

Research on the Creation of Super IP by Modern Media Expression of Chinese Traditional Culture in the Context of Media Convergence

Yuxin Xia^{1,a,*}

¹*Marine Science, Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology, No. 219, Ningliu Road, Jiangbei New District, Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province, China*
a.202083720021@nuist.edu.cn

**corresponding author*

Abstract: With the progress of society and the development of the times, the traditional culture IP craze has once again swept the world, with a number of popular IPs emerging, gradually forming a development trend of industrialization. IP with the theme of traditional Chinese culture is not rare. Traditional culture itself has a profound historical heritage and a mass foundation, coupled with the auxiliary promotion of Internet technology and the promotion of capital, making its development rapid. However, rapid development does not mean excellent quality. Currently, there are a lot of problems in the development process of many IPs in China, and there are still significant shortcomings in both subjective thinking and objective conditions. This article focuses on comparing the current development status and existing problems of well-known super IPs in China, using the method of analogy, comparison, induction, and summary to explore the experiences and lessons learned in the development of IPs, and extend them to the creation of traditional cultural super IPs in the future, seeking to achieve the long-term development of traditional cultural IP.

Keywords: Chinese traditional culture, IP, modern media expression

1. Introduction

In recent years, the term "IP" has become ubiquitous on the internet, and the "IP fever" trend has swept through all aspects of personal life. The concept of IP is an abbreviation of Intellectual Property, so it is essentially a legal concept. With the development of the economy and the progress of society, practitioners in the cultural industry have given IP a richer meaning, making it a symbol of emotions that indicates that a cultural product has been validated by the market. When people use IP to refer to a popular cultural product, its meaning is not only a reference to the cultural product itself, but also implies profound cultural acceptance and social psychological implications. In the 2020s, the development of social forms has shown a trend toward modernization, informatization, and efficiency, and the development of digital media has also extended to a new commercial form of IP - super IP.

From the perspective of the combination of business and academia, a new definition of "Super IP" is proposed, it is a super symbol that arises from the fusion of strong content and strong self-traffic, creating deep commercial value. The core attributes of "super IP" are content and traffic

(fans), which form a mutually supportive and integrated logical ecological chain, ultimately enabling the conversion, monetization, amplification, and ecologicalization of IP value [1]. Based on this, a successfully operated and monetized "super IP" often brings enormous economic benefits and drives the development of various industries in the origin of the IP, such as tourism, manufacturing, and services. According to the global IP total revenue statistics chart on Wikipedia in August 2021, the top-ranked revenue still belongs to Nintendo's "Pokemon" at \$105 billion, and the basic revenue of the top 20 IPs worldwide has all exceeded \$20 billion. Once an IP itself generates derivative products, the entire IP will form a huge profit system, and it may even cover many aspects of people's lives and entertainment. For example, the "Harry Potter" IP first spawned movies from books, then after the series of movies became popular, it generated electronic games, theme parks, and cross-border joint products (including stationery, toys, clothes, food, etc.).

"Up and down five thousand years of Chinese" is a Chinese saying that reflects China's long and splendid history of civilization. In today's internet business and cultural competition, excellent traditional culture is undoubtedly the most important cultural resource for creating national cultural symbols [2]. With the arrival of the globalization era, the cultural conflict between China and foreign countries is increasing day by day. In the whirlpool of world cultural integration and collision, Chinese culture must participate in cross-cultural exchanges and dissemination on a global scale. Today's competition between international countries is increasingly manifested as competition in cultural soft power. Therefore, national cultural symbols with lasting vitality and broad influence have become important indicators for measuring a country's cultural soft power. Against the backdrop of the popularity of IP, using cultural IP as a digital cultural form based on internet technology to demonstrate a great power's cultural soft power and enhance the sense of identity with Chinese culture is the best way to carry, innovate and disseminate traditional Chinese culture.

In addition, traditional culture itself has a deep cultural heritage that serves as a source of inspiration for IP creation. Combined with modern aesthetics and ideology, it is conducive to shaping the IP brand. Moreover, traditional culture itself has topical attributes, and the related fresh content can easily arouse the curiosity and novelty of the consumer market. Mature content itself is the soil for nurturing high-quality IPs [3]. Traditional culture, whether as the "content of dissemination" in modern media or as a new "regenerated" variety under the new survival mechanism created by modern media, illustrates that modern media provides new space for traditional culture and demonstrates the value of modern media in promoting the dissemination and inheritance of traditional culture [4].

This article will analyze and compare the current development status and existing problems of well-known super IPs in China, summarize the conclusions, and extend the conclusions to the creation of other potential traditional cultural super IPs in China to provide relevant assistance for the development and deepening of China's IP industry.

2. Analysis of the Development Status and Existing Problems of Several Types of Representative Traditional Cultural IP in China

2.1. Cultural and Creative Industries

Cultural and creative products are essentially a material representation and hardware carrier of culture and are considered a form of cultural wealth [5]. The cultural and contextual information they carry is an important characteristic that distinguishes cultural and creative products from ordinary products. Take the Palace Museum's cultural and creative products, which have exceeded one billion yuan in annual sales, as an example. Whether online or offline, they continue to maintain a phenomenon-level "Palace Museum culture" trend. The Palace Museum itself represents

a high level of artistic and cultural achievements in ancient China. Building on this foundation, the cultural value of the Palace Museum's collections has been deeply excavated, and creative and innovative products have been developed. With the motto of "if it's from the Palace Museum, it must be a competitive product," the Palace Museum has successfully transformed from a historical symbol into a super IP that can sustain cultural output.

Despite having a higher market share than similar products, the Palace Museum's cultural and creative industry currently has some shortcomings. The biggest issue with the design of the Palace Museum's cultural and creative products is the lack of innovation, as they do not delve deep into the cultural connotations. Although most of the Palace Museum's cultural and creative products revolve around cultural themes and showcase the cultural heritage of the Palace Museum, they only scratch the surface of the meaning of its collections and fail to explore deeper layers. Furthermore, their applications with epoch features are superficial, and they have not fully utilized modern media and technology. Instead, they continue to follow the traditional path of cultural and creative products, lacking a progressive spirit and significant room for improvement in terms of practicality [6].

2.2. Animation Film Industry

With the continuous development of China's economy, the animation film industry is receiving increasing attention. China has long supported the animation industry, but for many years, the quality of animation has not matched its quantity, and even suffered from severe juvenilization, lacking subtle connotations and spiritual cores. However, in recent years, the Chinese animation film industry has crossed over with traditional Chinese cultural intellectual property (IP), relying on cultural confidence to make a strong comeback. With the heat of traditional IP, the Chinese animation film industry has undergone artistic innovation, promoted a qualitative change and entering a new peak of development. From the release of "Monkey King: Hero Is Back" in 2015, to the subsequent "Big Fish & Begonia," and to "Ne Zha" in 2019 (which grossed over 5 billion RMB and ranked fourth in Chinese box office history), the emergence of these domestic animations signifies the rise of the Chinese animation film industry. Excellent production and exquisite art styles have opened broader horizons for domestic animation IP.

Although the Chinese animation film industry has made rapid progress in recent years, there are still many problems. Based on existing research, the following information can be summarized.

First, the phenomenon of blindly following trends in animation content selection is serious. Due to the long IP incubation period, high investment, and high risk of IP development, the development of IP animation is concentrated on classic IPs with high traffic, high topicality, and easy monetization. The clustering and trend-following of IP selection can lead to excessive development of the same source IP, causing audience fatigue and reducing their favorability, and possibly resulting in a box office "fiasco"; exacerbating the "involution" of the animation industry; and forming a tendency for IP animation development to focus on quick and profitable imitation of current popular works, which affects the healthy development of the IP animation industry [7].

Second, the transition from "traditional borrowing" to "contemporary creation" is difficult. Although contemporary traditional IP animation creation has innovative adaptation awareness, it lacks deep interpretation and relevant deconstruction of the original work, the lack of creativity and imagination, and a large number of imitations and references lead to a serious patchwork feeling. Textual creation lacks delicate polishing and persuasion, forced emotional drive, poor control of rhythm, symbolization of characters, sloganization of actor's lines, superficial delivery of the theme's core, and the overall narrative still leans towards juvenilization. Character images rely too much on the existing settings of traditional IP, lack innovation, and are difficult to combine with contemporary aesthetics. Through creative design, it is challenging to create new features that differentiate them from other same-source IPs and establish new IP identification symbols.

Third, there is a lack of long-term overall planning for IP development, and IP resources are only developed once or twice, lacking long-term planning that allows IP works to fail to continue to make an impact. The influence of IP cannot be extended or expanded, and the value of IP cannot be fully realized. High-quality IP also struggles to undergo sedimentation and polishing to become a classic IP, leading to the waste of IP resources. Moreover, the relationship between same-source IP animations is weak, making it difficult to plan uniformly and continuously to expand their influence or to build value associations and brand effects.

Fourth, the derivative product market is not yet sound, with few development categories, a small industry radiation area, weak extension ability of the industry value chain, and serious homogenization of derivative products with a lack of innovation and attraction. The development of China's IP industry chain is relatively lagging behind, and the IP derivative product market is in the nurturing stage. The development of genuine products for domestic IP animated films is far behind market expectations, with a significant gap compared to the derivative product markets of Japan and the United States [8].

2.3. Literary Industry

Compared with the current development status of internet literature IP, the types and fields of traditional cultural literary IP development are not balanced. In order to save manpower and material resources and achieve the rapid realization of IP value, the main focus is on the development of works that have been market-tested, have a fan base, and have an excellent reputation. In terms of content form, there is a greater tendency towards developing anime and TV dramas, with less development of peripheral literary articles. The main battlefield for the development of traditional cultural literary IP is concentrated on fan fiction creation, lacking professional guidance [9]. This situation not only leads to uneven quality of the already developed classic literary IP, but also creates various homogenization phenomena, and makes it increasingly difficult to develop other excellent traditional literary works. The gap and barriers between classic literary IP and other works in the industry are becoming increasingly large, forming a hard bone that can never be chewed on within the industry. The more it is not developed, the fewer people are willing to develop it.

Although the development of traditional cultural literary IP in the literary industry also lacks a complete industrial chain planning awareness, there is a special problem in the development of traditional cultural literary IP in the literary industry, which is that the quality and cultural depth of traditional literary content are high, and the difficulty of content adaptation is serious. There is a high demand for literary literacy, and it is necessary to inherit the ideological essence of literary classics while catering to the audience's needs, which is indeed difficult for ordinary fan fiction writers or related developers. At the same time, not all traditional literary works are suitable for IP adaptation. Novels with strong storytelling are more suitable for adaptation than works with weak storytelling and strong literary flavor, which creates significant limitations for the literary industry of traditional cultural IP.

2.4. Online Game Industry

Online games are themselves a product derived from culture. Especially online games based on martial arts and history, from the game's spirit and cultural core to the smallest details in the scenery, all rely on the secondary processing of Chinese traditional culture and are closely related to traditional cultural elements. In addition, online games have a high association with Chinese traditional culture. In terms of spreading traditional culture, online games have significant features such as fast dissemination speed, wide dissemination range, broad audience, and visualization.

Although using online games as a carrier to promote traditional Chinese culture has obvious advantages, as a highly entertaining carrier, there are still problems in combining it with traditional cultural elements, especially prominent issues such as game developers altering traditional cultural symbols, severe homogenization, inconsistency between the inside and outside, and fragmentation [10].

To cater to popular preferences, online games with Chinese traditional cultural backgrounds rarely showcase traditional cultural elements. The mobile game market is fiercely competitive. When a game or IP becomes phenomenally popular, developers will immediately develop similar products, resulting in a high degree of overlap in games released during a certain period. For example, the 3D turn-based RPG mobile game "Onmyoji" independently developed by the Chinese NetEase mobile game company in 2016, attracted many players upon its public release, becoming a popular mobile game. Subsequently, many imitative games with gameplay similar to "Onmyoji" were launched on the market, including projects based on traditional Chinese cultural elements. However, due to the lack of innovation in gameplay and only borrowing "Onmyoji's" gameplay into traditional Chinese culture, these imitative games quickly lost popularity and failed to achieve their cultural dissemination purposes. Furthermore, fragmentation is particularly evident in the combination of online games and traditional Chinese culture. In online games, Chinese culture is only used as a tool to attract players' attention, following the trend of ancient style rather than valuing players' immersive experiences with ancient style or traditional culture. This results in an insufficiently reasonable and complete storyline, fragmentary player experiences, and unclear and unsmooth experiences. Therefore, although online games have the advantage of quickly disseminating fragmented information, they also have drawbacks, such as cutting and selecting traditional culture unreasonably.

2.5. Conclusion

Through the study of the development status and existing problems of several representative traditional cultural IPs in China, the following common shortcomings in the development of existing traditional cultural IPs in different industrial contexts can be summarized:

- (1) Lack of innovation and creativity, insufficient refinement of cultural products, failure to combine with contemporary aesthetics, resulting in a lack of originality in the products, and over-reliance on the popularity of the IP itself rather than the design of the product itself.
- (2) Shallow development of Chinese traditional culture, with superficial forms of expression, failure to make good use of the rich historical background of Chinese culture, and even distortion and modification of historical facts in some products.
- (3) Following the trend of developing classic IPs with high popularity and traffic, making the development of IPs too concentrated, which is not conducive to the comprehensive development of Chinese traditional culture and easily leads to audience aesthetic fatigue.
- (4) Insufficient use of modern media or technological carriers in the development of existing traditional cultural IPs, mostly following the traditional path of IP development, resulting in low efficiency of IP dissemination and slow IP development.
- (5) The industrial development system of IPs urgently needs to be improved, lacking a complete awareness of industrial chain planning, making it challenging to form phenomenon-level super IPs. Short-term commercial behaviors for monetization in the middle of the industry chain led to the overfishing of cultural IPs, and it is difficult for downstream enterprises in the industry chain to operate and for subsequent cultural IPs to be iteratively updated.

3. The Concept of China's Future Traditional Culture Super IP Development Framework

Based on the research and summary in the previous text, most of the problems in common shortcomings are subjective issues in thinking. The two main shortcomings in the use of objective conditions are the lack of utilization of modern media and the incomplete industrial chain system. Compared to the problems in utilizing objective conditions, solving subjective issues is more complex and tedious, requiring subjective ideas and having lower feasibility, and solving them largely depends on opportunities and inspiration. Because different traditional cultural IPs have different attributes and characteristics, solving such problems must be tailored to each specific IP and finding a development path that is unique to them. However, the solution to the problem of utilizing objective conditions is clearer and more templated, and a mature system can be applied to the development process of many traditional cultural IPs. Therefore, this article will focus on the first point of insufficient utilization of objective conditions, exploring how to utilize modern media expression better to achieve the creation of Chinese traditional cultural super IPs.

In the 2020s, the trend of modernization, informatization, and efficiency in social forms is unstoppable. The characteristics of digital media, such as fast information dissemination, wide coverage, and strong social interaction, can make the content of traditional culture more abundant, the dissemination channels more extensive, and the dissemination effect more lasting [11]. Digital media has become the main platform for audiences to obtain information and express opinions. Digital media with strong social functions has also enhanced the interaction between users and between recipients and communicators. The advantages of these modern media expressions have greatly impacted the expression of Chinese traditional culture and provided opportunities for the revival and development of traditional culture. In this case, improving the quality of information has become the most effective measure and method to improve overall taste under the existing modern digital media. By using this social phenomenon, combined with the IP of Chinese traditional culture, it can not only play a role in building and promoting the IP's popularity but also help improve the quality and taste of various information content and enhance the effectiveness of modern media expression.

Traditional culture is rich in content, but cultural dissemination in the digital media age still has problems, such as outdated dissemination concepts, lack of dissemination skills, and convergence of dissemination content, which are not conducive to improving the social influence of traditional culture. Therefore, cultural dissemination should rely on new media carriers such as digital media, continuously enrich the ways of cultural dissemination expression, innovate the forms of communication expression, and gradually improve the dissemination effect and social influence of traditional culture. Therefore, this study proposes several modern media expression forms that are easy to implement and effective and conducts a preliminary analysis and summary of these expression forms.

3.1. Self-Media

In the internet era, civilization exchange and mutual learning have more carriers and channels, providing a broader platform for the world to understand and love China. Self-media has the characteristics of diversified information, good interactivity, accurate user positioning, wide acceptance, and easy dissemination, and its advantages have become increasingly prominent in modern life [12]. The self-media environment provides a platform for information traffic and provides assistance for the dissemination of traditional culture, optimizing content effects, expanding coverage areas, and breaking free from traditional media expression forms. This has spawned various new content forms, providing diversified and rich modern media expression forms for information dissemination, greatly improving the effectiveness of communication.

Compared to traditional media, self-media has several advantages. First, self-media platforms have strong user stickiness, ensuring platform user stability and providing the possibility for the spread of continuous stories. Second, self-media dissemination integrates infinite layout, permanent storage, and professional explanations, providing effective means of communication for products with strong professionalism and building a platform for consumers to obtain relevant information. Third, self-media platforms create social spaces, replicating interpersonal communication perfectly in the network space, providing a space for communication, enhancing user participation, and providing circulation channels for a series of online interpersonal communication activities, such as promoting products. Fourth, it has low cost, and self-media marketing is based on platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and Tik Tok 3, eliminating the need to establish independent marketing platforms, reducing technical difficulties and fixed capital investment. Fifth, the new form of dissemination. The creativity and inclusiveness of self-media make the content more diverse and interesting. The platform provides space for bloggers to innovate boldly, and users are free to explore, stimulating their curiosity and making it easier for the public to accept.

The revival and inheritance of traditional culture cannot be separated from the attention and interest of the masses. Self-media creators record life and transform the relatively dull textual information in traditional culture into various animations, games, and videos, which are published on the platform. Using this form of media expression can not only present traditional culture in the most intuitive way but also meet the cognitive needs of different age groups, especially young people, and make the presentation of traditional culture more diversified. This attracts attention, promotes traditional culture, and generates content revenue through traffic monetization, allowing excellent traditional culture to survive healthily.

In this era of unlimited cultural communication and exchange, telling good stories about China and shaping the image of China requires more "Grandpa Amu," "Li Ziqi," and "Dianxi young brother " and more quality and warm stories. By inviting self-media celebrities to collaborate in creating an experiential VLOG or PLOG, using their fan base to introduce the history and characteristics of the traditional cultural IP, we can further expand the fan capacity and increase the influence of the traditional cultural IP.

3.2. Fan Base

The monetization of an IP relies on establishing connections with fans based on content and centered around individuals. To successfully monetize a "super IP," it is necessary to activate and maintain a strong connection and bond with fans, build a community of fans around the IP, and accumulate a substantial amount of fan traffic to realize its value. Establishing a connection between the IP and fans not only satisfies their needs but also enables fans to become incubators for the IP, resulting in better dissemination. For example, the connection between content and fans can use the star effect to attract fans effectively. Stars can engage in interesting online and offline interactive activities with fans, creating an affinity and sense of identity, thereby creating a strong aggregation relationship between fans and stars. Afterward, various social software can be used to build a fan community (such as WeChat, QQ, Weibo, and TikTok.), and the "fans support fans" approach can be implemented. A massive fan community network can be constructed around the topic and its surroundings, allowing fans to freely express their love for the work in the fan circle's spatial field, forming a fan community aggregation effect. Consequently, the content and characteristics of the work can be maximally and automatically disseminated, resulting in an automated fan incubation model. The monetization of a "super IP" must be supported by fan consumers, who will provide internal connections, thereby facilitating economic exchange between the IP and fans.

3.3. Virtual Reality Technology

Fully utilizing current digital communication technologies to create a spectacular audio-visual feast for the dissemination of traditional Chinese culture, highlighting the audio-visual features of cultural communication. People can use new media communication technologies such as AR and VR to construct immersive communication methods, break the time and space boundaries of cultural communication, enhance user experience, and comprehensively enhance the social influence of traditional culture.

Digital media communication is different from traditional media, as it pays more attention to users' personal feelings and experiences and emphasizes the basic principle of serving the audience. Through disseminating high-quality content and deep social interaction, it forms a good reputation and gains user stickiness, thereby enhancing audience recognition [13]. When disseminating traditional culture, it is necessary to make full use of digital media to do a good job in communication. New communication methods such as constructing VR experience halls and online games can be used to disseminate traditional culture. Big data technology can be used to understand the audience's thoughts, thoughts, and feelings about traditional culture, analyze the focus of attention of the audience, achieve accurate delivery, and comprehensively enhance the communication power of culture.

Furthermore, in the current rapidly changing technological environment, teenagers have a natural interest in virtual reality technology. Through combining virtual reality technology with the construction of traditional cultural IP, it will be more beneficial for the dissemination of traditional culture among teenagers. It will enable teenagers to experience the charm of traditional Chinese culture as if they were there, to feel the artistic form and profound cultural heritage of Chinese culture, which is conducive to shaping the next generation's understanding of traditional culture and inheriting it.

Internationally, the recently popular virtual reality technology VR has been used by media such as The New York Times and Reuters as a means of international news reporting. 360-degree panoramic video and 3D stereo sound can greatly restore the on-site environment and give distant viewers a sense of immersion. Therefore, VR technology has a natural advantage in foreign-oriented communication products. By using VR and other technological means, it is easy to further enrich the audio-visual language of foreign-oriented communication and create a more involved and immersive foreign-oriented communication scene[14].

3.4. New Media Matrix

The new media matrix (as shown in Figure 1) is formed by multiple new media platforms such as "Weibo", live streaming platforms, video platforms, and self-media platforms. The first step is to fully utilize social media such as Weibo, WeChat, post bar, and Q&A platforms for online promotion of cultural dissemination. Traditional cultural IP creators should actively establish their own official accounts on various network platforms, hire professional operation teams, and actively update and operate them. Based on current events and hot topics, the cultural IP should be promoted to increase its popularity and attract public curiosity and attention. The second step is to use the popular format of online video to promote and even sell products, such as short videos on Tik Tok and others, online live streaming for product sales, and creating an introduction column on major audiobook apps for relevant traditional cultural IP. The third step is to use the self-media and forums mentioned earlier for further targeted promotion and control of public opinion, creating a complete architecture of the IP new media matrix.

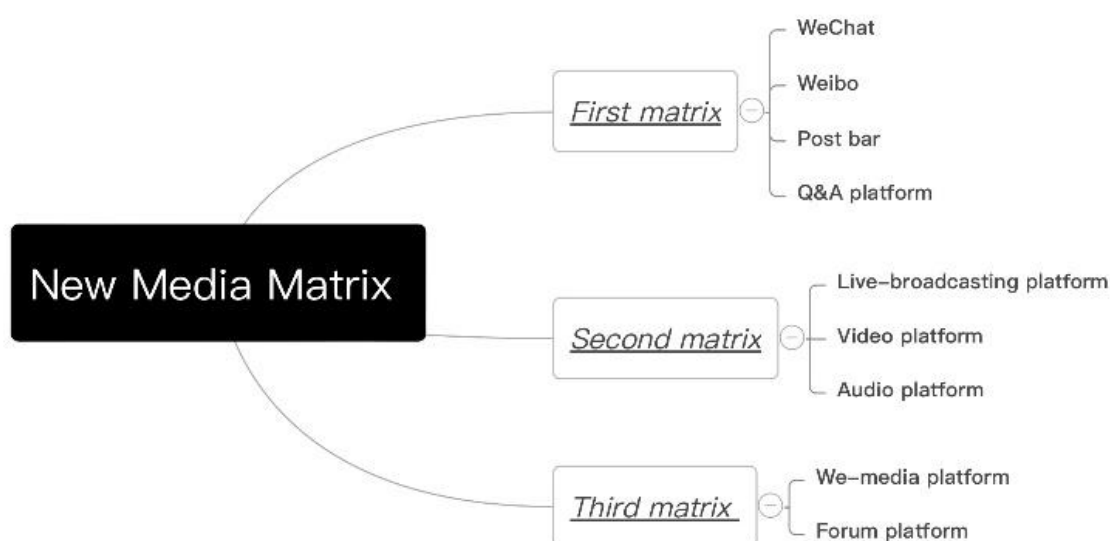


Figure 1: The new media matrix.

By leveraging the new media matrix, the "super IP" can achieve a brand propagation effect through fission. Compared to traditional "super IP" marketing, new media methods and platforms can effectively achieve the interaction, high frequency, and fission propagation of IP. The "super IP" can utilize this matrix to promote and propagate IP content to form an effective fission propagation and value sharing among fan groups, providing a continuous propagation potential and exposure conditions for the value realization path of the "super IP" [1]. In addition, it is important to combine multiple types of content and hold events to increase traffic and interest. For example, fans who follow public accounts can win prizes through lucky draws, sign in continuously on mini-programs can exchange for cultural or IP derivative product coupons, and discounts can be obtained by reporting a purchase code, etc.

4. Conclusion

In summary, and based on the research findings of previous scholars, there are several significant reasons for using modern media to express and develop China's traditional culture into a super IP. Firstly, the development of traditional cultural IP can enhance the Chinese people's recognition and understanding of their own culture, explore its background and characteristics, and identify its future development direction. This will increase their sense of cultural identity and self-confidence. Secondly, it will strengthen the integration of traditional Chinese culture and modern media, making it easier to stimulate young people's interest in Chinese culture and better inherit and develop it, thus giving it a longer life in the tide of social progress. Furthermore, adapting traditional cultural genes to modern culture and society will help to expand human understanding of Chinese traditional culture worldwide, transform outsiders' attitudes towards it, and gain more recognition and support. Finally, from an economic development perspective, commercialization is the fundamental purpose of IP development. IP brings enormous economic benefits, promotes economic development and cultural prosperity, and inspires more people to invest in IP creation and income generation, resulting in positive economic benefits. In addition, original content can be bought and sold through licensing, and IP economic participants can produce different cultural products by diversifying the interpretation of original content, using the influence of existing

content to sell more forms of cultural products and expand revenue channels while reducing market risks.

Therefore, under the above background of using modern media to express and develop China's traditional culture into a super IP, it can be seen that modern media plays a huge role in contemporary society. Only by utilizing modern media and fully innovating the industrial structure of Chinese traditional culture IP can it become a phenomenon-level super IP, radiating its infinite brilliance.

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