

**APPLY THEORY U TO STUDY PERSONAL IP CASE IN CHINA'S  
INFLUENCER MARKETING**

**MISS HUANG JIALI**

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY REPORT SUBMITTED IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDY IN MANAGEMENT  
KHON KAEN UNIVERSITY**

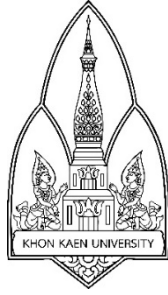
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**INDEPENDENT STUDY APPROVAL**  
**KHON KAEN UNIVERSITY**  
**FOR**  
**COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDY IN MANAGEMENT**

**Independent Study Title:** Apply theory U to study personal IP case in China's  
influencer marketing

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## **ABSTRACT**

Internet celebrities are also known as influencer, Internet fame, Wonghong (Chinese). The Internet celebrity economy refers to relying on the Internet, especially mobile Internet communication and its social platform promotion, through many social attentions, forming a huge fan and targeted marketing market, and centering on the Internet celebrity IP (Intellectual Property) derives various consumer markets and finally forms a new economic model of a complete internet celebrity industry chain. IP is the abbreviation of "Intellectual Property" in English. There are many forms of IP, which can be a complete story, a concept, an image or even a sentence, and it can also be used in many fields. Internet celebrities use multimedia social platforms, such as Weibo, Douyin, Xiaohongshu, bilibili, etc., to deliver high-quality content or values through multi-chain communication methods to gain fan recognition and make people who originally belong to different dimensions gather with preferences, and guide fans to complete direct or indirect consumption behaviors. At the same time, Internet celebrities establish deep feelings and trust with fans through high frequency interactions and become a part of the influential people on the Internet and the real world, and finally form the Internet celebrity IP.

In the past two years, since the global spread of the COVID-19, such words as "quarantine", "work from home", "make money online", "KOL", "Internet

celebrities", "E-commerce", etc. have become hot words on the Internet. Due to the rapid development of the Internet celebrity economy, some Internet celebrity IPs have gained the attention of capital and received investment. However, more Internet celebrities are still below the survival line. Therefore, how to successfully create a personal IP in the environment of the Internet celebrity economy is worthy of our consideration.

In the era of Internet celebrity economy, Internet celebrities have been professionalized and symbolized, and a set of models of online celebrity creation have gradually evolved. Researchers combine existing research reports with new phenomena in the industry, analyze how to create personal IPs by using theory u in case analysis, online interviews, etc., and explore the causes, basic classifications, and monetization methods of the three types of "Internet celebrity development mechanisms" currently mainstream in China, and the problems with the mechanism. On this basis, the researchers also paid attention to the survival status and monetization methods of the tail celebrities in the internet celebrity industry and put forward suggestions for the tail celebrities to create personal Ips by using theory u.

*Keywords: Internet celebrity, Influencer, personal IP, Theory U*

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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### 1. Research background

#### 1.1 The Internet celebrity economy is growing rapidly

According to data from iResearch's "2018 China Internet Celebrity Economic Development Insight Report", in terms of the e-commerce industry, in 2018, there were nearly 80,000 Internet celebrities with more than 100,000 fans. On the Weibo platform, the scale of Internet celebrity fans is close to 600 million. In the past year, the number of Internet celebrities with more than 1 million followers on Weibo has exceeded 20,000 covering 25 areas, and the proportion of Internet celebrities who have signed contracts with advertisers has increased from 23.1% to 57.53%. At the same time, the areas involved in Internet celebrities are increasing, and the diversification of content forms has also brought stronger monetization capabilities. For example, Internet celebrities, e-commerce, advertising, live broadcast rewards, paid services, and performing arts, training and other monetization methods have all achieved considerable growth (iResearch,2018).

In 2020, affected by the COVID-19, the user scale of most network applications has increased significantly. Among them, the user scale of online education, online payment, online video, online shopping, instant messaging, online music, search engine and other applications has increased rapidly compared with the end of 2018, with an increase of more than 10%. The number of Internet celebrities is also increasing (iResearch,2018), and the fields involved in Internet celebrities are also expanding from non-mainstreaming and aesthetic phenomena in the web 1.0 period to in-depth creation and mining in vertical fields based on platform and content characteristics.

## **1.2 Internet celebrities show a professional development trend**

Internet celebrities are not enough to be called a profession before 2019. With the development of platforms such as live broadcast, e-commerce, and short video, 2019 is called the first year of China's "Internet celebrity economy". The Internet celebrity economy is a series of business models and monetization models that personalize Internet traffic resources. From the development of Internet celebrities to the cultivation of consuming Internet celebrities, and the realization of Internet celebrity traffic output, a series of Internet business models constitute the network we are discussing. Compared with the traditional real economy, the most important feature of the Internet celebrity economy is that it fully introduces the attention economy and the fan economy based on the real economy, and deeply integrates the real economy, the attention economy, and the fan economy, and finally accelerate business realization through Internet finance (Kaiu Rui, 2019).

The advancement of information technology has given power to the Internet celebrity economy. From 2015 to 2018, the popularity of the mobile Internet ushered in the explosive growth of the Internet celebrity economy, contributed to the growth of MCN (Multi-Channel Network) institutions, and promoted the industrial development of Internet celebrities. Driven by the Internet celebrity economy, the concept of Internet celebrity has changed from an Internet celebrity with the meaning of opinion leaders to a professional product under the platform and capital packaging, and MCN platform-based assembly line production is carried out. MCN is an important promoter of the Internet celebrity economy, a commercial organization based on content production and traffic exposure (Kaiu Rui, 2019). MCN supports internet celebrities in production, interactive promotion, cooperative management, capital and other aspects, packaging, and production of individuals with the potential of internet celebrities to ensure that internet celebrities continue to output content, and finally achieve stable commercial realization. The attributes of Internet celebrities

show professionalism, personification, virtualization, and other characteristics, and they are developing in a multi-platform direction.

## **2. Research questions**

China's Internet celebrity economy is booming, and the Internet celebrity industry is at a dividend stage. The core of development lies in the cultivation of "Internet celebrities". At present, whether it is the path to fame of an individual becoming an influencer or the cultivation of influencers carried out by the MCN organization, there is essentially a certain logic to follow. Under this logic, many influencers have been cultivated and occupy the middle and tail of the influencer industry.

However, it is undeniable that this kind of cultivation method has also led to a vicious circle in the industry: on the one hand, the Internet celebrities that have been discovered lack room for growth, and on the other hand, there is a constant influx of newcomers, but in fact, they are well-known and have a certain right to speak. The number of people is less than 1,000, and the institutionalized production process has finally cultivated many "unknown internet celebrities" who have no chance of being seen. This is the sorrow of the professionalization of Internet celebrities, and it is also the core dilemma of the MCN and many mid-tier and tail celebrities. Therefore, the research questions of this study report are as follows:

How to create a personal IP?

How to improve the career development of the tail Internet celebrities in China?

## **3. Research objectives**

The objectives of this research are:

3.1 To provide reference for individuals to create personal IP by using theory u.

3.2 To propose suggestions for improving the survival and career development of China's tail celebrities by using theory u.

## **4. The scope of the study**

### **4.1 Scope of Content**

The scope of this study is to apply theory U to create personal IP and creation models of China's Internet celebrities.

### **4.2 Study Area**

The scope of the study covers Internet celebrities on Chinese online platforms, such as Weibo, Bilibili, Douyin, and Xiaohongshu.

### **4.3 Population**

Chinese Internet celebrities who have fans between 1 and 100,000.

### **4.4 Time of Study**

The period of this study is starting from September 2020 to April 2021.

## **5. Terminology definitions**

### **5.1 Internet celebrities**

Internet celebrities, Influencers, or Wang Hong (Chinese) refer to people who have become popular by netizens because of an event, behavior, or online life, or those who have long-term continuous output of professional knowledge and become popular.

### **5.2 KOL (Key Opinion Leader)**

The key opinion leaders mentioned in this report are defined as people who have more and more accurate product information, are accepted or trusted by related groups, and have a greater influence on the buying behavior of the group. KOLs are usually authoritative persons in a certain industry or field.

### **5.3 IP (Intellectual Property)**

IP is the abbreviation of "Intellectual Property", it's derived from Latin and its origins can be traced back to the middle of the 17th century. It was first proposed by the French scholar Carpzov and gradually appeared in legal documents and institutional names.

#### 5.4 Internet celebrity economy

Internet celebrity economy or Influencers, wanghong economy refers to relying on the Internet, especially mobile Internet communication and its social platform promotion, through a large amount of social attention, forming a huge fan and targeted marketing market, and various consumer markets derived from the Internet celebrity IP, and finally forming a new economic model of a complete internet celebrity industry chain.

#### 5.5 IP economic

The IP economic model is based on highly popular intellectual property works, creating a series of derivatives such as literature, games, animation, movies, TV shows, and TV dramas to make money.

### **6. Benefits expected from the research**

The result of the study will help personal IP creator:

- 6.1 To know use theory U effectively and efficiently for creating personal IP.
- 6.2 To help China's tail celebrities improve their personal IP career development.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

To study personal IP case in China's influencer marketing, the researcher investigates the relevant definitions, theories, concepts, related research as follows:

#### **1. Theoretical and concept**

##### **1.1 IP (Intellectual Property)**

IP is the abbreviation of "Intellectual Property", it's derived from Latin and its origins can be traced back to the middle of the 17th century. In the early 1970s, Chinese scholars translated IP into "intellectual property rights" and introduced this concept to China. Therefore, IP has been regarded as a kind of legal right from its origin to its first entry into China (Shen Xiao, 2016). Until today, IP refers to different subjects in different fields. In the cultural field, IP refers to Intellectual Property. The IP currently used by academia and industry is mainly based on the connotation derived from the latter. Although IP has a richer connotation, the understanding of its legal category still exists (Baidu Encyclopedia, 2014).

What is the difference between the current IP and the IP extended from intellectual property, cultural creativity, and novel script adaptation? Some Chinese researchers believe that a successfully developed IP can not only become a good product, but also a good cultural phenomenon. Now China has reached the stage of extending IP. The existing IP types mainly include the following four types:

The first type of IP is a story-based IP, which turns performances and novel scripts into star scripts. A novel script is essentially a good story. If you add your own imagination and creation, it can become a new product and something new (Xie Yingchun, 2019).



The second type of IP is product-based IP. Some products are loved, and many emotions and corresponding consumption are extended around these products. A typical example is "Harry Potter", which first creates a cultural product symbol and then develops it into a product-based IP.

The third type of IP is the founder's IP. In the era of personalized consumption, the products consumers want to buy are consistent with their personal values and personal tastes. Of course, the founders are the most representative of a company's product taste and values. Most founder IPs start with quotations, maybe a funny sentence, maybe a very profound sentence, and then slowly participate in forums, press conferences, and write autobiography. This is the model of founder IP development (Li Lin, 2016).

The fourth type is knowledge-based IP. Knowledge-based IP includes two points. First, this IP must have the ability to continuously produce original content in a certain field; second, it must have a certain influence (Wang Weibing, 2016). The main body of personal IP contains two parts: content and content producer. After a long period of accumulation of personal IP, high-quality original content that fans like in a certain field will be able to gain fans' attention. If an IP can be original, but there is no fan, then it is not an influential IP. At most, it affects itself and can only be counted as a person's IP, which has no commercial value.

Here, the researcher believes that whether a personal IP can be called an Internet celebrity should meet the following conditions:

1.1.1 Have a certain fan base and Internet traffic and have a certain right to speak.

1.1.2 Have a certain content output.

1.1.3 Possess certain means of realization

Therefore, the internet celebrities discussed in this article are not only KOL-based internet celebrities under the highly developed social media, but also a new professional and industrialized social role that promotes the development of each

other with the internet celebrity economy, and personal IP for monetization and value output within a certain social circle.

## **1.2 Internet celebrity creation mechanism**

Based on the Internet celebrity economy, the online celebrity economy-driven model emerged. This is a model in which technology-supported investors invest in celebrities or celebrity training companies, and then the celebrities attract users for consumption (Ao Peng, 2016). Driven by the Internet celebrity economy, the concept of Internet celebrity has also changed from an Internet celebrity with the meaning of opinion leaders to a professional product under the platform and capital packaging. Some famous top celebrities have developed personal IP, and some central Internet celebrities rely on platforms to carry out MCN platform-based assembly line production (Peng Zilong, 2019). Internet celebrities have been professionalized, symbolized, and commercialized, and a set of corresponding content models have gradually evolved. This model carries out nested production of Internet content and individuals with the potential of Internet celebrities, and this model is Internet celebrity creation mechanism.

To put it simply, Internet celebrity creation mechanism refers to a set of systematic operation mechanisms. The operator of the mechanism can be either an individual or a MCN organization. Under this mechanism, ordinary individuals can become Internet KOLs and realize traffic monetization. The Internet celebrity economy is the endogenous driving force of the Internet celebrity development mechanism. On the one hand, the large-scale development of the Internet celebrity economy has prompted the Internet celebrity industry to require a mature training system, which can adapt to personal traffic and can also be applied to institutions such as MCN; On the other hand, the industrial operation of the cultivation system requires the Internet celebrity economy as its backing support to realize the capital-driven mining and shaping of new content, which is the relationship between the downstream and upstream of the online celebrity industry (Social talent, 2019). The

interrelationship between the two is like the entertainment industry's talent selection and star-making methods. The only difference is that the popular demand of stars restricts their development direction, while the hierarchical and niche attributes of Internet celebrities make their content creation more multiple.

From this perspective, the operating principle of the Internet celebrity fame mechanism is the industrialized operation of the Internet celebrity economy by individuals and the online celebrity MCN organization, relying on content, using individuals as symbols, platforms as channels, and monetization as the goal.

### **1.3 Theory U**

Theory U is mainly derived from a research project on corporate leadership led by Otto Scharmer from 1994 to 2004. In this project, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews and intensive discussions with more than 150 CEOs of well-known companies (Otto Scharmer, 2013). Through these interviews, Scharmer gradually realized that for a long time, people's understanding and research of complex and organic social subjects has a "blind spot" that is when observing social entities, most existing theories only pay attention to what the leader does, how to do it, but without involving the source of leadership.

Scharmer examines the world in a new perspective and explores a revolutionary way of leadership. It advocates people to explore the future instead of wandering in the past. In this era, we live in, social development has gradually become complicated, and various horizontal and vertical leapfrogs have presented problems beyond our control. Therefore, many experiences have lost the value of reference. We must follow the process of Theory U, perceive the future trend that is being generated, and move forward with it.

### **1.3.1 Prerequisites for Theory U**

#### 1.3.1.1 Open the mind, open the heart, open the will

The first step in creating a personal IP is to open the mind. The opening of the mind is to consciously let go of judgment, which will allow us to see the problem with a new perspective. Opening the mind refers to opening one's own sensory organs. The open mind of IP content creators refers to the ability to give full play to empathy, the ability to adapt to different situations, and the ability to put yourself in consideration for others. Finally, opening the will mean accepting yourself completely, letting go of fear, seeing the facts, and gaining the ability to continuously improve yourself.

#### 1.3.1.2 The most important leadership tool is yourself

In the process of personal IP creation, individuals are constantly changing. People have two "selves". The first "self" is an individual or group formed by past experiences, and the other "self" is an individual or group that can become when moving toward the future. When these two "selves" communicate, they will experience the nature of the natural flow and realize that the most important leadership tool is selves, and the future has unlimited possibilities.

#### 1.3.1.3 Dare to face interference from the outside world

In the process of personal IP creation, the first one is the voice of judgment. It blocked the door to open thinking. In the process of creating IP, we must treat the voice of judgment correctly, otherwise we will not be able to touch the real creativity.

The second is the voice of sarcasm. It blocked the door to open the heart. It comes from outside criticism, indifference, suspicion, and other acts of alienating emotions. In the process of creating a personal IP, it is necessary to open the heart, speak positively with ridicule, and gain power from the ridicule.

The third is the sound of fear. It blocked the door to open the will, trying to prevent us from letting go of what we already have and our identity.

The "voice of fear" can be expressed as fear of losing financial security, fear of being excluded, and fear of being laughed at. The term "net celebrity" used to be a derogatory term in China and was not loved by society and people. However, a new world can only begin to form when the fear of the unknown is overcome (Qiu Zhaoliang, 2016).

### 1.3.2 Theory U is a theory of active field

Theory U is a comprehensive whole, not a linear process, which is the essence of the theory. Observing the deeds of Bruce Lee, boxing champion Ali or some celebrities, they will find that their actions are not linear trajectories, on the contrary, they dance with the situation they are facing, constantly observe and perceive a certain connection, allow internal perception or intuition to emerge, and then act in an instant. Creating a personal IP by using Theory U means coexisting with the rapidly changing online world, constantly observing, or perceiving the emotions of fans, and then reacting quickly (Jiang Qinglin, 2016).

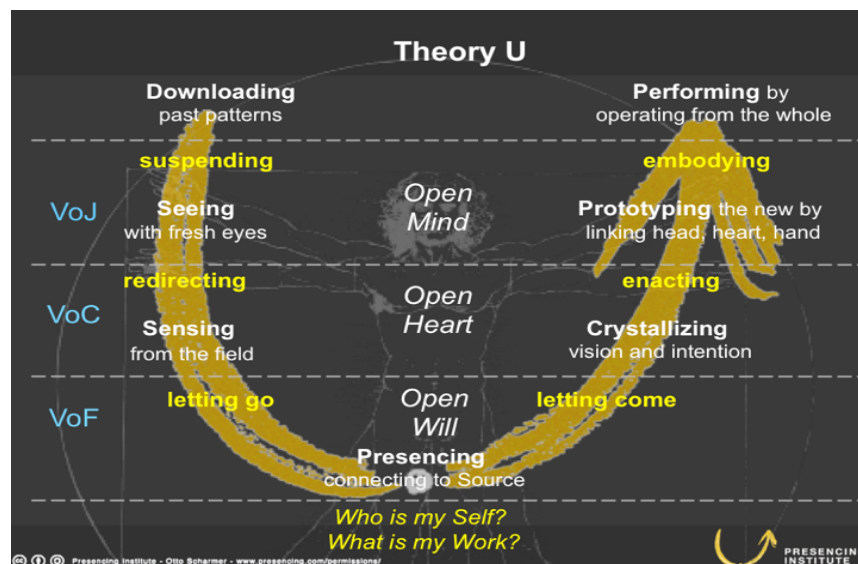


Figure 1 Theory U

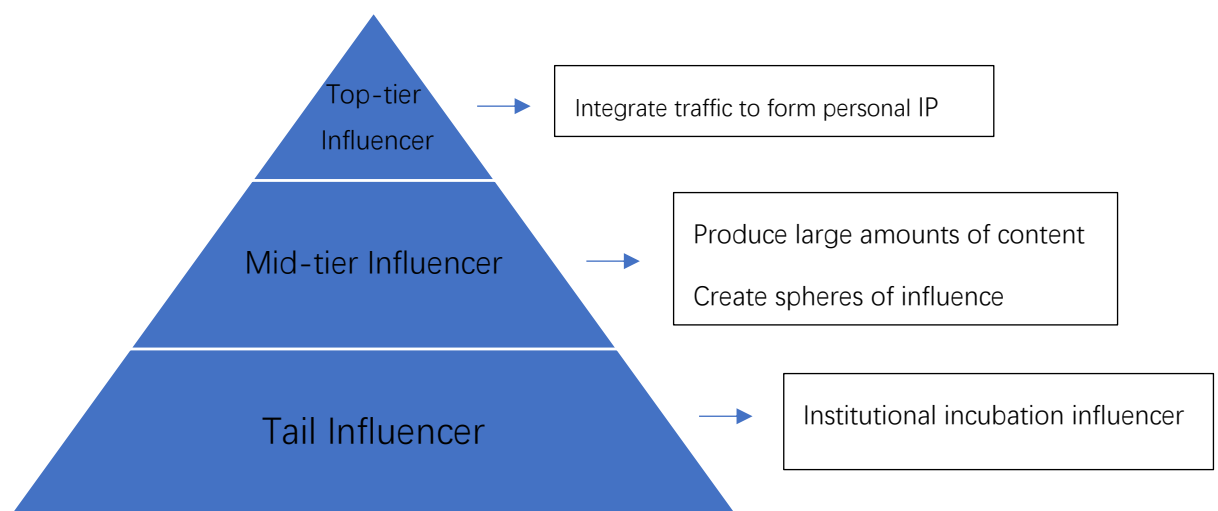
(Source: [www.presencing.com](http://www.presencing.com))

## 2. Business background

### 2.1 China's Internet celebrity industry shown a pyramid

At present, the industry has formed a network celebrity industry level where the top-tier influencers dominate resources, the mid-tier influencers create content, and the long-tail influencers continue to output. Top-tier internet celebrities such as Li Jiaqi, Li Ziqi and others occupy the head resources for stable content output and commercialization (Liu Min, 2019).

The mid-tier influencers are mostly circle influencers, and they often have certain content productivity and innovation; the long-tail influencers have two major categories, one is the commercial KOL of the contracting agency or the influencer brokerage company, and the other is for Interest-oriented individual amateurs have a certain influence in a small circle and have a certain room for improvement (Social talent, 2019).



**Figure 2** Internet celebrity triangle level

(Source: [www.analysys.com](http://www.analysys.com))

## **2.2 Multi-platform dissemination with distinctive characteristics of content**

At present, the main gathering platforms for Internet celebrities, KOLs and personal IPs are Weibo, Douyin, Kuaishou, Xiaohongshu, Bilibili, and Taobao. The content of different platforms has distinct characteristics, but they interact with each other. Weibo has become a core platform for KOL to stabilize fans and build traffic data with strong sociality and high interaction, with various content forms. Kuaishou and Douyin are mainly short videos, and the decentralized algorithm recommendation mechanism can realize the content out of circles quickly (Tik Tok 2019 Annual Report, 2019). The Bilibili is centered on long videos and is the core community of high-quality video creators and circle-level influencers. Xiaohongshu is mainly female consumers and is linked to Taobao to realize e-commerce monetization (Social talent, 2019).

## **2.3 Perceptual consumption becomes mainstream**

In the “New Media Marketing Blue Book” released in 2018, the “SICAS” model, a new marketing model in the social media era, was proposed. This model pointed out that social media consumption is mainly divided into five parts. The first is sense, especially the symbolized consumption concept created by social media. It is generally realized by the top-tier of the Internet celebrity (Theodore Adorno, 2006); The second is interest that is consumers' interest in the product itself after perceiving consumption scenarios and ideas; The next step is communication which is realized by the mid-tier KOL; the consumption action is carried out based on communication; Finally, individual consumers share the product. The process of sharing is not only the process of consumers becoming KOC, but also the process of consumers themselves realizing the influence of individual tails (New Media Marketing Blue Book, 2018).

## 2.4 Disadvantages of the model Internet celebrity

In the industry report "The Brilliance and Floating of Internet Celebrity: Communication, Economy and Big Data" released by Qingbo Big Data (Qingbo Big Data, 2019), the investigator made an in-depth analysis of the current plight of the Internet Celebrity economy and pointed out the eight pain points of the current Internet Celebrity economy:

The first is the limitations of monetization channels and industry sectors, the second is the game between commercial operation and the maintenance of personal style, the third is the risk of content creation stability and the cost of scale, and the fourth is the reproducibility and homogenization of content models (Qingbo Big Data, 2019). The fifth is the distorted values and vulgar culture driven by the Internet celebrity economy, the sixth is the limitation of the audience and consumption conversion rate, the seventh is the dilemma of communication platforms and algorithms, and the eighth is the development of industrialization and management risks.

At the same time, reporter Ding Xiaobing divided the current Internet celebrity industry into two categories in his in-depth report "Internet celebrity's 24 Hours" (Ding Xiaobing, 2019): one is self-media and content-based celebrities under the banner of their own fame, and the other is professional internet celebrities based on internet celebrity institutions. Researchers have portrayed several common dilemmas in the current Internet celebrity industry in the form of group portraits: difficulties in maintaining traffic, data fraud, product quality issues, etc. Although Internet celebrities and KOLs have become synonymous with Internet content, the problems behind the development of modularization and institutionalization have become increasingly prominent.



## **2.5 Characteristics of China's Internet celebrity economy**

### **2.5.1 The industrial chain divided into three layers**

At present, the industrial chain of the Internet celebrity economy is gradually improving, and an integrated Internet celebrity economic operation mode has been formed in which all links in the upper, middle, and lower reaches are coordinated in an orderly manner.

The upstream of the Internet celebrity economic industry chain is the content production link. With the gradual development of the Internet celebrity economy, its content has become more professional and systematic (Zhang Pengyue, 2017). The main body of content producers has changed from user-produced content to professional content production. Such professional institutions are in China Called MCN. The concept of MCN originally came from the field of foreign Internet video. After entering China, it was mainly used in the video field in the initial stage. In a broad sense, MCN refers to a content creation organization capable of serving and managing accounts of a certain scale. The content format is not limited to video, but also includes live broadcast, graphics, and other forms (Crawley Data, 2019). After a content creation agency becomes an MCN, it can obtain exclusive resources and policy preferences for the platform, and through continuous operations, it will continuously increase the scale and activity of its account matrix, expand its own brand influence, and enhance its commercial value. The MCN model not only provides traffic and exposure opportunities for many Internet celebrities, but also brings advertisers a more efficient and flexible delivery method, which effectively promotes the development of the overall industry of the Internet celebrity economy (AiMedia Data, 2018).

The midstream is a dissemination channel. The platform, as the carrier of Internet celebrity content, is responsible for disseminating and pushing content. Excellent platform parties can quickly push online celebrity content and accurately match potential users, which requires extensive investigation and data

collection by the platform party. The platform makes more accurate judgments on users through a large amount of data and pushes appropriate content to users to ensure that users get the best experience, thereby increasing user stickiness and achieving the goal of rapid growth in user scale (AiMedia Data, 2018).

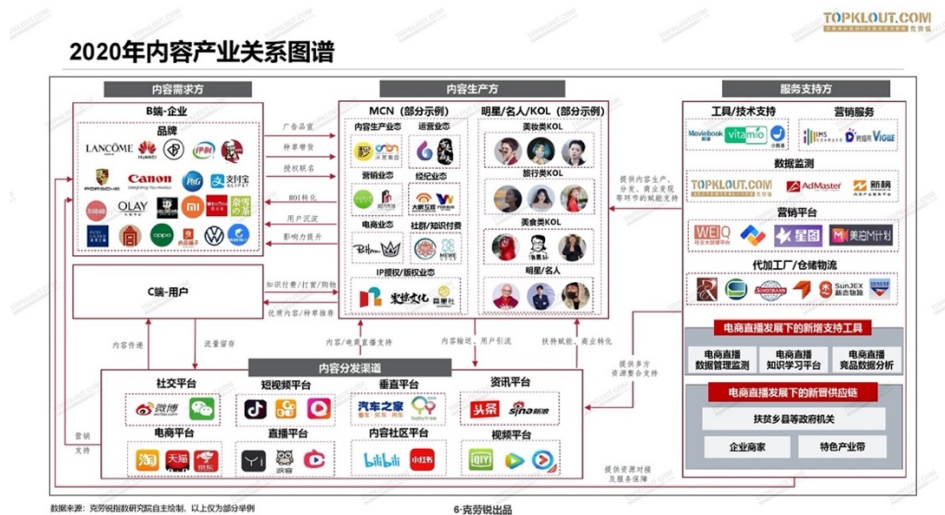
The downstream of the industry chain is the monetization channel, and there are various forms of traffic monetization, but in general, they are mainly concentrated in four areas: cooperation with brands to collect advertising fees, e-commerce introduction, fan rewards, and participation in offline activities to obtain notification fees. The smooth realization of downstream can feed back upstream and promote the ecological operation of the entire online celebrity industry chain (AiMedia Data, 2018).

### **2.5.2 The industry forms a systematic closed loop**

The internet celebrity industry chain is divided into three major structures: upstream social platforms are the main traffic source of internet celebrities, midstream internet celebrity brokerage companies is the main suppliers of internet celebrities, and the downstream of the internet celebrity economy mainly relies on e-commerce, advertising fees, fans rewards, offline activities, etc.

The industrial chain of the Internet celebrity economy is still gradually extending, including the economic service chain, the entire derivative chain, the platform service chain, and the capital integration chain. Among them, Internet celebrities are the core of this economic industry chain. According to the internet celebrity industry flowchart produced by Crowley, in 2020, the internet celebrity industry has formed a systematic closed-loop structure. The entire industry is composed of four pillars (Topklout.com, 2019). One is to provide the core internet celebrity group, and two is MCN organization that provide content and commercial monetization to the internet celebrity. The third is platform channel for content

distribution for Internet celebrities, and the fourth is the supply chain that provides practical support for monetization.



**Figure 3** 2020 Internet celebrity industry structure in Chinese

(Source: [www.Topklout.com](http://www.Topklout.com))

### 3. Related research

#### 3.1 The existing research perspectives of the popularity of Internet celebrities

Regarding the popularity of Internet celebrities, the current industry discussion is mainly based on three core perspectives:

The first is from the micro perspective, which focuses on analyzing the causes of online popularity from the perspectives of the personal characteristics, psychological motivations, and behaviors of the Internet celebrities. Ma Chuan, Li Lin and others believe that celebrities consume through physical symbols, topic hype, and active fan interaction to seek attention and popularity, the ability, talent, appearance and temperament, story background, speculative mentality of Internet celebrities are important individual factors that affect the popularity of the Internet (Ma Chuan, Li Lin, 2016). At the same time, Jin Ying and Ao Peng believe that the online audience's

curiosity psychology (Jin Ying,2014), social needs, aesthetic preferences, etc. are important reasons that promote the popularity of Internet celebrities (Ao Peng, 2016).

The second is a meso-level perspective. Zhang Xiaojie emphasizes the influence of factors such as Internet technology, business organizations, and fan communities, and believes that the continuous iterative upgrade of network technology is an important technical prerequisite for the continued popularity of the Internet celebrity phenomenon (Zhang Xiaojie, 2019). Ao Peng, Shen Xiao Others believe that Internet promoters, Internet celebrity companies, and venture capital are the driving forces for the professionalization and marketization of Internet celebrities, which have led to a significant increase in the value and influence of Internet celebrities (Ao Peng, Shen Xiao, 2016); Yang Jianghua and Yan Pei believe that Internet celebrities pass online online Under the communication and interaction and team management to establish and operate exclusive fan community, in order to stably increase popularity (Yang Jianghua, Yan Pei, 2015).

The third is a macro perspective, which mainly explains the phenomenon of Internet popularity from aspects such as the transformation of social structure, the advent of a consumer society, and Internet popular culture. Ao Peng, Wang Weibing and others believe that the real problems of the polarization between the rich and the poor and the pressure of intergenerational mobility in the process of social transformation , is an important background factor for grassroots netizens to become popular on the Internet; and the improvement of Chinese residents' consumption ability and the diversification of demand structure are the realistic basis for the booming Internet celebrity economy; the culture of online fans and various subcultures have been developed by grassroots internet celebrities (Ao Peng, Wang Weibing, 2016). Active construction has become a typical way for netizens to express their social emotions and provide the necessary public psychological foundation for the phenomenon of Internet popularity (Jing Ying, 2014).

### **3.2 Research on the popularity of Internet celebrities from the perspective of consumerism**

Most of the research on Internet celebrities is carried out from the perspective of consumerism. The symbolic value theory of commodities proposed by Baudrillard shows that with the continuous improvement of economic living standards, symbols with special significance are not pure commodities (Baudrillard, 2014). Use value is the original meaning and connotation of people's consumption. Therefore, most researchers regard Internet celebrities as a group of people like celebrities, as a symbol that highlights the fashion and personality of these groups.

Consumers' consumption of related products is more ostentatious or following the trend. Zhang Zijuan's research directly pointed out that Internet celebrity is an abstract commodity symbol temporarily used for mass entertainment consumption, with the goal of profit-seeking (Zhang Zijuan, 2013). The essence of ordinary people's pursuit of "net celebrities" lies in their consumption of desires (Jiang Jianguo,2010). The purpose of their consumption is not to satisfy actual needs, but to satisfy the created and stimulated desires, and desire and satisfaction both create consumption and Internet celebrities (Xie Yingchun,2009).

## **4. Conceptual framework**

This study report combines existing domestic and foreign research reports, using theory u to analyze how to create personal IP. The case analysis allowed the researcher to understand the current mainstream three types of "Internet celebrity development mechanisms" in China and the industry environment. Though online interviews with relevant parties in the Chinese celebrity industry, allowing the researcher find out the career development problems of China's tail celebrities. After discussion it, the researcher put forward suggestions for improving the career development of the tail net celebrities by using theory u. The full text is divided into 5 parts, the following is a brief description:

The introduction of the first chapter mainly introduces the research background of this study report, research questions, explains the purpose and significance of the research.

The second chapter literature review mainly introduces the business background of China's internet celebrity industry, definitions of related terms and related research on internet celebrity economy at China and abroad.

The third chapter research methodology uses theory U, case analysis and online interview. Apply theory U to study personal IP in 5 steps. To understand the construction mechanism of China's Internet celebrity industry, the researcher conducted a case analysis of the Internet celebrity industry in the top, middle, tail part. The researcher interviewed 15 interview subjects for understand the current plight of anonymous tail celebrities.

The fourth chapter results and discussion. Through the study of theory u, the researcher proposes 5 steps for personal IP creation by using theory u. Through case analysis, researchers can summarize the three mainstream Internet celebrity creation models in the China market. Based on the classification and summary of the content of online interviews, the researchers discussed and found that the current dilemmas faced by China's tail celebrities can be divided into four categories.

The fifth chapter conclusion and suggestions, summarizes the research of this article, and propose relevant suggestions on the dilemma faced by China's tail celebrities.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter is consistent with the research method as follows:

#### 1. Theory U

Apply theory U to study personal IP in 5 steps as follows:

- 1.1 Co-initiating
- 1.2 Co-sensing
- 1.3 Presencing
- 1.4 Co-creating
- 1.5 Co-evolving

#### 2. How to summarize the three major mainstreams creation models of China Internet celebrity industry

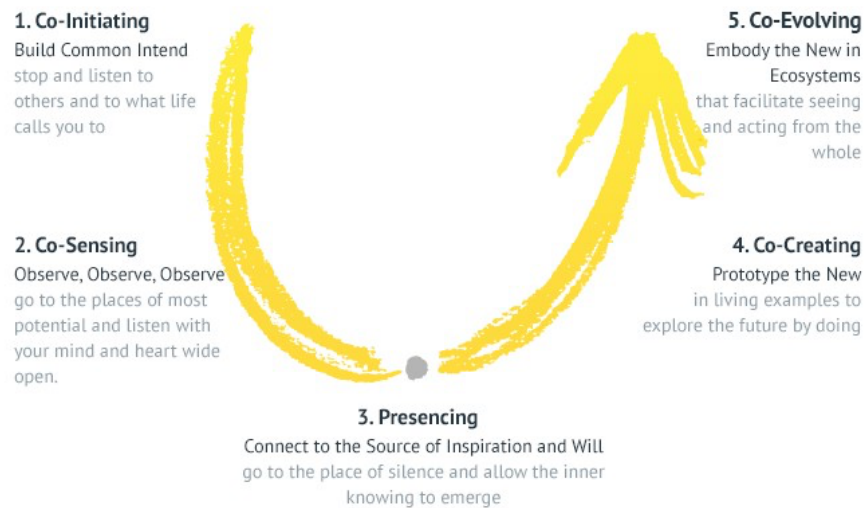
To summarize the three major mainstreams creation models of China Internet celebrity industry, the researcher analysis the three major mainstreams creation models of China internet celebrity industry by using case analysis.

- 3.1 Top-tier internet celebrity
- 3.2 Mid-tier internet celebrities
- 3.3 Long-tailed Internet celebrities

#### 3. How to know the current plight of tail Internet celebrities

To understand the current dilemma facing China's tail celebrities, the researchers interviewed 15 people related to the industry. The researcher interviewed 5 content creators (Internet celebrities), 5 industry workers, and 5 related people who browse the content of internet celebrities daily. According to the "creator", "practitioner" and "relevant", the researcher classified 15 interview subjects and summarized the current plight of Internet celebrities.

## 1. Theory U



**Figure 4** Five stages of Theory U

(Source: [www.presencing.com](http://www.presencing.com) )

### 1.1 Co-initiating

At this stage, people are required to stop downloading to view the world in their own way of thinking and stop repeating the four old patterns of the past:

1.1.1 Not realizing what you are seeing means that perception and thinking are separated.

1.1.2 Did not say what you think means that the thinking and conversation are separated.

1.1.3 Did not do what you said means that the conversation and the action are separated

1.1.4 Not seeing what you are doing means that perception and action are separated.

The first step of theory U is to learn the skills to stop downloading. This applies to individuals, groups, organizations and even society. Stopping the download



is a prerequisite for entering the U process. Only by terminating the download can we wake up to see the reality and enter the next observation stage of the U process.

## **1.2 Co-sensing**

The common perception stage requires observation, observation, and observation. Observation means that we must temporarily suspend the judgment and observe the world with a new perspective. When it becomes a habit to stop downloading, we enter the observation phase, our intuition becomes more acute, and we begin to realize the reality we are facing. Once you start to act in this cognitive space, you start to perceive from the boundary between the observer and the object of observation on the periphery of the organization. To help us move from downloading to objective observation, we need to consider the following three principles:

### **1.2.1 Clarify issues and intentions**

Issues exist in different areas of human activities in different forms. In the social field, a problem refers to a certain type of dilemma. If this dilemma is resolved, social benefits can be produced, such as making society more harmonious, improving efficiency, or eliminating or reducing social conflicts. In the business world, the problem refers to the difference between the current situation and the desired situation. Intention is the idea of intending to realize a certain desire.

Clarify issues and intentions of co-sensing means even if there is a clear research topic or problem statement, it does not mean that you can ignore the new situations that are constantly generated in the process.

### **1.2.2 Incorporate into relevant situations**

In the past 20 years or so, many companies and organizations have become smarter and have learned to integrate into the context of customers, partners, and suppliers. From talking about customers at the beginning to later changing to communicating with customers, until now begin to understand customer experience, the purpose is to understand the undeveloped capabilities and unmet customer needs. In real life, the more complex the situation, the more important self-perception is. As

the problem evolves, we must keep in touch with the problem from time to time. If there is no direct connection with the situation of the problem, we cannot learn to observe.

### 1.2.3 Suspend the judgement temporarily, stay curious

Human beings have the habit of conditioned reflex. When you are observing, you are interpreting continuously in your heart. These interpretations are based on our past thoughts, experience, and inherent patterns. Currently, observations are often invalid. It is difficult to observe new things. So, when you are observing, you should temporarily suspend the judgment. The best state is to be like a baby, as if you don't know anything and observe completely blankly. Only then can you receive new external environments, new things, even unfamiliar things, so the most difficult thing to observe is to temporarily suspend judgment.

Only by suspending the judgement can people open their hearts and welcome curiosity. Curiosity means noticing a new world that goes beyond the traditional download model. Therefore, curiosity is the seed that roots the U process. Without the ability to be curious and inquiring, people are likely to fall into the confinement of the mental model and cannot escape.

## 1.3 Presencing

When the U process moves from observation to perception, cognition is generated across the entire field. This will form a closed feedback loop that connects people's experience of reality (what the system does to us) and their sense of participation in the overall experience. When we really perceive, the place where our cognition is generated moves from the inside of the individual's mind (the field of observation) to the outside of the observer's own organization which is the cognition begins to come from the entire field. When this transition occurs, the boundary between the observer and the object of observation disappears, the observer begins to view the system from a completely different perspective. It begins to see itself as part

of the observed system. The system is no longer a part of something "external" (external problems caused by others) but also something "internal" (internal problems caused by us). There are also three guiding principles for this process:

1.3.1 We cannot rely on the habit of downloading abstract thoughts, we must integrate ourselves into specific parts to activate our own perception.

1.3.2 We need to divert our attention and grasp the reality by being aware of the constantly forming field inside.

1.3.3 While deepening this dynamic, mobilize a different cognitive ability which is the perception that emerges from the wisdom of the mind. We not only grasp reality from the perspective of individual observers, but also grasp reality from the perspective of life and its source. In fact, we are observing with our heart.

#### **1.4 Co-creating**

After establishing a connection with the presencing and clarifying the awareness of the future that is being generated, the next stage of the U process is to explore the future through action, that is prototyping.

In the process of building prototypes, theory U is very similar to zero-to-one, lean entrepreneurship theory, and design thinking methods. We need to build prototypes quickly. Don't be perfect for the prototype. It is the most primitive and simple prototype. Use it quickly, communicate with stakeholders related to the prototype, communicate with those around you, listen to the real feedback from the surrounding stakeholders. And then go to perfect the prototype, continue to iterate. This is the proposition from zero to one, rapid iteration, rapid improvement, early mistakes, and early success. At this time, facing the errors found, don't treat it as a problem, but as a good thing.

To build a prototype, you need to create a prototype team, build a platform for prototype experimentation, build the surrounding environment, create a closed-loop mechanism of rapid construction, testing, feedback, and iteration, including data

collection, methods, data gap analysis and learning, establishing hypotheses, rebuilding and re-launching a new version to test from zero to one mention. The theory U is consistent with the process from zero to one, while the theory U speaks from a deep level of logic; from zero to one and lean entrepreneurship it is more a practical method.

### **1.5 Co-evolving**

Co-evolving means that our behavior originates in a grand field, which is generated from the deep connection between us and others (the surrounding places).

When we move from the field of prototype to the field of performing, the focus of attention has also shifted from shaping microsystems to shaping and evolving large institutional ecology.

Once the organic prototype is born and passed the assessment, it is necessary to consider how to take it to the next level of the journey, that is how to integrate the infrastructure of the rest of the organization so that the prototype can continue to evolve by passing a large ecosystem rather than a single institution's ecosystem. For small teams or individuals, this infrastructure may be a series of supporting spaces, exercises, companions, processes, or rhythms that allow new things to form and continue to develop.

Due to the multiple structural characteristics of the organization, changes at this stage need to follow several principles: system integration, innovation and switching between the system and the self.

## **2. How to summarize the three major mainstreams creation models of China Internet celebrity industry**

Some models are formed in previous experience, and some are formed immediately when facing phenomena. Whether the model is consistent with the essence of the phenomenon, it must be gradually tested and modified in the process of

cognition to gradually get a correct understanding. The model itself is uncertain, and the individual personality of the research object is also diverse. To understand the survival and career development of China's tail celebrities, the researcher analysis the three major mainstreams creation models of China internet celebrity industry by using case analysis.

## **2.1 Top-tier Internet celebrities**

According to data from the Crawley report in 2019, the top influencers accounted for 77% of the traffic in the influencer market. This not only means that the top influencers occupy a huge market share and commercial resources, but also means that the content of the top influencers has become a commercial activity centered on the "personal brand", and the top influencers rely on the commercial value of personal IP is realized in a variety of ways. On the one hand, the content of the head influencer is often unique and easy to imitate and has a certain national character and reproducibility. On the other hand, the popularity of the head influencer itself also provides a set of practical and mature IP monetization templates.

Therefore, the research on the re-copying mode of personal IPs must start with the copied IPs, that is the top-tier influencers themselves, and analyze their popular paths, advantages, dilemmas, transformation methods, and ways of being imitated to characterize this model more accurately. Therefore, the researchers selected two top influencers in the four major categories of current Internet celebrities, namely live broadcast, e-commerce, social networking, and content, to conduct case and text analysis to demonstrate the feasibility of re-copying personal IP.

### **2.1.1 Li Jiaqi IP “live broadcast + E-commerce”**

#### **2.1.1.1 Li Jiaqi's basic situation and popular path analysis**

Li Jiaqi, Taobao anchor, the top Internet celebrity anchor in China and king of lipstick. He took 4 years to become “the first brother of Taobao lipstick”. In 2019, Forbes added him to the “China’s Under 30 Elite List” boasting six

figures of his monthly income. He is the second in the income ranking of Taobao Experts, and currently the most influential Taobao head anchor. From his e-commerce live broadcast debut to the first person in China's e-commerce live broadcast: As of December 2020, Li Jiaqi has nearly 90 million fans on the entire network and has won the China Most Popular Internet Celebrity Award.

In 2020, Li Jiaqi completed the approach and transformation to capital, and became the co-founder of MCN agency Mei ONE, and realized the transition from top-flow Internet celebrities to super IP. Li Jiaqi has successfully used his influence as a weight and attached it to brand, this is also the core logic of the top internet celebrities—personal IP benefits.



**Figure 5** Li Jiaqi (king of lipstick in China)

(Source: <https://baike.baidu.com>)

#### 2.1.1.2 Personal characteristics and advantages

As a sales influencer, Li Jiaqi has his own set of marketing logic:

- 1) Cut into the vertical field to make the content more professional.
- 2) Explain the points of interest, which can better grasp the psychology of fans.

3) Personal image labelling to attract accurate fans.

4) Label the content form to cultivate viewing habits.

Li Jiaqi is also setting up a new set of e-commerce concepts, namely "life atmosphere" and "Costco mode." Living atmosphere refers to typical symbolic consumption, or the visualization of Baudrillard's consumer society. Consumers are not buying a product, but a lifestyle and a yearning for a better future. The Costco model is derived from the British Supermarket, which refers to the least choice, the lowest gross profit, to increase the value of customer transfer, and to return all the profits to the customers.

Li Jiaqi's personal charm, coupled with his unique insights into e-commerce, strictness to the brand and respect for consumers, are the keys to his becoming the first person in the field of e-commerce live broadcast.

#### 2.1.1.3 Analysis of dilemmas and imitators

2021 is the fourth year of Li Jiaqi's popularity. As an Internet celebrity, Li Jiaqi's bottleneck has not yet arrived. However, judging from the key words of Li Jiaqi's discussion on Weibo and WeChat public accounts, the dilemma has begun to emerge.

The media's excessive attention to Li Jiaqi's negative issues. The sharp increase in Li Jiaqi's Baidu Index and Media Index began in October 2019, with keywords such as "luxury", "fake", "excessive", and "bragger". The media's praise and people's attention have always been gathered from the perspective of negative news.

There are many imitators of Li Jiaqi, and countless e-commerce live broadcasts and short video bloggers want to copy Li Jiaqi's success. When inputting the keyword "Imitate Li Jiaqi" on Douyin, there were 20w+ related videos and 100w playbacks. Li Jiaqi himself said that e-commerce anchors are imitating him, but they did not become him. The imitators imitated Li Jiaqi's tone and style, but only stayed at the surface imitation, and failed to further grasp Li Jiaqi's

attitude and business thinking. It is easy to imitate what Li Jiaqi said, but it is very difficult to create an IP with commercial value like Li Jiaqi.

Li Jiaqi's advantage has never been only in his language and style, but in his extremely high brand conversion rate, from 0 to 1 to 100, which has never appeared in any other Internet celebrities.

## 2.1.2 Papi-style content creation

### 2.1.2.1 Basic situation and commercial value of Papi

Papi is the number one short video creator in China, chief content officer of Baidu, and founder of Papitube MCN. In July 2015, Papi started to form a "TCgirl" with her friend to upload the first video. At the end of 2015, Papi had already ranked second in the list of Chinese Internet celebrities. In March 2016, Papi received a total of 1200W of financing; in April, Papi sold the first pre-movie advert at 2200W, which was the highest price for a single video advert in human history; in July, Papi launched its live broadcast for the first time. The number of viewers exceeded 2000W and the number of likes received exceeded 100 million. The gifts she received during the entire live broadcast were equivalent to 900,000 RMB. At the same time, Papi's IP is also valued at more than 300 million. In the same year, Papitube, the MCN agency for Papi short video, helped contracted bloggers to promote, operate, and monetize their businesses. In 3 years, Papitube has signed nearly 100 bloggers, and the valuation of Papitube has exceeded 1 billion. Papi is known as the most commercialized internet celebrity and is the ambassador of more than 10 companies at present.





**Figure 6** Papi picture

(Source: [www.papitube.com](http://www.papitube.com))

#### 2.1.2.2 Papitube creates a new model of incubation

As of February 2020, there are a total of 150+ short video bloggers under Papitube, and the total number of fans on the entire network has exceeded 500 million. The content creator of Papitube who has occupied the first place on the Weibo MCN list for a long time, but it is not completely copy the style of Papi. Papitube has created a new set of "industrialization process" for incubating short video creators, which can be simply summarized as "discovery-targeted incubation-realization". Papitube implements a producer system. A producer must bring several bloggers to be fully responsible for their topic selection planning, output, personalization, and commercialization. Each blogger under its banner will have its own fixed platform and vertical category. For new bloggers, producers will not ask them to imitate, but to find out who they are. Imitation is always only temporary. This model is also recognized by other MCN organizations.

*"Imitation certainly exists, but imitation does not last long. A qualified MCN company will never let you imitate a certain internet celebrity. If you*

*want to become popular, your own style is very important" (a top MCN staff in Shenzhen, 2021)*

However, the idealized concept and process will still be weak in the face of a large influx of new creators. Even Papitube has become the number one MCN institution under questioning, it still has problem during the incubation process. The problem is not only the problem of the organization, but also the problem of the creators themselves. It is one of the core problems of the current Internet celebrity industry: many creators and few opportunities.

*"Papi and Li Jiaqi are both at the top of the industry. It is difficult for the Papitube organization to get a second Papi. I signed Papitube before and it has developed very well, but there are many limitations. It may be like her when I signed in. After that, the organization may bring less growth. After all, I am not the top influencer in the organization, especially now that content creators are prone to bottlenecks, and it is difficult to break through themselves." (A creator of Papitube, 2020)*

## **2.2 Mid-tier Internet celebrities**

Top influencers occupy the top traffic of all major platforms, and they have a very high number of fans on all platforms. Mid-tier influencers are a typical platform-oriented, relying on a specific platform's algorithm mechanism, promotion and monetization model, and bonus mechanism. It can be said that the incubator of mid-tier influencers is the platform. The platform uses its own incentive mechanism and model to help and promote the content production of such creators. There are MCN companies behind some creators, but the characteristics of platform dependence are still very significant.

Therefore, the researcher will use the four core content platforms of Weibo, Xiaohongshu, Douyin, and Bilibili as the analysis objects to analyze platform characteristics, content characteristics, monetization models, incentive mechanisms, etc., to analyze mid-tier influencers development model.

## 2.2.1 Weibo: Comprehensive Platform

### 2.2.1.1 Weibo platform features

Weibo, which combines media, social and search functionality, has a unique advantage in the field of influencers. Weibo's strong interactivity, circle fluidity, and sharing characteristics help content and bloggers to get out of the circle. Therefore, Weibo is relatively more popular at the mid-tier and above. Live broadcasts and small videos have become an important part of Weibo products and are the main tools for bloggers to interact with fans. In addition, Weibo stories like "Instagram Stories" also allow you to upload short visual content. This is a very open social network, so it is the most effective way for bloggers to build reputation. Most content bloggers have achieved content out of the circle on the Weibo platform, which in turn affects the attention of the starting platform and achieves a breakthrough from the mid-tier to the top-tier of the creator on the original platform.

### 2.2.1.2 Weibo KOLs monetization model

#### 1) Weibo small shops, e-commerce monetization

In 2018, the income of Weibo content creators reached 28.6 billion, of which e-commerce realized 25.4 billion, accounting for 88.8%. In March 2020, Weibo launched the "Weibo Xiaodian", which is essentially to deeply integrate Weibo's social interaction with E-commerce. From a lot of data, Weibo's main revenue in recent years has come from e-commerce. Alibaba's shareholding in Weibo has created a front-end shopping scene and entrance, while the small store has created a more convenient and faster closed-loop shopping ecology (Celebrities Microblogs, 2018). In the past, KOLs joined the Taobao link and converted by itself. Now you can open a store, which simplifies the conversion way and improve the conversion rate.

From this, it can be inferred that the core monetization method of Weibo will still be E-commerce in the future.

## 2) Content-enabled advertising, layout sinking market

Weibo has established a strong media attribute, and the activeness of celebrities and top KOLs gives it quality content. But the flip side of the coin is that it also lost the sinking market (third tier and below small Chinese cities and rural areas, comprising a total of about 930 million people). In 2019, Weibo launched its own app "Oasis", which is intended to layout sinking market. High-quality communities need more UGC (User Generated Content) content, and this is also a new opportunity for Weibo internet celebrities.



**Figure 7** Weibo

(Source: [www.weibo.com](http://www.weibo.com))

## 2.2.2 Xiaohongshu: The Key Chinese social media for KOC Influencer in China

### 2.2.2.1 Xiaohongshu platform features

Xiaohongshu literally means “Little Red Book”, it is a shopping application that focuses on providing users with real product reviews, experiences, and high-quality travel tips. Xiaohongshu's benign monetization model

of "Ecommendation + Shopping" has become a marketing method sought after by brands and occupies an important position in all major comprehensive social platforms. The platform has a strong community. Fan users focus on the collection of guides and daily product recommendations. Xiaohongshu's KOC (Key Opinion Consumer) has a large distribution, and KOLs with 10,000-100,000 fans account for 71%. Among them, KOLs account for the highest proportion of beauty and skin care and fashion. The two types of KOLs account for the total number of KOLs more than half, the vertical category of beauty cosmetics is highly competitive, and 80% of users are women, who like skin care and beauty content.

At present, Xiaohongshu is a decentralized platform that uses the number of fans to divide bloggers. In principle, the larger the number of fans in the five-figure waist blogger, the healthier the content ecology of the platform. This is also the principle that Xiaohongshu has always allocated traffic. The tilt of traffic is not based solely on the number of fans, but on the quality of the content itself. The algorithmic nature and content characteristics of Xiaohongshu determine that Xiaohongshu must be a suitable channel for the development and realization of Internet celebrities.

*"Xiaohongshu's decentralized traffic distribution mechanism, the quality of the content determines whether users will buy it. The platform will first put the notes in the traffic pool, and then decide whether to push to a larger traffic pool based on user interaction. As a result, the agglomeration effect of the top influencers on the Xiaohongshu platform is not obvious, and the tail influencers are easy to get ahead."(A staff in Shenzhen MCN agency,2021)*

*"Xiaohongshu is a very capable platform with high content quality and a clearer consumer positioning. Compared with Weibo, Xiaohongshu are relatively scarce and easier to do. It is more suitable for preliminary work. We*

*sometimes feel that we are stronger but restricted by the platform, then we went to Weibo and found that there was no way to stir up splashes, so we had to return to Xiaohongshu."*(Maby, 2020)

#### 2.2.2.2 Xiaohongshu operation mode

Xiaohongshu's high participation and rapid sharing rate determine that it is a very suitable platform for starting and growing. The starting point of the online celebrity of Xiaohongshu is "sharing". Relying on Xiaohongshu's decentralized algorithm mechanism and high social interaction rate, one sharing will turn into multiple sharing, and multiple sharing will turn into long-term regular sharing. In this process, the KOC of a little red book has been formed. When the number of fans and likes accumulates to a certain amount, there will be promotion cooperation, KOC is transformed into KOL, and a preliminary achievement of net celebrity raising is completed.

Xiaohongshu was originally developed as UGC (User Original Content), and now this part of the content still accounts for a considerable proportion, with 70% of the exposure. The growth is also very fast. In the past year, lifestyle UGC content such as digital, home, wedding, etc. has increased by more than 10 times.

In addition to UGC, Xiaohongshu has established PGC (Professionally Generated Content) and PUGC (Professional User Generated Content). On the one hand, it produces professional content and operates hot topics through vertical accounts established by the platform; on the other hand, it attracts KOLs, third-party content parties such as MCN settle in and produce professional content.

Xiaohongshu is more recognized and trusted by the brand, the PGC and PUGC produced by KOL and MCN have become a more profitable part and a greater commercialization space. The main ways to monetize

content are advertising and e-commerce. In the market, this part of resources is in the hands of most of the top-tier and mid-tier KOLs.

*"In the beginning, I liked taking pictures and sharing. The time for doing this business is relatively free, and it will not be difficult, so I will slowly produce it. If there is a sign company affiliated, the advertisement will charge high taxes, but it is all about the business. The content is created according to the hot spots and the parts that I can share. In fact, the main purpose of signing the company is to avoid tax, so there is almost no need to give the company a commission. My income is good, and I can receive about 10 in a month for commercial promotion."*  
(maby, 2020)



**Figure 8** Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book)

(Source: [www.xiaohongshu.com](http://www.xiaohongshu.com))

## 2.2.3 Douyin: The Rise of Grassroots Discourse

### 2.2.3.1 Douyin platform features

Douyin is a short video social application that can be viewed on smartphones, owned by ByteDance. It is positioned as a music short video community suitable for young people in China. The social media platform is used to

make a variety of short-form videos, from genres like dance, comedy, and education. Users can record videos of 15 seconds to 1 minute, 3 minutes or longer, and upload videos, photos, etc., which can be easily completed lip-synching and built-in special effects, users can leave comments on other users' videos.

Douyin was launched in 2016. After 17 months, Douyin exceeded 100 million. This is the fastest-growing product of China Mobile Internet after WeChat. In November 2019, Douyin had more than 320 million users, and this data is still growing, and there is no slowing down at all. Relying on the platform mechanism algorithm, its fans are growing fast. At present, Douyin has more than 6000 KOLs with more than one million fans.

The characteristics of the Douyin platform are as follows:

1) Pan-entertainment

The most popular in Douyin are music, dance, and funny jokes. With the help of the recommendation mechanism, many entertaining short videos have been exposed and disseminated, prompting creators to approach a relaxed and entertaining style when creating videos.

2) Weak social

It is positioned as a music social platform, and its content attributes are much stronger than social attributes. Compared to using it as a daily social tool, users are more willing to watch videos on Douyin.

3) Short

The video duration and viewing time are in seconds, and the production cycle is in days. Both creators and viewers have a low cost of time. Although the video duration is in seconds, it is complete and exciting. Douyin has worked hard on many details. To make up for the time limit, it provides speed up and slow down functions, allowing users to easily adjust the rhythm when making videos. The speed up function can make the video short but complete, and the slow down function can highlight the details.



#### 4) Easy

Easy is reflected in its low threshold. The consumption threshold of Douyin short video is almost zero. Everyone can participate in the creation and understand. This is also one of the reasons why Douyin is so popular. Douyin provides a "dumb" video shooting method. The face-to-face performance mode solves the content creation problems of ordinary people. This makes shooting short videos a thing that everyone can do, and at the same time it adds fun. As a content creator, for everyone to understand, present content with a low learning threshold to users and avoid obscure and unfamiliar topics.

#### 5) Fast

One is the fast product iteration. In 2018, Douyin iterated as many as 35 versions, with an average iteration of 10.4 days. It can be seen that its adjustment and optimization speed are fast, and the new gameplay is constantly increasing.

The second is the fast feedback from the market. There are quick feedback and adjustments to the banning of illegal accounts, the deletion of illegal content, and the problems of social feedback, such as monthly announcements of banned accounts and content, and the launch of anti-addiction mechanisms.

The third is the fast update of hotspots. Hot videos appear fast and disappear fast. For some hot content that appears in Douyin, we often have no time to participate and are quickly replaced.

The fourth is the rapid growth rate. Whether it is the number of Douyin users or the number of fans of outstanding creator accounts, the initial magnitude of the increase is very fast.

#### 2.2.3.2 Douyin creation incentive mechanism and content monetization products

In 2019, Douyin announced the launch of the "Creator Growth Plan", opening the creator service center for data analysis, authentication information,

advanced accounts, and functional aggregation, and efficiently aggregated and displayed content. This will allow creators to grasp the feedback of their works in a timely manner. User feedback is used to optimize content creation. Creators can also publish related video content under the same collection, users can enter the collection through the videos of interest, and the system can watch related content.

Douyin also established a Creator Academy to accelerate the growth of creators. To enhance the direct interaction between creators and fans, Douyin creator academy will connect online and offline to build a learning and communication platform for creators. While constantly enriching creative tools, Douyin is also thinking about how to provide creators with better service guidance. The platform will publish official policies and tutorials at any time through the academy, and will also organize sharing on a regular basis, answering questions for creators, and solving problems in video production and account operation (Yang Jianghua, 2018).

Currently, Douyin has content monetization products such as live broadcast, star map, and content shopping guide. Take the Star Chart platform that connects brand owners and creators as an example. It has gathered many very creative content creators on it, helping brand owners carry out very good content marketing.

*"Nowadays, many users who play Douyin will write business cooperation and add xx mailboxes if they have a little fan base, which means that they have a company behind them."(Staff of Douyin Advertising Department, 2020)*

*"Douyin has special contracts with major MCNs, and also has a very complete training process and model. Since the growth plan started last year, countless newcomers have flooded in. Douyin is too popular, and everyone wants to grasp it. But if not platform and capital to help, it will have difficulty in boosting in*

*the future. Of course, there are many successful ordinary people, but there are really few."(Staff of Douyin Advertising Department, 2020)*



**Figure 9** Douyin (Chinese Tiktok)

(Source: [www.douyin.com](http://www.douyin.com))

2.2.4 Bilibili: The largest youth pop culture entertainment community in China

#### 2.2.4.1 Bilibili Platform features

Bilibili, also nicknamed B Site in China, was established in June 2009. Its predecessor was Mikufans video sharing website. Now it is a comprehensive video community based on pan-two-dimensional content and PUGC content production mode. It is an online pop culture community that covers love cultural elements such as music, painting, fashion, life, technology, education, entertainment, animation, cartoons, games and so on, is currently the largest youth pop culture entertainment community in China.

##### 1) User Analysis of Bilibili

According to the official information of the Bilibili in 2019, nowadays it has extremely active young users, with high stickiness and loyalty of user. Bilibili is the most favorite App for young people under the age of 24 in China according to data released by QuestMobile TRUTH in October 2018.

##### 2) Media Features of Bilibili

Based on the powerful user community and the unique 2D bullet-screen culture, Bilibili has now become the birthplace of the mature Z-generation's (post-90/00) online pop culture.

The benign business model of Bilibili has also encouraged many excellent content creators. According to the official information of Bilibili, the number of active uploaders per month at Bilibili has reached 350,000, with a monthly contribution of 1.16 million and an average daily VV (Video View) of 320 million.

### 3) Advertising Characteristics of Bilibili

80% of users in Bilibili are young people aged 18 to 35, and they will become the user group with the highest consumption ability. Bilibili now has 7,000 core cultural circles and 2 million accurate user culture labels, which is beneficial for advertisers to perform fine advertising.

#### 2.2.4.2 Bilibili incentive mechanism and core advantages

The UP master (who upload their works online) is the core of the content ecology of the B site. Starting from the end of 2018, the B site officially selected the top 100 UP masters of the year from the levels of creativity, popularity, and user evaluation to encourage and commend the creation of UP masters. B site has fewer bottlenecks in realization, not only due to the incentive system, but also from its core advantages: 1) High conversion, 2) Low cost, 3) Diverse industry solutions, 4) Full-dimensional orientation capability.

## 2.3 Long-tailed Internet celebrities

The long-tail celebrities are different from the top-tier and mid-tier. If you give the long-tail celebrities a position, they are more like "trainees" in entertainment companies, or people waiting to debut in talent shows. Since the long-tail internet celebrities do not yet have content production capabilities, they have no clear direction for future development. Therefore, they have a strong institutional

dependence. Depending on the nature of the company, long-tail celebrities also have two core development directions: one is content-oriented and continues the development of the tail-mind-top context; the other is business-oriented, with the identity of "Internet celebrity", and it is a performing arts celebrity who conducts small-scale publicity, advertising, live broadcast, and other entertainment brokerage activities.

### 2.3.1 Internet celebrity incubation company: content incubation orientation

Internet celebrity incubation companies are a type of MCN. According to the "2019 China MCN Industry Development Research White Book" released by Crawley, the number of MCNs in China has exceeded 5,000, and more than 90% of the top celebrities have signed MCN companies or established own MCN. The core work of MCN is to produce content and incubate Internet celebrities (Crawley Data, 2019).

*"The incubation process is to first interview some practitioners who meet our standards, and then in their daily work, let them create their own scripts to study the market for analysis, and give them a three-month period. After three months, if they reached the standards that we set, such as the number of fans, the case of hot products, and the research on the market, it will begin to be realized. If they are not met, they may be dismissed." (A Watermelon video MCN staff, 2020)*

### 2.3.2 Internet celebrity brokerage companies: start making and business realization orientation

Internet celebrity brokerage companies have both commercial value and channel value. On the one hand, they have many brands and media channels that can convert the commercial value of contracted Internet celebrities. On the other hand, they also have certain Internet celebrity resources that can recommend suitable personal for brands at any time. In this sense, the nature of the Internet celebrity

brokerage company is the same as the entertainment company, and its main source of business is to gain the attention of consumers.

*"My job is to receive announcements, such as auto show live broadcasts, furniture live broadcasts, cosmetics live broadcasts. I am not familiar with those brands, but they all want an online celebrity. People don't recognize me, but they think I am in the live broadcast, she should be a very famous person. I feel that I just rely on my face to eat."(Kol Xiao,2020)*

*"Internet celebrities seem to be beautiful, but that is the symbolic value of the internet celebrities behind the platform and the mobile terminal and the industry chain. In society or going out, there is not much value for personal and professional planning. On the online platform, everyone has a protective color, and the unpleasantness of human nature will affect my personal life."(Anchor of a live broadcast platform,2020)*

### **3. How to know the current plight of tail Internet celebrities**

The analysis of the creation models of china internet celebrity industry should not be limited to those groups that we have seen whose get a certain amount of traffic and fans but should pay more attention to the large number of long-tail internet celebrities who are still struggling in them. Therefore, researcher pay attention to the anonymous long-tail celebrities and want to know the real problems of the long-tail network celebrity mechanism.

The researcher interviewed 5 content creators (Internet celebrities), 5 industry workers, and 5 related people who browse the content of internet celebrities daily. According to the "creator", "practitioner" and "relevant", the researcher classified 15 interview subjects and summarized the current plight of Internet celebrities. The content of this interview will be shown in the following table:

Group Interview	Interview Content	Core Dilemma	Frequency
The first group: content creators	1.Life cycle is too short, no one can remember you	Under the fierce industry competition, almost strict requirements are placed on creators	23
	2.Only fifty works can fire one work		
	3.Netizens have a lot of forgetfulness and demanding activities		
	4.The biggest creation of the same product is that there is no innovation, and the content that needs continuous innovation in the similar field		
	1.Uncertain the type of content that people like to watch, irregular	Unclear target users	11
	2. User preferences are complicated and difficult to adjust. It is necessary to establish a prominent personality to attract users		
	1. Hobbies cannot be eaten as meals, lack of actual sources of realization	Limited monetization channels	25
	2. Advertising will charge high taxes, the cost of shooting is high, and it is not enough to make ends meet		
	3. After all, no matter how much content I create, in the final analysis, I am a buyer in the eyes of others.		
	1. Nowadays, people still wear colored glasses to watch Internet celebrities	Personal value is difficult to realize, lack of self and social identity	17
	2. "Personal Design" is one of the core values. It is a mixture of the image created by the Internet celebrity and the label posted by the fans. Too many criticizing me		
	3. Sometimes I doubt myself; do I really like videos? If I really like videos, why do I need to force myself?		
Group Interview	Interview Content	Core Dilemma	Frequency
The second group: industry practitioner	1. If you want your company to invest your, you must have a special place. This industry is really like the entertainment industry. There are too many good-looking people. It is difficult to live without a point	The industry bubble is serious and fierce competition leads to lenient entry and strict exit	34
	2. This industry is too impetuous and too frothy. Many people are still alive at the stage where Internet celebrities can become famous overnight.		
	3. After graduating and becoming a blogger, I can over ten thousand in the first month. If there is no pursuit, I can do it for two or three years, but if there is pursuit, the bottleneck is inevitable。		
	4. A short life cycle is inevitable. This is the industry's innate logic: the survival of the fittest and the survival of the fittest.		
	5. No future, strong replaceability		
	1. The brand doesn't know whether you are red or not, just have the data	The tail has outstanding entertainment attributes and serious polarization	21
	2. Pretty girls don't need to do content, just sit in front of the camera. They say they are internet celebrities, but they are not much different from the entertainment industry.		
	3. Find good-looking internet celebrities, take		

The second group: industry practitioners (continue)	beautiful photos, and just have a face			
	1. The elements of the explosions are very clear in the industry, with distinctive characters, high-quality content, and the content has viral characteristics, easy to imitate or high in content	The paradox between assembly line production and the special out-of-circle makes it difficult to become famous	18	
	2. Explosive models have their characteristics. To become famous requires the right time and place, so there is only one Li Jiaqi			
	3. Our organization hasn't been out of the circle so far.			
	4. It's not that the company doesn't invest, the company is all the same model to cultivate, the key is to see if you have talents, which is the same as the entertainment industry			
	1. Internet celebrities are pretty girls, live broadcast and play Douyin	Serious social stereotypes, lack of identity	10	
	2. Nothing but good-looking			
	3. Internet celebrities should be divided into two categories, pretty girls, and content creators. I look at both categories, but I think it is inappropriate to call them Internet celebrities.			
	The third group: industry browsing group	1. The fun Douyin will only be played twice more, but a good book can be remembered for a lifetime.	The industrialized nature of the content has different preferences	16
		2. I will watch popular articles and videos, but I usually don't subscribe it. Even I subscribe it, if there is no exciting content in the follow-up, I will not go to watch it.		
3. Some content is difficult to make, some contents are too simple to fun, some contents are too difficult to understand it, such as technology videos.				
1. Many Internet celebrity products have high or low quality, just sell a brand		Internet celebrity products have mixed reviews	7	
2. Some Internet celebrities recommend products that are good, and occasionally buy them				
3. In most cases, Internet celebrity products are their reputation effect, and there are many alternatives				
1. No problem as a profession, the profession of a star is an idol		Different views on professional influencers	6	
2. I can understand making internet celebrities a career, but if my daughter wants to go				
<b>Group Interview</b>	<b>Interview Content</b>	<b>Core Dilemma</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	

**Table 1** Summary online interviews

(Source: Author drawing)



## CHAPTER IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers interpreted and analyzed the research in Chapter three, and came to the two results and a discussion in this chapter:

1. Apply theory U to create personal IP
  - 1.1 Co-initiating
  - 1.2 Co-sensing
  - 1.3 Presencing
  - 1.4 Co-creating
  - 1.5 Co-evolving
2. Summarize the three major mainstreams creation models of China Internet celebrity industry
  - 2.1 Summary of personal IP replication mechanism
  - 2.2 Summary of content production in the vertical field of mid-tier influencers
  - 2.3 Summary of intensive cultivation and universal realization
3. Discuss the current plight of tail Internet celebrities

## **1. Apply theory U to study personal IP creation**

Through the study of theory U and the analysis of the environment of China's Internet celebrity market, the researcher proposes 5 steps for personal IP creation by using theory U:

### **1.1 Co-initiating**

At this stage, people are required to stop downloading to view the world in their own way of thinking and stop repeating the four old patterns of the past:

Personal IP should create or reserve a space that can invite others to enter. The key is to reserve a listening space for the Internet celebrities themselves and others, especially those supporters who participate in the creation and maintenance of IP operations, as well as the high-viscosity fan group condensed by personal IP. The basic ability embodied in this step is listening. Listen to the voices of other people, listen to your own voices, listen to what is happening in the group. Effective listening requires the creation of an open space, so that other people can contribute their own strength to the whole, and the company can focus on the highest possibility of the group in the future.

### **1.2 Co-initiating**

To create a personal IP, we need to go to our most potential place, listen to the voice in our head, open our minds, and find our core position. To help individual IP, find their core positioning, objective observation needs to consider the following three points:

#### **1.2.1 Clarify issues and intentions**

What is the positioning of personal IP? Why create a personal IP? A clear and efficient positioning can play a very important role in operations. For self-media people, the primary condition for the success of personal IP comes from the positioning of style. IPs with interesting, predictable, and difficult-to-copy characteristics will have higher vitality.

### 1.2.2 Incorporate into relevant situations

The Internet era is an era of information sharing and rapid dissemination. The Internet world under the trend of entertainment needs "personal IP" creators to integrate relevant scenes in a timely manner to fit the development of hot events. Only when personal IP is integrated into the relevant situation can it learn to observe truly.

### 1.2.3 Suspend the judgement temporarily, stay curious

For every hot event or topic in the online world, it is necessary to temporarily suspend the judgment when observing it. It is best to observe completely blankly. Only then can we receive the new external environment and new things in real time. Curiosity is the seed that roots the U-shaped process. Driven by curiosity, further thinking about how to locate the fan crowd. From the perspective of two-way value, a personal IP needs to think clearly about who the content is shown to and what viewers can get. Readers will only choose to pay attention if they feel that the content of the self-media is valuable.

When Internet celebrities start to create content, they need to perceive the user's emotions in the content creation area. The content created by personal IP must resonate with viewers before they pay attention, invest in coins, and forward. As far as the content created by personal IP is concerned, high requirements are put forward for self-awareness, perception, and understanding. The users of content and services are all human beings. To do content innovation and service innovation, people must not only have IQ, but also have a high EQ. Only when personal IP creators have a high degree of empathy can they understand users deeply. When the user feels understood, the user will truly present his thoughts. When the user knows that you understand him, he will feel safe and may talk about the true thoughts in his heart, otherwise it is often a defense and an illusion.

### 1.3 Presencing

The presencing refers to a state in which IP creators enter the flow. The following four points can help individual IP creators to enter the state of natural flow:

#### 1.3.1 Label branding

This kind of "label branding" is essentially a human-centered business model and logic, and self-labeled accounts have more room for development. There are two possible forms of self-media labeling, one is to label yourself, and the other is to label you by fans. Labeled personal brands have become the most effective means of monetization. Compared with traditional advertising, advertising, or outdoor, flyers and other monetization methods, after the advertising is issued by the media, behind it is a living "person". Fans pay attention to a certain IP means their recognition of this IP. In this way, the recommendation of KOL is more like a friend or role model introducing you to the products he approves, so there is a natural sense of trust. Self-media brands can obtain higher profits at a lower cost and form a closer relationship with fans.

If you want to have a personal IP, you must first create a label based on your own scarcity. You can label yourself through the four aspects of personnel, product, partner, and platform to create a personal brand. First, users must recognize the mainstream consumer groups in the market, investigate and investigate, and those unmet needs. Second, establish its own core values around the user needs of the selected group, and formalize the values. Third, you need to operate your own self-media as a team. Nowadays, information and knowledge are updated very quickly in the new media industry. It is far from enough to rely on one person's ability, so you need to set up a team to carry out your own content operation. Finally, you must learn to make good use of the platform.

#### 1.3.2 Personalized operation

The traditional way of self-media operation is that a person hiding behind a machine uses the tone of a machine to make a sound. Over-official operating

methods and communication methods cannot make fans or users feel close or trusting in you. Notification-style text also cannot make people have the desire to understand you and communicate. Most of the self-media have expressed their views from the perspective of an individual practitioner, and a great feature of personal IP is to speak from the real experience and perspective of oneself. Personalized feature output makes fans feel that they are related to a "person" when watching the content, they produce. This "person" with unique personality characteristics has values recognized by the audience and speaks what the audience thinks. For the audience, watching the continuously updated content of this kind of self-media is like watching the current situation of a close friend, which creates the natural affinity of this kind of self-media. By adopting a personalized operation method, fans can understand the lifestyle and preferences of We-media through the content delivered by personal IP, attract fans through personalized features, and lead their way of life and consumption.

In the era of mobile Internet, self-media has become an important channel and way for us to obtain information or daily entertainment. In many cases, some practical or fresh self-media content, although it allows us to learn something or obtain emotional pleasure, but it does not make us want to pay attention, because it does not make readers feel that this is a miss. The idea of "person", and this situation is a manifestation of the lack of personality characteristics.

### 1.3.3 Sharing economy, building trust

Sharing economy refers to an economic phenomenon in which individuals, organizations or enterprises share their valuable idle resources through Internet channels and obtain certain returns. Personal IP monetizes product recommendations and sales through social networking platforms, which is essentially an experiential sharing.

Traditional online shopping stores only give a detailed introduction to the pictures of the products. Few shop owners share their own feelings of use. Nowadays, the "sharing economy" is prevailing. Personal IPs who want to

promote and sell a product can not only publish the picture of the product on On your own social platform, you can also convey your experience to fans in the form of multimedia, and respond to fans' questions in a timely manner. This kind of real experience sharing can easily dispel fans' buying concerns.

## **1.4 Co-creating**

### 1.4.1 Create high-quality content

Personal IP needs to output high-quality content continuously and steadily, through high-quality content dissemination, attract online fans, promote fan consumption, complete traffic transformation behavior. In the Internet age, the ways and means of communication are constantly being updated, but the essence of "content is king" has not changed. If the content is not high-quality enough, it will not attract readers to watch and it will not be able to spread. Only high-quality content can retain fans, only professional content can be trusted by fans, and only infectious content can be better monetized.

### 1.4.2 Create consistently and steadily

Faced with today's fast-paced life, time is becoming fragmented, the industry is renewing very quickly. It is not easy to manage personal IP with heart. Diligence is one of the important qualities of operating personal IP, because it is difficult for a self-media to occupy a popular position for a long time, and the new self-media often faces the status quo of low reading rate for a long time. Therefore, if the personal IP is to be successful, it must be updated continuously, otherwise it will drop fans.

### 1.4.3 Create in familiar areas

In self-media operations, choose a field that you are familiar with, use the accumulated experience or expertise to deepen the content of the vertical field. We-media in this vertical field is easier to attract a more accurate fan group with a professional image and it is easier to operate successfully. There is no uniform

standard for good content. Choose a familiar field and continue to create IP content based on your own experience and preferences. In-depth research and accumulation of professional fields determine the quality of IP content.

#### 1.4.4 Create with user thinking

Creating with user-thinking refers to the point of view of user-thinking, systematically considering whether the topic selection and language style of the article can attract the attention of readers. In the environment of fierce competition from the media, if personal IP wants to achieve the effect of word of mouth, it must be guided by user thinking, slowly accumulate high-quality content, eventually become an irreplaceable personal IP.

#### 1.4.5 Create interesting content

With the rapid development of science and technology and artificial intelligence, the fast-paced life in the city is easy to cause anxiety. At this time, an outlet to release pressure is needed. Valuable content can make fans gain something, and interesting content is a powerful magnet to attract fans. The Internet is like a giant playground with strong entertainment attributes. Relaxed, funny, and entertaining self-media content can make readers feel happy and relaxed while reading.

#### 1.4.6 Create personalized content

Nowadays, the people who participate in self-media are mainly "post-95s", their distinguishing feature is the pursuit of individualization and not being bound by rules. The existence of self-media meets their needs for individualization. No matter how niche their hobbies are, they can find their likes in the media. In the mobile "Internet +" era, everyone has more autonomy in their choices, audiences have become aesthetically tired of the same content. This requires personal IP to output personalized and interesting content.

## 1.5 Co-evolving

Common development includes maintaining platform relationships and fan relationships.

### 1.5.1 Be grateful to fans and develop together

Fans are the yardstick that embodies the commercial value of self-media and the basis for self-media to monetize. With the rapid changes in Internet technology and the continuous updating of carriers, how to escape the declining is what we urgently need to solve. The flow of fans is very rapid, it is inevitable that fans will be dropped and forgotten. Pay attention to maintaining the relationship with fans and conduct professional fan operation and management, so that personal IP can go further.

No matter what monetization method the personal IP adopts, it is based on the number of fans. Only when the number of fans reaches a certain level can a series of operational activities be carried out. Fans' attention behaviors and consumption behaviors are all their recognition of the values or lifestyle expressed by the media. Consumer behavior through self-media is also due to the trust in self-media people. As the beneficiaries, people from the media must learn to be grateful to fans.

### 1.5.2 High-frequency interaction to develop fan viscosity

One of the most important points in judging the stickiness of individual IP fans is the click-through rate of the article. If a personal IP wants to increase the stickiness of fans, it must have many fans and efficient interaction with them. The forms of interaction on different platforms are different. For example, topic collection and voting can be used on the WeChat official account, the form of likes and forwarding can be adopted on Weibo. The self-media that has become an IP has a form of interacting with its fans. With the increase in the number and content of self-media, personal IP must be aware of the importance of maintaining fan relationships and strengthen interaction with fans to increase fan stickiness.

### 1.5.3 Develop community and attract paying fans



Successful personal IP pays special attention to the formation and interaction of the community. Nowadays, the community economy has become a hot word. Active communities can continue the influence of personal IP and activate fans. Many self-media channels provide fans with a platform for communication and sharing through WeChat or QQ. The combination of online and offline community operations can better maintain the relationship between personal IP and fans. Personal IP can avoid the loss of fans by building a community. And fans can learn and improve themselves through the community.

#### 1.5.4 Develop platform relationships

In recent years, major websites have also begun to invest in self-media platforms. The reason for the rise of self-media platforms is that the convenience of the mobile Internet has stimulated the needs of the audience in many aspects. A good platform is very important for personal IP, it even play a multiplier role.

The relationship between personal IP and self-media platforms is very delicate. They rise on the platform but are not limited to a single platform. Their results must have the part of using the platform to get dividends, but with the continuous development of self-media platforms, they will eventually get rid of this limitation of the platform. We-media platforms make every effort to create personal IP. Its personality charm with individual characteristics that can ultimately become a personal IP. If you publish content on only one self-media platform, you will face great risks such as being blocked or frozen. Therefore, at the beginning of self-media operation, we should maintain the trend of multi-platform distribution and make it change according to the characteristics of the platform. Let the self-media better spread and develop.

## **2. Summarize the three major mainstreams creation models of China**

### **Internet celebrity industry**

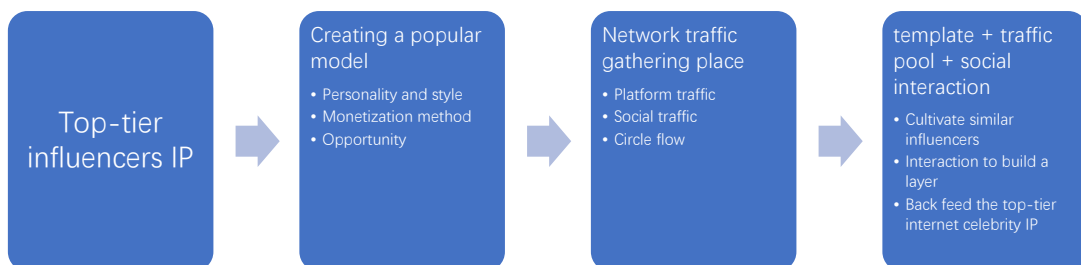
Behind the development of Internet celebrities are the two-way achievements of individuals and MCN. The systematic development model originated from the MCN organization. The content types of MCN services cover text, pictures, video, live broadcast, and other fields. A large part of the content type of the current MCN organization is short video.

At present, there are three more common ways to develop online celebrities in the industry, and based on this template, they are adjusted and developed according to personal characteristics or multiple templates are superimposed. Since the industry does not have a more uniform definition, researchers have tried to call these three models according to their different characteristics: "personal IP re-copy mode", "vertical field content production mode" and "intensive cultivation of universal realization mode". The generation and use of these three modes of models are closely related to the MCN agency's head influencer attributes, the fundamental purpose of the organization, and the characteristics of the net influencer at the end of the organization. At the same time, these three also constitute the pyramidal hierarchical division of the current Internet influencer industry.

#### **2.1 Top tier: Personal IP re-copy mode**

IP stands for intellectual property, which literally refers to intellectual property rights. However, as the concept of IP has been continuously applied to the content field in recent years, its derivative can be understood as a content symbol that can be derived and created with distinctive characteristics and commercial value. Personal IP refers to individuals who have distinct personal characteristics, have obvious identifications, and are well-known. Here, they specifically refer to top Internet celebrities who already have a lot of Internet popularity, such as Li Jiaqi and Li Ziqi.

The re-copying of personal IP is to use the content creation form, content style, popularity path, and monetization mode of the top influencer as the basic template to cultivate a group of influencers with certain similarities. Therefore, the personal IP re-copying template is not so much a copy of the popular path of the head influencer, as it is to use the traffic of the head influencer, which is essentially personal IP-oriented traffic aggregation, and will have similar content orientation and aesthetic orientation. Consumers are aggregated in the traffic pool created by the head influencer, and then the copier performs targeted content output: on the one hand, the copier itself has the head influencer for traffic orientation, which can get attention faster, on the other hand From a long-term perspective, the top influencers are not invincible for a long time, and there is also the possibility of content bottlenecks or loss of commercial value, and the content creation of the copy will also give back to the top influencers to some extent. Whether it is in terms of commercial value, or in terms of flow maintenance.



**Figure 10** Basic flow chart of Influencers IP re-copying mode

(Source: Author summary drawing)

### 2.1.1 Summary of personal IP replication mechanism

From Li Jiaqi to Papi, top influencers in different fields are explaining a core problem, which is copying the mode and method of top influencers is not the key to becoming popular. Li Jiaqi, with its uniqueness and business model, has many imitators, but there is no leader yet. Some MCN institutions lose tens of millions, but Papatube has become the first MCN, the key is to control the content of the incubator.

Therefore, the researchers think that the key to the personal IP replication mechanism is to use the traffic of the top influencer, and a complete incubation process should be top influencer becomes popular—the institution provides a template— creation of a traffic pool—the patterned cultivation of similar influencer—feedback the top internet celebrities and their institutions— achieve industrialization. The success of Papitube illustrates this process.

<b>Model Principle</b>	Top influencer becomes popular—The institution provides a template— Creation of a traffic pool—The patterned cultivation of similar influencer— Feedback the top internet celebrities and their institutions— Achieve industrialization
<b>Model representative</b>	Papi and Papitube
<b>Suitable for people and scenes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Suitable for Internet celebrities who take personal image as their core value.</li> <li>2.Suitable for Internet celebrity bloggers with unique styles.</li> <li>3.Suitable for Internet celebrity bloggers who have excellent content but lack exposure opportunities.</li> <li>4.Content/style-oriented influencers.</li> </ol>
<b>Monetization model</b>	Brand promotion + Advertising + Product realization Targeted adaptation according to the style of content adaptation
<b>Model advantage</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Higher exposure</li> <li>2. Blessing of head influencer effect</li> <li>3. A monetization system with and operable</li> <li>4. Mature incentive mechanism and creation mechanism</li> </ol>
<b>Model dilemma in recent years</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Content homogeneity under industrial production</li> <li>2. Many mid-tier internet celebrities gather, lack of top breakthroughs</li> <li>3. There are many creators but lack of high-quality content</li> </ol>

**Table 2** Summary of personal IP replication mechanism

(Source: Author drawing)

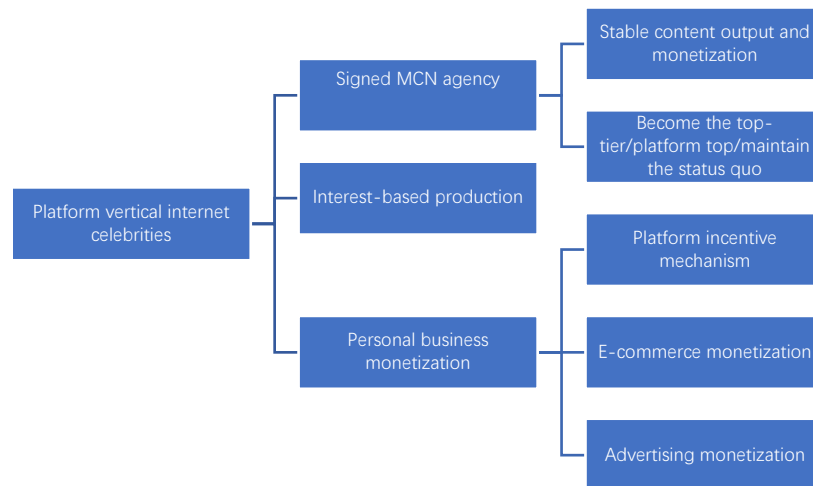
## **2.2 Mid-tier: Content production mode in vertical field**

Content production characteristics of the vertical field are targeted content production for specific users within a specific scope and circle. The content producers themselves have also established a greater influence in the circle, and the monetization channels are often limited to the circle within range. For example, beauty bloggers produce color test and beauty videos in the beauty field, and at the same time do commercial promotion or drainage for corresponding cosmetics and beauty products.

If it is said that the personal IP re-copying mode belongs to the popular head influencer and its personal company, then the vertical field pays more attention to the platform-oriented circled influencer, like Youtuber, Douyin celebrity, and the Xiaohongshu bloggers. On the one hand, this mode of influencer relies on the content produced by itself to gather traffic in small circle groups; on the other hand, it also relies on the platform algorithm mechanism or the MCN team behind it for commercial operation. It can be said that content is its core productivity. The platform is an important promoter.

With the deepening of Internet content construction, content producers in the vertical field constitute the backbone of the Internet celebrity echelon. They have not become the cross-border and IP commercial value of the top Internet celebrities, but they have more tangible content and traffic than the long-tail Internet celebrities. If they can generate explosive content, they may rise to become the top Internet celebrities, but if they always output stably, they may also become content laborers. This mode of influencer is also the most variable group, because the top and long-tail have an exact business connection and the possibility of professionalization, but a large part of the mid-tier influencers are part-time influencers based on interests and are not driven by commercial interests. This mode of internet celebrity group will neither sign a contract with a platform organization, nor will the content output be

unstable, and at the same time there is no possibility of cultivation, so it is hereby stated that this article does not discuss this type of group.



**Figure 11** Basic flow chart of content production-oriented creation in vertical fields

(Source: Author summary drawing)

### 2.2.1 Summary of content production in the vertical field of mid-tier influencers

<b>Model principle</b>	Interest-based vertical content production—Signing a platform or MCN agency after gathering a certain popularity—Making a hot product to become a top or vertical top influencer or always carry out content production in the circle, which is gradually forgotten.
<b>Model representative</b>	Ritawang, Beijing Xiaofengzi, Maomao Sister, Dianxi Brother, etc.
<b>Suitable for people and scenes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continuous and stable content creation</li> <li>2. Vertical field</li> <li>3. The content has certain characteristics</li> </ol>
<b>Platform-oriented monetization model</b>	<p>Method 1: Brand advertising, KOLs with accurate fan bases will be highly valued by the brand.</p> <p>Method 2: Knowledge paid membership, KOL recommend product at the same time to complete the shopping.</p> <p>Method 3: E-commerce conversion is the most direct way of commercial realization for KOL.</p>
<b>Model advantage</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Platform feature blessing: The differences between fans and users give different values to the platform. In the future development of platforms, brands, and KOLs, they will seize the difference in value and combine their own advantages to choose the right channel to maximize the value.</li> <li>2. Steady traffic training: Fan user groups are the foundation for platforms, KOLs, and brands. Only by understanding users can they attract users. Similarly, understanding users is also a process of recognizing yourself and finding pain points.</li> <li>3. High conversion rate and realization rate: The platform is the front end, and the product placement content creates the first ring of consumption in the social media era: atmosphere, and high interaction is a very high commercial conversion rate.</li> </ol>
<b>The dilemma of creators</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is easy to produce homogeneous content in the field, and competition is fierce</li> <li>2. Single monetization model, commercial obliteration of content</li> <li>3. There are many alternative content and lack of clear memory points.</li> </ol>

**Table 3** Summary of content production in the vertical field of mid-tier influencers

(Source: Author drawing)

### **2.3 Long-tail: Intensive cultivation of universal realization mode**

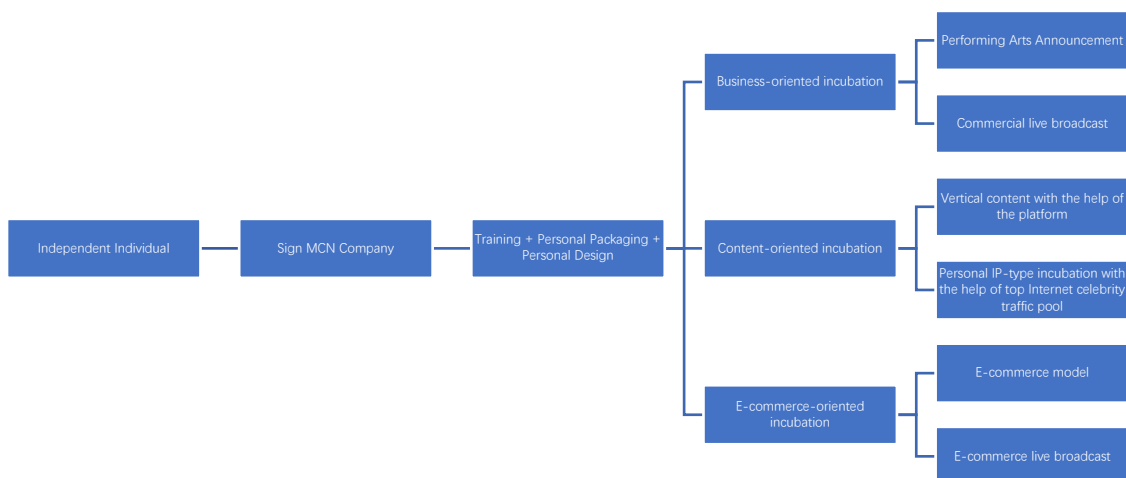
If the above two modes of Internet celebrities are essentially content-oriented aggregated traffic and MCN institutions that emerged during the web 2.0 period, then intensive cultivation of Internet celebrities is more complicated. This mode of company combines the content of MCN institutions, while possessing the pure commercial nature of an artist agency. There are two core ways for the current intensive cultivation of Internet celebrities.

The first method is general training based on content, which is often applicable to media platforms or the MCN organizations of the leading influencers themselves. Sign up many content producers in a specific circle, promote their stable output and realize commercial realization in an institutionalized model, in the process to ensure the content popularity, commercial value of the producers and the profitability of the organization, and at the same time give specific guidance to the content with a view to creating a top Internet celebrity.

The second method is based on the cultivation of commercial profitability, which is often applicable to current Internet celebrity brokerage companies. Such companies can connect many media and commercial resources to provide various business opportunities for the company's Internet celebrities. Therefore, such companies have signed many Internet celebrities on live broadcast platforms and short video platforms, arranged brokerage activities for them, and conducted economic commissions for profit. From the perspective of development, this mode of Internet celebrity has no value to cultivate, nor does it have a specific development direction. It only performs performing arts activities in different fields in different periods.

The core feature of these two methods is the intensive cultivation of "widespread", but this intensive cultivation mode has further exacerbated the "bubble" of the Internet celebrity economy.





**Figure 12** Basic flow chart of intensive training and universal realization

(Source: Author summary drawing)

### 2.3.1 Summary of intensive cultivation and universal realization

<b>Model principle</b>	Positioning style-packaging design-content / performing arts
<b>Suitable for people and scenes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start from 0</li> <li>2. People who want to become an internet celebrity but don't know how to do it</li> <li>3. Choose one of appearance/skills</li> </ol>
<b>Model advantage</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have a clear development direction plan</li> <li>2. Those who have clear guidelines</li> <li>3. There is an exact way of commercial realization</li> </ol>
<b>Current dilemma</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The survivorship bias, with greater competitive pressure</li> <li>2. Social pressure</li> <li>3. The platform will be biased</li> </ol>

**Table 4** Summary of intensive cultivation and universal realization

(Source: Author drawing)

Unlike the clear monetization model of the top celebrity and the clear content circle of the mid-tier celebrity, the long-tail celebrity not only faces huge competitive pressure and social pressure, but also does not have a mature and complete content system and monetization model. Whether it is the fame of ordinary people or the

creators who signed MCN agencies, they are at the end of the entire online celebrity. On the one hand, they are faced with the huge temptation of the industry and the driving force of fame and imagination, on the other hand, the huge gap brought by reality.

Gu Yu Lab published an article titled "Game of Riches: Beautiful Internet Celebrities in the Urban-rural Fringe", "A huge Internet celebrity" base has formed around the ruined Jiubao where in the urban-rural fringe, in a one-kilometer factory and office building, there are hundreds of large and small Internet celebrity companies, including the successful one, as well as countless newcomers who broadcast 20 hours a day. On this issue, the researchers will further focus on the long-tail celebrity group to analyze the actual dilemma of its development mechanism and make some corresponding recommendations.

### **3. Discuss the current plight of tail Internet celebrities**

Based on the above classification and summary of the content of online interviews, researchers found that the current plight of Internet celebrities can be summarized as follows:

#### **3.1 Problems with the main communication**

##### **3.1.1 Internet celebrities' self-cognition disorder under "playing the role"**

In fact, Internet celebrities are still "playing" their social roles, and there is often a huge gap between the person they play and the actual personal situation. This gap forms the imbalance of Internet celebrities' self-recognition. Bloggers are not always exquisite, but they must play the role that everyone yearns and admires. The role-playing of stars is temporary, but due to the closeness of Internet celebrities, they require to "playing" all the time. This also directly leads to the dissonance of the internet celebrity's self-cognition.

### 3.1.2 The trend of the circle of Internet celebrity content

The top influencer also has a specific communication circle. The circle structure of the Internet communication structure has led to the block division of Internet content. Therefore, it is a recognized problem in the industry to become famous on the original influencer system. Being famous means that it affects people other than the target consumers, but in fact, even if you become famous with high-quality content and are seen and understood by most people, the fans who are finally harvested are still related to the circle content. Passers-by will forward it once and watch twice, but in the end, it was still a passerby. The verticality of Internet content determines the stability of the circle. The content that is truly famous is often popular, vulgar, and entertaining. At this level, we can also see why the top influencers are showing star development, while the content-focused influencers or KOLs maintain vertical spread. Such a trend will also affect the development path of Internet celebrities in the future.

### 3.1.3 Content homogenization caused by assembly line production

The essence of the net celebrity development mechanism is the production line of the Internet. Whether it is copying IP or training along the established path, the long-tail internet celebrity obliterates not only the individuality of themselves under a system based on the preferences of others, but also the possibility of producing high-quality content. This standard is just like standardized production. Individuals have certain characteristics, but the content needs to be consistent with unified values, which directly leads to the lack of interest in the content.

## **3.2 Problems in the communication environment**

In terms of communication environment, behind the complete industrial chain, complete incubation mechanism, and complete communication model are the attempts and practices of countless people. Capital-oriented and flow-oriented brings an increasingly impetuous industry atmosphere. Everyone wants to become famous overnight. Behind the popularity of the Internet celebrity industry is the popularity of

the continuation of star dreams 20 years ago. On the one hand, it is the attraction of both the fame and fortune of the top influencers, and the other is the huge gap in front of the long-tail influencers: crowded platforms, repetitive content, and easily forgotten consumers.

### **3.3 Problems with social identity**

#### **3.3.1 Limited consumer recognition**

Consumer recognition comes from two aspects, the recognition of the content and product produced by the influencer. From the content point of view, the hot content can certainly bring great attention and traffic, but the one-time hotspot is not once and for all. In the face of fast-changing content, consumers will still welcome the next hotspot and new content. From the perspective of Internet celebrity products, e-commerce monetization is currently one of the main channels for Internet celebrity monetization. However, the society's evaluation of "Internet celebrity e-commerce" and "Internet celebrity products" is more negative than positive, and the vast majority of "Internet celebrities" products are labeled as "not worth" or "sell a brand". This evaluation not only affects a single internet celebrity, but also directly impacts the monetization model of internet celebrities.

#### **3.3.2 Deep-rooted social stereotypes**

Searching on WeChat and Weibo with "Internet celebrity" as a keyword, most of the content is still negative keywords such as "plastic surgery", "break up" and "destroy". In a sense, "Internet celebrity" is still an unorthodox, even non-influenced profession. Social stereotypes have led to individual Internet celebrities suffering huge disidentification and social pressure in society.

### **3.4 Difficulties in class breakthrough**

Whether it is to achieve a breakthrough from the long-tail to the mid-tier, or from the mid-tier to the top-tier of the celebrity, fame is the most frequently mentioned key word in the industry. Behind the fame is not only the high attention of the content, but also the recognition of the personality and the favor of the brand.

However, due to the relatively small fluidity of the Internet level and the circle, it is rare for content and personal settings to become famous at the same time. Therefore, the entire online celebrity ecological chain is in a relatively solid state, and the level of change is small. This also directly led to the solidification of the Internet celebrity circle. The top Internet celebrities occupy most of the resources, and the mid-tier Internet celebrity channels and resources are squeezed by the top Internet celebrities. Even if the long-tail internet celebrities have a mature development mechanism, it is difficult to achieve a breakthrough in the sphere of stratification.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

According to the purpose of this research, after the analysis and research of Chapters one to four, the following conclusions and suggestions are obtained in this chapter:

#### **1. Conclusion**

##### 1.1 Apply theory U to study personal IP creation

###### 1.1.1 Co-initiating

For creating personal IP, listening is to better understand yourself and others, especially when facing many users and needs, you need to change different identities, angles, environments, and scenarios, and listen to the usage and needs of various user groups.

###### 1.1.2 Co-initiating

To create a personal IP, we need to go to our most potential place, listen to the voice in our head, open our minds, and find our core position. To find their core positioning, objective observation needs to consider the following three points: 1) Clarify issues and intentions, 2) Incorporate into relevant situations, 3) Suspend the judgement temporarily, stay curious.

###### 1.1.3 Presencing

The presencing refers to a state in which IP creators enter the flow of create content IP. The following four points can help individual IP creators to enter the state of natural flow: 1) Label branding, 2) Personalized operation, 3) Sharing economy, building trust.

###### 1.1.4 Co-creating

Creating high-quality content consistently and steadily; Creating in familiar areas with user thinking; Creating interesting and personalized content.

### 1.1.5 Co-creating

Common development includes maintaining platform relationships and fan relationships. 1) Be grateful to fans and develop together. 2) High-frequency interaction to develop fan viscosity. 3) Develop community and attract paying fans. 4) Develop platform relationships.

1.2 China's internet celebrity development model is divided into three categories:

1.2.1 One is based on the IP effect and influence of the top influencer, and the top influencer's IP re-duplication model with a traffic pool. The top IP re-copy mode can achieve high exposure, rapid realization, and traffic aggregation.

1.2.2 The second is the vertical content production and monetization model of mid-tier influencers based on platform characteristics. It is conducive to maximizing value, stable flow, and cultivating loyal fans, with a high conversion rate.

1.2.3 The tail Internet celebrities signed with MCN companies to carry out personal packaging, intensive training, and a general realization mode of commercial activities. Intensive training at the tail has a clear development direction plan, a clear guide, and a precise way of commercial realization.

1.3 To improving the survival and career development of China's tail celebrities, the researcher analysis the creative model of China's internet celebrity industry and summed up the three mainstream internet celebrity creation models. Based on the summary of the content of online interviews, researchers found that the current plight of tail Internet celebrities. Therefore, the researchers put forward the following suggestions for the tail Internet celebrities by using theory U.

## **2. Suggestions**

The problems discovered when summary of the content of online interviews, the researchers put forward the following suggestions for the Internet celebrities at the tail by using theory U. It helps China's tail celebrities improve their personal IP career development.

### **2.1 Guided by theory U**

The Internet celebrity market is developing very rapidly, and only by maintaining a state of continuous learning can you gain a place in the ever-changing Internet celebrity industry. Theory u can help Internet celebrities understand themselves more clearly, observe the industry, combine themselves with the characteristics of the industry, complete the personal IP realization of Internet celebrities, and realize the long-term development of Internet celebrities and the industry.

### **2.2 Clear self-positioning**

Set up an achievable and specific goal for yourself. In the process of achieving your goal, you will constantly adjust yourself to adapt to the new scene and constantly find your own position.

Tail celebrities need to step out of the path of simply attracting fans, clarify the personal IP positioning of the celebrities, create personalized IPs, update products in a user-oriented manner, and combine the Internet's communication thinking with the traditional craftsmanship to create a lasting, a vital internet celebrity IP brand.

### **2.3 Clear multi-platform features**

Different platforms have different user orientations and algorithm mechanisms. Like Douyin, which focuses on short videos, requires attractive content, Bilibili which use long videos as the core. If tail internet celebrities want to grow quickly, they need to analyze the characteristics of each platform in detail, and develop personal IP based on the characteristics of the platform.

### **2.4 Display subjective initiative, integrate resources in hand**



2.4.1 The courage to face interference from the outside world, such as criticism and ridicule

#### 2.4.2 Create ecological personal IP

The creation of personal IP must be extended from the inside to the outside to establish a content ecological chain. "Ecological personal IP" means that IP relies on the self-media platform to build ecological personal IP by integrating resources and extending the IP content industry chain, such as the development of animation, comics, web dramas or mobile game products.

### **2.5 Link the influence of the top and mid-tier Internet celebrities**

The tail celebrities centered on culture and branding should be integrated. After the top and mid-tier complete the basic content production and monetization, the future internet celebrity industry should not only at monetizing, but should center on influence of top celebrities, develop a set of cultural brand and value standards. The linkage between upstream, middle, and downstream needs to be closer.

### **2.6 Diversified monetization mechanism**

The tail influencer market needs a huge number of mid-tier and tail celebrities to complete, and the tail market emphasizes individuality and niche crowds. This requires mid-tier and tail celebrities to go deep into the content field, and based on good content, appropriately incorporate new elements and new content, and develop diverse styles to achieve diversified realization. In the current environment of paying for knowledge, using the platform incentive policies of Bilibili and Douyin, Internet celebrities can carry out activities such as paid content and online courses to achieve diversified realization.

High-quality internet celebrity IP can be developed on multiple platforms. Through interaction and relationship maintenance with fans, internet celebrity IP can gather fans to form a community with the same interests or values, and the community will activate fans' sense of participation. Based on the community, Internet celebrities can build an e-commerce ecosystem and feedback the

development of e-commerce with their own influence. E-commerce platforms and community building provide platforms and channels for the development of the Internet celebrity economy. The rapid development of the Internet celebrity economy has also brought traffic and fans with high stickiness and high loyalty to the e-commerce platforms and social media platforms.

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