing strategy: A multi-pronged approach. *Social Media Success*. 2020. Accessed 8 Oct. 2023. Available at: <https://medium.com/social-media-success/embracing-a-full-funnel-marketing-strategy-a-multi-pronged-approach-101cd05e2013>.
- [7] Whyke T.W., Chen Z.T. and Lopez-Mugica J. An analysis of cultural dissemination and national image construction in Chinese influencer Li Ziqi's vlogs and its impact on international viewer perceptions on YouTube. *The Journal of Chinese Sociology*, 2022, 9(1).
- [8] Lemon K.N. and Verhoef P.C. Understanding customer experience throughout the customer journey. *Journal of Marketing*, 2016, 80(6): 69–96.
- [9] News. Li Ziqi can earn how much money a year, the data quantitatively show you. *www.xjx100.cn*. 2023. Accessed 8 Oct. 2023. Available at: <https://www.xjx100.cn/news/2454495.html?action=onClick>
- [10] Liu I. Why IP & Branding go together in protecting SDGs - Sedgwick Richardson. 2023. Accessed 8 Oct. 2023. Available at: <https://www.sedgwick-richardson.com/views/ip-sdg/>