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## "We are Famous on the Internet": A Study of the Chinese Phenomenon of Wanghong

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# Abstract

The emergence of China's Wanghong – or internet celebrities – mainly relies on the generation and development of the Internet. Especially in the past few years, the development of Internet technology in China has seen a massive upsurge. The innovation of smartphones, the full coverage of the mobile Internet, and the continuous emergence of various platform for pictures, videos, especially for live broadcast, have provide a superior living environment for strengthened Wanghong's group.

Wanghong, who get fame with huge audience and can sustain fame, is the focus of my research in this article. Based on this research needs, I choose three Wanghong as my research subject, analyze how they arise, how they produce the content, what kind of practice can maintain their own fame.

Although these three Wanghong are in different fields respectively, my research shows that the contents and methods of their publication are similar in all aspects. Authenticity, natural style and entertaining are the common characteristics in these three cases. However, if Wanghong want to maintain their fame in a long-term, they need to look for some unique characteristic among the huge homogeneous Wanghong group, which meets both their own personality's and the audience's needs.

# 摘要

中国的网红群体的产生主要依托于互联网的产生与发展。尤其是近几年之内，中国的互联网科技呈现了井喷式发展，智能手机的革新，移动互联网的全面覆盖，以及各种图片，视频，尤其是直播平台的不断出现，为网红群体的壮大提供了优越的生存环境。

一个能够成名，具有广大受众，且可以维持名气的网红是我在本文中研究的重点。基于这种研究需要，我选取了三位网红做我的研究主体，分析他们如何产生，如何进行了内容生产，进行怎样的实践以维持自身名气。

虽然三者分别在不同领域，但经过我的研究发现，其发布的内容及方式有类似的方面，其中真实，自然，具有娱乐性是三者共同具备的特征，不过我们也能看到，在同质化的网红群体中另辟蹊径，寻找既符合自我个性又可以迎合受众需求的特征，才是一个网红生存发展的长足之道。

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The purpose of this study and research questions

The discussion of Wanghong (网红) (short for Wangluo Hongren (网络红人)) is a popular research topic in Chinese society in recent years. (Zhang, 2011; Zhu, 2010; Li & Shen, 2017) The reason why Wanghong became the focus of discussion in academia is mainly due to the surprising commercial value, as well as the significant social impact created by the amount of Wanghong (including people and events). They use the network as a stronghold but also impact on the traditional media and mainstream society with their ideas, thoughts or behaviors.

In Western society, the concept which is most similar to Wanghong is Microcelebrity, which Alice Marwick defines thus: Microcelebrities are people who "view themselves as a public persona to be consumed by others, use strategic intimacy to appeal to followers, and regard their audience as fans". (Marwick, 2015) However, in the Chinese context "Wanghong" covers a wider range, and is also more ambiguous. It includes not only the microcelebrity of Marwick but also the mainstream celebrities of hot discussion on the internet in the specific conditions or time. The difference in the two concepts leads to certain different kinds of research between "Wanghong" and "Microcelebrity" among Chinese and Western scholars respectively. Western scholars pay more attention to the study of how a microcelebrity builds self-branding, (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017; Abidin, 2015; Marwick, 2013) while, Chinese scholars focus more on the study of "Wanghong" economy and the analysis and management of the causes of Wanghong phenomenon. (Wang, 2016; Wang & Cui, 2016; Hu, 2016; Zhang, 2011; )

Based on the two different research perspectives above, in order to study how Chinese Wanghong produce and how to practice themselves, I chose three Wanghong from Weibo (one of the most famous Chinese social media platforms) as case studies, and

drawing upon Western and Chinese research, I will try to explain how they create their personal brandings and how they attract followers.

My three case studies are @uktimes (@英国报姐), a Chinese and English culture writer; @薛之谦, a mainland China singer also known as Joker (薛之谦, English name is Joker. As a matter of convenience, I use his English name to represent 薛之谦, and use @薛之谦 to reoresent his Weibo account); and @萌大雨 YUYU, who is a personal make-up artist. Basically, they have all accumulated popularity in Weibo and have successfully converted internet fame to commercial interest. However, the difference is each of them has used different strategies to become famous. @uktimes is anonymous and is renowned for her funny anecdotes of British and foreign countries' life. She selects some engaging contents to translate, edit and retell them to the Chinese audience. @薛之谦 experienced short-lived fame as a musician and later used humor to become an internet celebrity. @萌大雨 YUYU was an ordinary user who posted a single video that went viral, and who managed to turn her fame more permanent.

Through the theory of Microcelebrity, self-branding establishment theory and social media-related theory, I analyze images, released content and impact in the above three cases.

## 1.2 Research Question

How does Wanghong fame work? My main goal in this thesis is to understand how Wanghong build their own "prestige". To do this, I observe and analyse the process of three wanghongs' self-branding setup. My observations of the case studies also include a study of the audience's response to the Wanghong. So, some additional questions arise depending on the discussion of Wanghong fame: 1. Why do the audience like these three Wanghong? 2. What kinds of feedback does the audience give to the Wanghong they like; 3.How did these three Wanghong become famous, and what strategies have they used to maintain their fame? I also ask more general

questions: 1. What is the relationship between Western internet celebrities and Wanghong? 2. What is the history of web celebrity in Chinese social media? 3. What are typical characteristics of Wanghong, as theorised by Western and Eastern scholars?

## 1.3 Structure of the thesis

This introductory chapter mainly introduces the research purpose and the research questions of this paper; the second chapter is the background introduction, which includes the introduction of Weibo, the active platform of my research object, and the introduction of Wanghong; the next chapter is the methodology part. In this chapter, I mainly introduce the methods used in this thesis, as well as the methodology used in each of the following case study chapters; from Chapter 4 to Chapter 6, I use @ uktimes, @薛之谦, @ 萌大雨 YUYU as separate chapters, with these three individuals as specific case study objects, analyze the reasons for their fame, timeline, practices, and specific impact; the last chapter is the conclusion chapter, which makes a particular summary for all above practice chapters.

## 2. Background

This chapter is divided into two sections, the first part is an introduction to the Sina Weibo platform, and the second part is an introduction to Wanghong in China. The introduction to Wanghong includes a discussion of theoretical approaches to Wanghong, a description of the stages of development of Chinese social media, the history of Wanghong in China and a description of different kinds of Wanghong. Due to the difference between the cultural backgrounds, I think it is necessary to give some details about these to let readers quickly understand and analyze the cases in chapters.

### 2.1 Research platform：Sina Weibo

### 2.1.1 Introduction of Sina Weibo

Sina Weibo is one of the most popular social media in China today. In fact, The emergence of some Wanghong, and a series of performance after their fame will to a certain extent reflect on the Weibo platform. In this article, the three Wanghongs I studied are mainly using Sina Weibo as the primary active platform, and other social media such as Wechat play an auxiliary role to maximize the high viewer traffic and achieve the goal of attracting fans. So first, I will introduce Sina Weibo.

Next, I will use @uktimes as an example, to briefly introduce the Weibo interface.
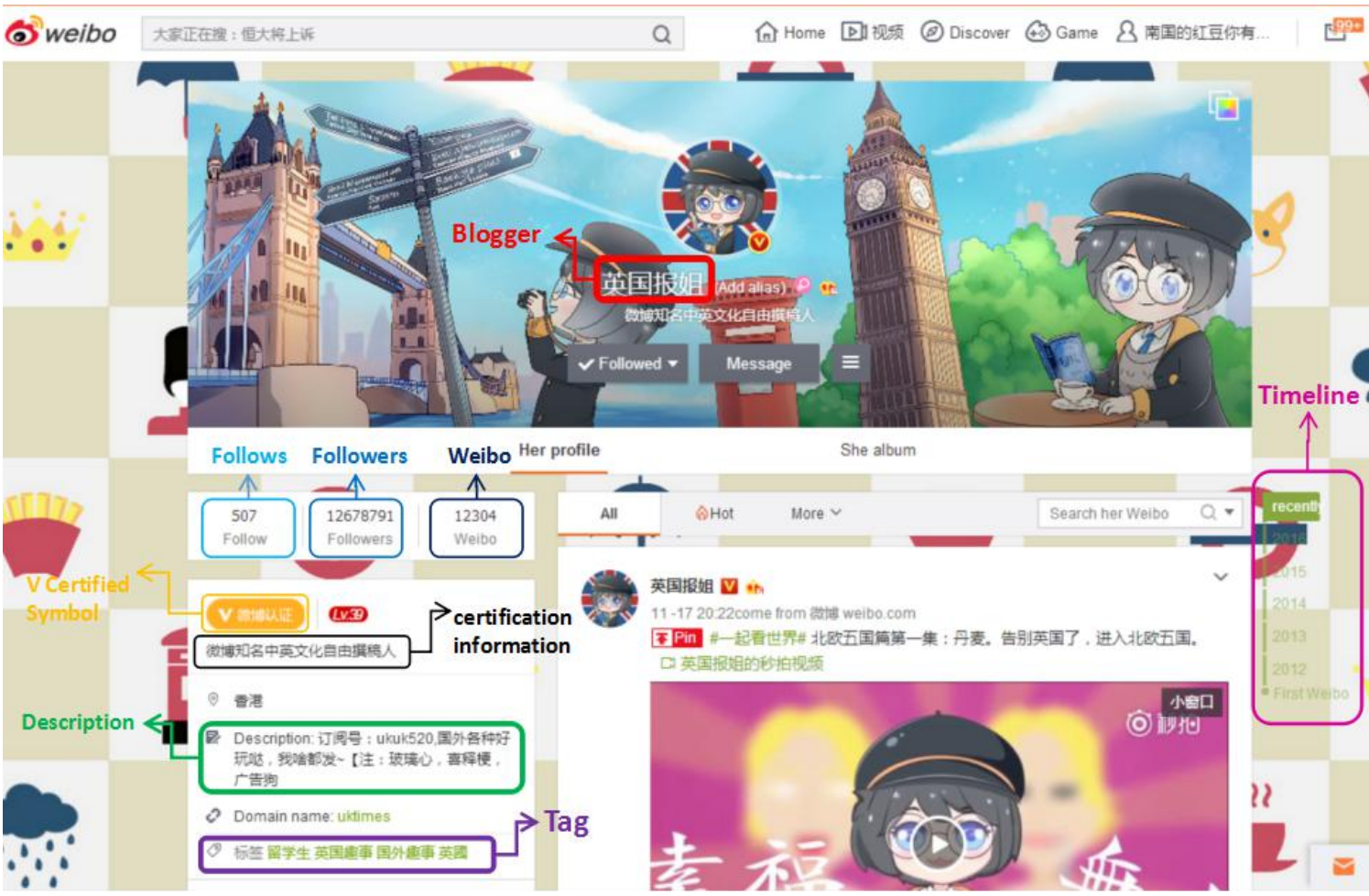
Figure 1. The homepage of @uktimes on 12.11.2016.

When Weibo users enter on someone's homepage, they can see the relevant information of bloggers.

In the primary interface, users can see the Blogger's Nickname, and her Follows, Followers and the amount of Weibo posts. Users on Weibo can follow other users or follow hashtags or a group. "Followers" means that users who follow a specific user, hashtag or group, and "Follows" refer to the users, hashtags or groups that a user follows.

In the bottom left of Figure 1, you can see the orange logo "V Weibo Certification," this logo is a sign to prove that @uktimes has met certain conditions, so Sina Weibo has certified her account as genuine and regarded it as an influential account; the

following sentence "Famous British and Chinese culture freelance on Sina Weibo" is her certification information. The description (marked in green in figure 1) is the blogger's self-description. In Weibo, each "tag" is a link, and when the user clicks on a label, you can find people with the same tag. On the right is the Timeline, which allows the user to select a range of time and to see the blogger's posts during that time.

If there is an indication of "See More" under the personal profile of the blogger, we can enter another interface for her personal information, as shown in Figure 2. Here, we can see her further information: Nickname, Location, Gender, Domain Name, Slogan, and Registration Time.



**Basic info**

Nickname英国报姐
Location :香港
 Gender : Female
Domain Nhttp://weibo.com/uktimes
 Slogan : 订阅号：ukuk520,国外各种好玩哒，我啥都发~【注：玻璃心，喜释梗，广告狗
Registratic2012-11-10

**Tag information**

Tags :　留学生　　英国趣事　　国外趣事　　英國

Figure 2. More information about @uktimes. (Screenshot on 12.11.2016)

Weibo personal homepage is very similar to Twitter's (Suh and Hong, 2010). In Weibo, the users can publish text, Emotion (Emoji), Photo, Video, Topic (with hashtag) and Article (In Article, users can edit and write a long article in an editor. When the article is completed, it will be appended to the post as a URL). (See Figure 3)

Figure 3. Weibo text box English interface.

Users can also choose who can view the content they publish, including Public, Friend Circle, Only me, and Group view only. (See Figure 4)
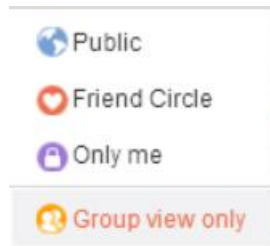


Figure 4. The audiences users can choose.

Unlike Twitter, Weibo has canceled the 140-character limitation from January 2016, and the limit characters increased to 2000 words; but the part which is more than 140 words will be concealed behind a "See More (展开全文)" link. Users will see the full content when they press the link.

### 2.1.2 Development of Sina Weibo

Sina Weibo was released by Sina Company in 2009, and from a Western perspective can be described as a combination of Twitter and Facebook. From a functional perspective, Weibo is closer to Twitter, and it is mainly used to look through current events, or to follow people, topics or groups which you are interested, and to publish your views or situations on the public platform.

In China, there are many social public platforms, and they focus on different fields, such as Wechat (chat function just likes that of Whatsapp, Line; additionally, people can also use it to access information), Zhihu (like Quora, Q&A site).

From the following Figure 5 we can see, Weibo has been the third popular social media in China for three consecutive years, although the proportion of users is decreasing year by year, it is still a critical social media. We can see from Figure 6, in mobile devices, Weibo in the social field ranked second, which plays a vital role in public social life.
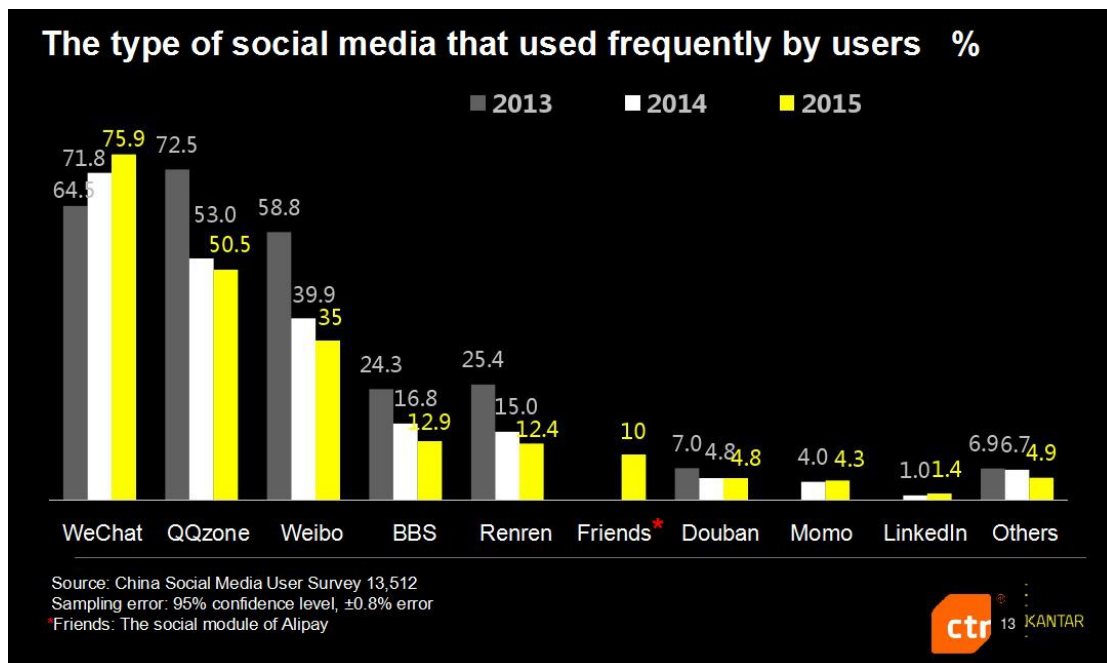


Figure 5: Types of social media which used frequently.
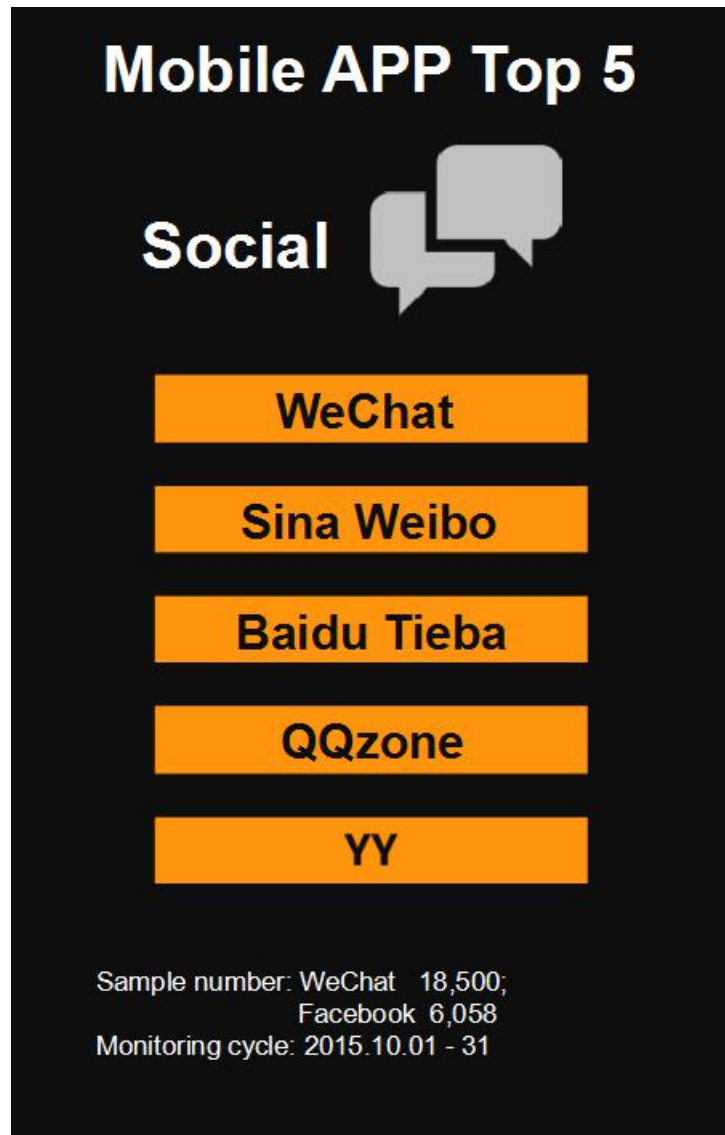
Figure 6: Types of social media which used frequently.

However, in the number of social platforms, Weibo has instant, convenient and fast access to real-time information advantages, and, Weibo not only has an impact in the news media, entertainment and other fields in sports but also plays an important role on spreading information about finance, tourism, TV series. According to a 2015 Weibo user development report released by the Sina Weibo data center, as of September 2015, the number of Sina Weibo monthly active users (MAU) was up to 222 million, and September average daily active users (DAU) was up to 100 million people.[1] Compared with the same period of previous year, the number of active users

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[1] 2015 Weibo user development report . http://data.weibo.com/report/reportDetail?id=333

has increased, so as a social platform, Weibo still has some advantages.

Weibo plays an essential role in Internet socialization in China. Therefore, I take Weibo as my research platform and Wanghong in this platform as examples, which can better reflect contemporary China Wanghong phenomenon in the network environment.


## 2.2 Wanghong (网红)

In recent years, Wangluo Hongren has become a very popular group break into Internet users' normal life and become the focus of the discussion among ordinary people.


Next, I refer to Li and Shen's article "Communication Interpretation of the Network Red Phenomenon," Wu's paper "The Study of Content Production about Web Celebrity Economy - Take Papi, Zhang Dayi, Xiao Zhi for example.", and Xie's article "From Consumer Idols to Symbolic Reds - The Perspective of China's "Internet Reds Phenomenon" from 1998 to 2008", to summarize the development of China's Wangluo Hongren to Wanghong.


### 2.2.1 Definition, development and types

In Chinese, "Wanghong"(网红) is the abbreviation of "Wangluo Hongren." (网络红人, literally means "Internet celebrity," which refers to a person who gets attention and achievements popular online). Although "Wanghong" is the part of "Wangluo Hongren," its practical significance in the Chinese network environment has undergone a huge change. "Hongren"(红人) in the Chinese context is often understood as people who are authoritative or influential within a certain extent, and the meaning of "Hong"(红) is more extensive, it can refer to people who are very popular, and also indicate events which have continually received attention. Because of the diversity of these words' meanings, "Wanghong" can stand for not only the human but also the events, even some phenomenon. In China, then, the same word is

used to describe famous internet celebrities and other popular internet phenomena, such as memes.

### 2.2.1.1 The origin of "wanghong"

I searched in Chinese biggest search engine Baidu by using the keyword "网红," and found that the first appearance of the word "网红" was around September 2009. Netizen (yanyan9998) published a post which introduced three rich girls in Chinese Tianya BBS[2], with a title of "Internet beauty DIDI, NADIA, MIUMIU", and that was the first time "Wangluo Hongren" was abbreviated as "Wanghong." Although the word "Wanghong" appeared at that time, it was not widely used by Chinese netizens until around 2012.

In 2012, some boys and girls who received wide attention via their appearances had been accused by netizens according to their series of behaviors including showing off rich, improper behaviors, and the most important reason was the difference between their online photos and their real appearances. The word "Wanghong" was formally and widely used after this series of acts were exposed. Figure 7 shows a comparative search between "网络红人" (Wangluo Hongren) and "网红" (Wanghong) by using Baidu Index[3], we can see from 2012, "网红" (green line) gradually rose, while the search volume of "网络红人" (blue line) declined.

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[2] Tianya BBS, "Internet beauty DIDI, NADIA, MIUMIU". http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-no11-809287-1.shtml

[3] Baidu Index. https://index.baidu.com/

Figure 7: The Search volume comparison between "网络红人" and "网红" in Baidu.

The term "Wanghong" from the beginning does not cover all the concepts of popular people, objects, phenomena, etc. At the beginning, it was used as a derogatory term and to criticize some people, especially young women's improper behaviors. Next, I would elaborate on how Wangluo Hongren emerged，developed and eventually become a mature network culture— Wanghong over the course of 20 years.

### 2.2.1.2 Research on Wanghong

For Wangluo Hongren, or the "Internet celebrity"/"microcelebrity" commonly referred to by Western scholars, different scholars in different cultures have their understanding. In the article "Ethical Reflection on the Reason for the Formation of Internet Celebrity," Chinese researcher Hua Zhao defined Wangluo Hongren from its producing reasons, he argues that "so-called "Wangluo Hongren" are the direct product of economic relations' diversification and profit relations' multi-polarization. Their common feature is that they are based on the network as their communication media so that their strong desire of performance can be achieved on the internet instead of offline, and their fame will reach a peak because of internet users supporting or despising them"(Zhao, 2007). This view is very similar to Theresa Senft's view of microcelebrity. Microcelebrity is defined by Theresa Senft in her book *Camgirls: Celebrity and Community in the Age of Social Networks*. She defines

microcelebrity as "a new style of online performance that involves people 'amping up' their popularity over the Web using technologies like video, blogs, and social networking sites." (Senft 2008, p25) This definition is firstly raised in 2008, but obviously，the situation and the meaning expressed can be found in the network no matter in China or other countries since a long time ago.

From the exposition of Zhao and Senft's, we can see that both scholars argue that Wangluo Hongren /microcelebrities use the network as an external tool in the process of pursuing fame; public positive participation or boycotting participation plays a very significant role; at the same time, no matter the performance or expression of desire, they are the subjective factors that make a celebrity famous.

Some academics like Yingchun Xie and Zijuan Zhang have classified "Internet celebrity" according to the different media carrier forms, (Zhang, 2011; Xie, 2009) which they divide into "the era of Text internet celebrity", "the era of Graphic internet celebrity", and "the era of Video internet celebrity". In the latest Chinese "Internet celebrity" research, many scholars also borrow this system and make a similar classification, such as Boxun Sun and Mingli Chu, in their article "The Development of "Internet Celebrity" and Its Effect on Adolescents," they assort "Internet celebrity" as "Text internet celebrity", "Graphic internet celebrity" and "Podcast internet celebrity". (Sun and Chu, 2016) From the "Internet celebrity" classification above we can see that most academics regard the development of Chinese Internet and related technology as the main basis for classifying internet celebrities. At the beginning of the development of Chinese internet, ordinary network users had to rely on Dial-up service to access the internet, which can only reach a speed of a few tens of kbps. In this case, text as a carrier is the mainstream way to disseminate and exchange information, which contributed to the fame of people who relied on writing. And after 2000, the application of broadband has greatly improved the speed of the network for network users, which naturally provided the conditions for the upload and download of pictures. In the past decade, with the large-scale use of mobile Internet technology,

the promotion of smartphones, and the rise of short video recording software and broadcast platforms, ordinary people can dynamically release their personal behavior video to the internet anytime, anywhere, and from this point of view, there are indeed more and more people relying on the release of video and becoming an internet celebrity, then so-called "Podcast Internet celebrity" era also has some truth.

No matter about the internet celebrity or microcelebrity, we can see that Chinese and foreign scholars are discussing and researching people as the principal research object, and the discussion of Chinese academics mostly criticizes Wanghong's speech and behavior (Shen & Wang 2016); or discusses the Wanghong economy (Liu & Qin 2016). And Western scholars also tend to discuss how microcelebrities establish identity in the network to create their own brand. (Abidin, 2015; Marwick, 2013). But in the case of Chinese current situation, no matter Chinese scholars or foreign scholars, I think they missed some part of the discussion of Wanghong, although generally speaking, what we call Wanghong as discussed by the above scholars is cyber star, but I will elaborate more detail in the next part about the meaning of Wanghong in current Chinese network culture.

### 2.2.1.3 The evolution from Wangluo Hongren to Wanghong

#### Wangluo Hongren 1.0: From 1998 to 2004

The so-called Wangluo Hongren 1.0 era is the widespread use of the text. People got attention by writing novels or publishing unusual remarks. Chinese scholars (Li and Shen, 2017; Wu, 2017; Xie, 2009)generally believe that the rise of the first generation of Wangluo Hongren was in 1998, which a Chinese writer Zhiheng Cai published a network novel named *The first intimate contact*, because of the writing style combining with the popular culture and language expression at that time, the novel was famous to the public, and Zhiheng Cai also became the first Wangluo Hongren. In May 2003, a network writer Mu Zimei released her internet sex diary, whose

content was bold and straightforward, and she became a controversial Wangluo Hongren. (Xie, 2009) Writers were the main object in this generation of Wangluo Hongren, whether they wrote novels or diaries. Xie suggested that "Mu Zimei leads to the 'Mu Zimei phenomenon" which "marks the decline of Text internet celebrity era." (Ibid) However, she also opened another era. With Mu Zimei, the talent was no longer the only to get attention: spoofing, being bold, grandstanding, or challenging rationality and traditional concepts have become another trend.

## Wangluo Hongren 2.0: From 2004 to 2012

In Wangluo Hongren 2.0 era famous people relied mainly on pictures and videos, but the content of pictures and videos were various, humorous and funny ideas, pure and lovely appearance, flirtatious posture, or maverick language, all contents which can attract people's attention would be used intentionally or unintentionally, and not surprisingly, some of them indeed stood out successfully. 芙蓉姐姐(Furong Jiejie) became one of the typical representatives who described herself as full of narcissism: "I have an enchanting and glamorous appearance and pure temperament so that no matter where I go, I will attract everybody." (Da, 2009) However, with the exposure of her photos, which she at first had not shared, people found she was not so-called "beautiful" in the traditional sense. The "discord" was zoomed and rendered wantonly by network users, who ridiculed her unreasonable confidence but also pushed her to the media outlet wave. After becoming famous, she seems to try to be among the ranks of "celebrities" by the accumulated fame, such as releasing singles, starring in the movie, but did not lead to an even greater sensation. However, from her personal Weibo introduction, now she has become Beijing Furong International Culture Media Co., Ltd. CEO, which may benefit from her "Wangluo Hongren" experience. Another example is the Chinese "lip-syncing" meme's originator, Back-Dorm Boys, because of their exaggerated facial expressions in their "cover" of the song of Backstreet Boy using lip-syncing, they became famous. (Shifman 2013, 106)

### Wanghong 1.0: From 2012 to 2016

From 2012, the term "Wangluo Hongren" was gradually simplified to the term "Wanghong"，which became the more popular word people would like to use.

But at that time the meanings of Wangluo Hongren and Wanghong had a considerable extent of repeat, "Wangluo Hongren" contains "Wanghong." "Wanghong", during this period, always referred to a girl who has a good-looking and sweet face (the classic characteristics are the big eyelid, pointed chin, and high nose) and enchanting body (which can be understood as the model who is active on the internet instead of on a real stage). They voluntarily uploaded photos to the network, and people who were extremely outstanding and acted full of personality would stand out, and became a high-profile person who was award the name of "网红"(Microcelebrity). However, as mentioned above, they are often criticized by netizens because of misconduct, aesthetic single, and self-materialization. So we can understand that, from the beginning of the word Wanghong widely used, it often contains the people's intense criticism of emotion and a strong derogatory color.

### Wanghong 2.0: From 2016 to present

The wanghong 2.0 era is in many ways similar to current web celebrity, although the public still can not jump out of the context that "microcelebrity" is equivalent to "online fashion model." Now the term "Wanghong" includes not only people but also things, even some network phenomena. Emotionally, it transits gradually from pejorative to a neutral word. The boundary of Wanghong 1.0 era and Wanghong 2.0 era is very vague, but a notable event during this period was Papi 酱 receiving structured finance. On March 21st, 2016, funny video blogger Papi 酱 accepted 12 million investment, which shocked network users. Papi 酱 attracted many fans by shooting the short videos and Zhenyu Luo, one of her investors, once said: "I spent more than three years to attract six million followers, while Papi 酱 got 10 million

fans in just four months. "(Jiang, 2016) And this event awoke people that in addition to cater for audiences' aesthetic glimpse by face and body of the "network model," people working on the internet also have other ways to attract the audience and capital injection.

### *2.2.1.4 Different types of Wanghong*

"Hong" can be used as a noun in the word "Wanghong" which means "popular people." Alternatively as an adjective that states a person, an object, and a popular event. The development of Wanghong in China so far includes both the so-called "Internet celebrity" or "microcelebrity" by Senft and Marwick as well as the "pieces of cultural information". (Shifman 2013, 18) Wanghong is more than just an individual "amping up" (Senft 2008, 25), it also covers some of the unexpected fame and events. Ultimately, "Wanghong" triggers "a shared social phenomenon" (Shifman 2013, 18), which is also a feature of Meme, so I tend to define Wanghong in such a macro way and to apply to all types of Wanghong classified.

I have identified five different types of Wanghong, which I described below. For each type, I give a Chinese example, as well as an example of a Western equivalent.

1.  Social figures who make a stir depending on uploaded photos taken by chance.
For the time being, the vast majority of Wanghong belonging to this category are well-known for being spread over the Internet, with very few likely to appear in traditional media first and then into the network. In this type, because people passively become Wanghong, not everyone is proud of this "fame," and some people even feel too much of the concern to disturb their daily lives. Wanghong could be forgotten in a very short period of time if it is not subjective to maintain his or her reputation.

This kind of Wanghong in China we usually call "Wanghong picture" "Wanghong expression," they are mainly used by the public to express their feelings, and this so-called "Wanghong expression" survival time is also very short on the Internet. As long as a few years, or just a few days, he or she will disappear online, few people will mention again.

Example from China:

Tianxian MM: as a common and far-city mysterious Qiangzhai girl, Tianxian MM with her pure expression was well known by a photo posted in the travel news by a network user named "浪迹天涯何处家"(lang ji tian ya he chu jia).



Figure 8: Tianxian MM

Example from abroad:

Syrian father: A Syrian father was famous by a photo that he was selling pens with his sleeping daughter in his arm.

Figure 9: Syrian father

2. The actions, behaviors or expressions make by ordinary people become internet memes, but the people per se do not as famous as his/her meme. People may be not so interested in the figure behind n this kind of memes.

Example from China:

Little Fatty: He was well known by his cunning glance taken in 2003, and this expression inspired the enthusiasm of whole Chinese people to photoshop his face, and the enthusiasm even spread through the entire world in 2006. (Kim, 2012) And Little Fatty also became one of the most famous Chinese faces.



Figure 10: Little Fatty

Example from abroad:

Lazy College Senior: He was famous by a picture posted by Redditor ikfotsur titled "a young man drinking beer" as Lazy College Senior with capital "5 minutes later for first class/ skip entire day". Then the picture became a Lazy College Senior meme because of the participation of network users.


Figure 11: Lazy College Senior

3. The intentional Internet celebrity, also known as the normal Microcelebrity, means people who intend to become Microcelebrity via whether disclosing their own photos, or publishing radical and compelling remarks, or performing hilarious actions. They are consciously voluntary to be famous on the internet.

Example from China:

Papi 酱: She was famous for uploading original videos made by voice changer. She focused on many controversial topics in life by discussing and reproducing with an exaggerated and interesting way, satirizing and challenging the traditional concepts. Her fame also provides a lot of new meanings to Microcelebrity.

Example from abroad:

Agnes Lovise: She is a 20 years old Norwegian make-up artist, and is famous for her makeup blog and Youtube Channel which she started six years ago. She posted a lot of videos with information about make-ups, and every video can gain about 10,000 viewers. She is considered a famous Microcelebrity in Norway.

There are some special groups under this category, who are called "Marketing Accounts." They rarely appear as real identities, instead of that, they attract fans by using one or more unique talents or topics. They can be contributed by one person or a group, and their authenticity is often lower than normal Microcelebrity even though they seem to give a "real identity" to the accounts.

Example from China:

@博物杂志 (Sina Weibo): It is the official account of a journal named Bowu, and was famous by communicating with its followers actively via answering vegeto-animal questions interestingly and briefly.

Example from abroad:

@FootyHumour (Twitter): It is an account posting football-related jokes on Twitter, and was famous by commenting football news humorous with related pictures, videos or interesting capitals.

4. Object Wanghong

Example from China:

Mao Sun: Pandas are loved by all over the world, but only this panda's name can be remembered depending on its unique posture. Since the eve of 2017, Mao Sun became the focus of media because of its unusual lifestyle, lying on the branches. This "selling of cute" was enlarged and spread by media, and attracted a lot of people to take photos with it.

Example from abroad:

Screaming Chicken: It was wildly used as a prop in stage performance, and become a famous Kuso tool, (means be funny, fool people and make people laugh) because it frequently occurred in TV shows. At the beginning, some Youtubers made weird sounds by it and attracted people's attention. And then it became an Object Microcelebrity after played in different ways in Kuso videos.

5. Phenomenon Wanghong, is the phenomenon meme that a special action copied by people and then re-upload with various interesting results.

This Phenomenon meme may include one or more elements and techniques such as Reaction Photoshops, Photo Fads, etc. from Shifman's meme classification, which can be seen as a new variant of meme after the screen capture function and short video recording function appear. (Shifman 2013, 100-101)

Example from China:

"Guess how much they are": There was a phenomenon of "asking the prices of make-ups to boyfriends" happening in Chinese internet platform Weibo. And it is wildly discussed because of the huge differences in the prices between the real ones and what the boyfriends' guess. A lot of female network users followed this and returned various results online.

Example from abroad:

"The Beauty Blender meme": A beauty blender's picture with capital "Send your boyfriend or male friend/siblings this pic and asking him 'what is this?' Post their responses in the comments." wildly spread online. And they usually attached with the answers that the female network users got from their male friends. This meme was well responded then.

To sum up, we can notice that Chinese Wanghong is overlapping with the microcelebrity which western society generally accepted, but with a wider range. The same thing is that they all include the people who are interested in making themselves famous on the web and maintaining their reputation through various means. The difference is that, in the strict sense, Chinese Wanghong also includes those who do not intend to be exposed in the network environment and cause a sensation (in the next personal development, they may not have the willingness to be famous or earn money depending on that); the stars in reality who are prominent in the network; other species or even non-living; the account manipulated by individual or team and so on. But no matter in which situation, they are using the Internet and advanced technology to increase their popularity in the network.

In this thesis, for the convenience of discussion, I mainly focus on people who are seen as Wanghong, especially on those who show a purposeful, operational and subjective intention to become a Microcelebrity. Also, there are some people getting famous not depending on their willing, but in the condition of Chinese Internet environment, they become "celebrity" somehow. I would like to include these in my discussion, who are usually not considered as Microcelebrity by the foreign academic.

### 2.2.2 The reason for the success of Wanghong

In the question of how a Wanghong (microcelebrity) became successful, Chinese and foreign scholars have given their own answers. Interestingly, the standpoints of the two sides are relatively different: foreign scholars are more prone to focus on how a microcelebrity contributes to their personal branding; (Marwick 2013, Senft 2013) while Chinese scholars tend to use the knowledge of linguistic and communication to analyze the market and the audience, and they are more concerned about the external factors which lead a microcelebrity to get fame (Zhang 2011). Here I would like to combine two perspectives to elaborate the reason for the famous of Wanghong.

*2.2.2.1 Internal factors: Wanghongs'self-management.*

Unlike the audience in the mass media era, audiences today become consumers who can manipulate the market. This change in status can be explained by Henry Jenkins's concept affective economics. Affective economics refers to "a new discourse in marketing and brand research that emphasizes the emotional commitments consumer make in brands as a central motivation for their purchasing decisions"(Jenkins, 2006). This new marketing theory emphasizes consumers' emotional factors when they are watching or purchasing. Although the concept of "affective economics" is used to explain the strategic adjustment of   programs and advertisements made by television producers to their audiences, in the Internet age, especially considering the rise of participation culture, affective economics is an essential thing to some of Wanghong, who are just like the microcelebrities Marwick describes, hope to maintain popularity "through ongoing fan management" (Marwick, 2013).

In her book: *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity, and Branding in the Social Media Age*, Alice Marwick borrows Robert Sternberg's words to present the requirement that a person needs to want to be a microcelebrity: "Micro-celebrity practice requires a degree of self-commodification to create a publicizable personality ... performers now intentionally compose their persona for the market, and do so through methods learned from the celebrity world "(Marwick, 2013). On the internet, a distinctive identity is a key for Wanghong who wants to survive in the fierce market competition.

**The establishment of self-branding**

No matter whether you are a tech geek or make-up artist, a film-maker or song-coverer, the network is just like a huge talent show market, some talented people will always be selected from the crowd by the audience who are the judges. The establishment of Self-branding includes both self-identification and value judgments of Wanghong, and implies their estimates for the online market. In this process, some people may insist on their initial brand, but other people adjust their position

gradually. Here I will briefly describe several very common Wanghong self-branding methods.

1. Kuso

On the surface, the term "Kuso" can be understood as "fun," "hilarity," which was originally used "as an expletive or an interjection, used as the English equivalent of 'shit!'" (Shah, 2009) but which now in Chinese network culture can be used as a verb. The word came from Japan into China, and had a significant development when it was widely used by Chinese network users. Now, Kuso culture has become an indispensable cultural form on internet. There are two reasons for the rise of Kuso culture: Firstly, marginalized groups have gained a greater discourse space due to the emergence of high technology. Relying on new media, they try to subvert and deconstruct the sanctity of mainstream culture and elite culture and to express their intentions and political demands; secondly, through the way of playing narrative, people try to escape the pressure in real life, and seek a sense of inaction to express the rebellion to social control (Zeng, 2012; Shah, 2009).

However, it is not easy to target oneself as a "Kuso" Wanghong, whether one is relying on text, pictures, or videos. Audiences want to see fresh, non-repetitive content, but one person can create limited cultural content in their available time. When some Wanghong cannot meet the needs of the audience, they have to grab network resources, and sometimes even had to misappropriate the wisdom of others results. Therefore, many Wanghong would like to use kuso as the main style of expression, but they could involve in many fields, such as with kuso style to comment game, to spread science knowledge, and even a lot of make-up artists would set up a "funny" type personality.

Also, many people who become "Wanghong" accidentally are mostly Kuso type.  Because of the particularity of action, expression, of body language, they are

made to memes, and the real identity of them would be exposed by widely disseminated memes.

## 2. 萌(Moe)

萌 (Pronunciation is Meng, English is Moe), originates from the Japanese character "Meng え" (implying someone creates a very strong and profound emotions to some people or things, these emotions include love, admiration, perseverance, excitement; the object includes both physical and fictional objects).(Ibid)

In Chinese, the meaning of "Meng" is as follows:

1. Noun, means Meng culture or something/someone has kind of lovely property;

2. Adjective, means cute;

3. Verb, means someone is crazy or fascinated by something. (Huang, 2012)

If you use "萌" as a key word in Baidu image search engine, most of them are cartoon figures, small animals, children, and girls with innocent eyes. In Chinese network, although there are many women commercializing their own body to meet a certain degree of "male gaze", (Yiu and Chan, 2017) but more people have a sympathetic emotion to small things, "smallness, compactness, softness, simplicity, and pliancy — call forth specific affects: helplessness, pitifulness, and even despondency". (Ngai, 2005) For this reason, a group of bloggers who rear pets and upload the cute pictures and video become "affiliated Wanghong", although true fame should be attributed to their pets. For example, Sina Weibo's famous Wanghong @回忆专用小马甲, at an early stage, he was famous to releasing some tenderness, sadness, memories of love posts, but in the long run, even fans, cannot stand long-term phony content with full of negative emotions. To gain his audience's attention again, @回忆专用小马甲 bought a cat and a dog: he began to raise a Samoyed named 妞妞 (Niuniu) and a Scottish Fold named 端午(Duanwu) and sharing many pictures of these cute animals, he received widespread attention. This shows how a Wanghong can work very deliberately to rebrand himself. Abidin described three types of cute in the article

"Agentic cute (^. ^): PastichingEast Asian cute in Influencercommerce": the Doll, the Darling, and the Dear. These three types of cute represent "infantile infantile cuteness," "vulnerability" and "extravagant lifestyle envied by other women". (Abidin, 2016) My example above is in line with "the Doll" cute, as Konrad Lorenz 's Kindchenschema (1943) argued, the baby's facial features motivate humans concern and care of babies, and the application of this theory, not limited to infants, but also animals.

Overall, most of China's Wanghong follows Abidin's three categories. Interestingly, there is another cute, or "Moe," often referred to as "silly Moe," which can be interpreted as a silly behavior, At the same time, it is also cute. In many cases, some male Wanghong, will be called "silly Moe" and attract followers.

## Authenticity, the core of self-branding

Authenticity is often referred to as important for internet celebrities and Wanghong. Marwick argues that authenticity is an essential part of the practice of self-branding. "Authenticity is viewed as real, unqualified, and biological or even genetic." (Marwic 2013, 198) Abidin also acknowledges in many articles that this authenticity has a direct and close relationship with the establishment of microcelebrity's popularity. (Abidin, 2015; Ots&Abidin, 2015) Now I will divide authenticity into three layers. The first layer is showing the real characters, the second layer is exposing the specific information, and the third layer is interacting with their fans.

Early in the TV media era, scholars realized that "'personal disclosure' is a key focus for the talk show interview where 'guests appear to be showing us their 'real' selves，where they can discuss how they 'feel' and reflect on their private lives with impunity'" (Tolson, 2001). Although some people argued that the 'real selves' they showed to others are just the extension of their past acting experience, (Ibid) audiences are often willing to believe that these characters are their real inside

thoughts and personalities. In the internet era this point becomes extremely essential. Many traditional stars' behaviors on the social media platform are also expected to see on reality TV show. For example, Robert Downey Jr. has the same kind of personality with a strong sense of humor and rebelliousness in the tweets on his twitter, his address on the news conference, and even the settings of the characters he acted in the dramas and movies. And it is this trinity that makes audience admit and accept those personalities as his 'authentic' characters.

The second layer of authenticity is the exposing of specific information. This is tightly connected to people's strong desire of peeping at others' private life. When audiences want to know more about one specific Wanghong, they want to get more detail information about this person and let him or her become the "familiar stranger" (Senft 2013, p352). However, no one can promise this authenticity's objectivity. It is just seen as "simply a shared set of beliefs about the nature of things we value in the world" (Grazian 2005, p12). Just due to this reason, in recent years mainstream celebrities rely on posing informations on the social media platforms, to give audiences a kind of pleasant sensation of interacting with real idols directly without the block of agency companies (Marwick and boyd, 2010).

In the third layer, Wanghong's engagement with audiences can include both online communication and offline real-life meetings. Here, the audience have more opportunities to make simple contacts with Wanghong, and it does not seem to cost Wanghong more to engage with Likes or comment with emoji, which makes the interaction be a very simple step. Of course, there are also some Wanghong who, in order to establish a deeper relationship with followers and prepare for others a beautiful myth of "easy access to celebrities," some of whom hold small gatherings and others who hold large-scale meet-ups, talks, etc.

Like Marwick argues, so-called authenticity is by no means to do "truly authentic actions" (Marwick, 2013). Rather, authenticity is a tactical expression. The true

performance, which is in line with a Wanghong / microcelebrity real character and also meet the expectations of the audience, makes them easier to exist in the Internet era.

I discussed above two factors related to the establishment of self-branding, in fact, Abidin et al. make their own explanations, including "endearment and personal language, authenticity through unaltered 'behind the scenes' material, commonality with readers by displaying shared mundane practices (despite a luxurious lifestyle), and real-life meetings with their followers".(Abidin&Ots 2015) Coincidentally, although my classification of different strategies for self-branding is not exactly the same as theirs, we express very similar content. Their research is mainly based on the microcelebrity phenomenon of the Internet society in Southeast Asia and the Western countries, which makes me have reason to believe that the commonalities in cyberculture exist both in the East and in the West.

### 2.2.2.2 External factors：Internet users carnival and Fans

In an article by the Chinese scholar of Wanghong, Ma, he uses Bakhtin's "Carnival Theory", and explains the reason why the Wanghong can be widely sought after by internet users from another perspective: he described the network as same as the Carnival Square, this kind of "national" and "free" (Ma, 2016) scene blurred the boundaries of ordinary people and privileged persons, the culture of Wanghong becomes a national and carnival culture by the help of all the people. M.M. Bakhtin made the following division of folk culture in his study of Rabelais: "1. Ritual spectacles: carnival pageants, comic shows of the marketplace. 2. Comic verbal: parodies both oral and written, in Latin and in the Vernacular. 3. Various genres of billingsgate: curses, oaths, popular blazons" (Bakhtin 1984, 5). In the Internet age, Wanghong's behavior is more or less embodied in these three forms, or the variants of these forms: Wanghong in every era who want to be famous　are competing with the

most popular way to try to expose in front of a large number of netizens; each Wanghong who wants to fame and keep heat needs a large number of output works, whether it is text or video; and the most interesting thing is that, in the sub-culture of the network, curses are seen as a symbol of subversion of traditional culture, in a class of sub-cultural groups, curses are interpreted by fans as happiness and truth, they will also use such words to speculate Wanghong's character. Normally, successful "Blasphemies" performance will be marked with a straightforward and frank personality. (Ma, 2016)

The carnival also shows a state of nothingness. Very often, when the netizens are involved in a Wanghong event, though this participation does not bring any practical effect, people unconsciously join them. Such as the sudden activity at the end of 2016 that making a combination of Chinese idioms and English words, (such as writing 无可奉告 as 无可 phone 告, phone and 奉 have similar pronunciation) has caused widespread participation of netizens.

One important point in Bakhtin's carnivalistic theory is intimacy, also mentioned above. Most of the Wanghong who stand out from the people who desire to get the reputation are exactly the users of this point. "All distance between people is suspended, and a special carnival category goes into effect: free and familiar contact among people" (Bakhtin 1999, 123). But with the end of the "Carnival", after Wanghong harvested much reputation and stepped into the altar, they become crowned kings and queens, maintaining the attitude to the people while keeping inviolable at the same time (The simplest example is when some anti-fan deliberately attack them, their fans will counterattack as the Self-Defense Forces).

### The power of fans：Identity

When fans are following a Wanghong, they are actually engaging in a pleasant cultural consumption practice. Jackie Stacey believes that fans in the choice of their

favorite stars, are projecting a kind of their own quality on the stars, and then by copying or imitation, etc., and in the end introjecting the good quality of stars to their own (Stacey, 1994). The reason why some Wanghong can be enthusiastic support is because that fans can see themselves or someone they want to become through Wanghong. A successful Wanghong often comes out of mediocrity but breaks through mediocrity.

Some Wanghong also assume the function of the transitional object which proposed by D.W. Winnicott (Winnicott, 1953). Sometimes, the emergence of Wanghong provides a platform for fans to entrust their own feelings, Wanghong's success provides the power for their personal success, and even more, the success of Wanghong becomes a victory of fans..(Yang 2012, 34).

# 3. Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

Overall, my thesis is mainly about Wanghong, who are active on Weibo in recent years. The research is about the reasons for their emergence, fame and their influence on online society and even daily life. My research is primarily qualitative, but I also use some quantitative methods for analyzing the popularity and influence of different kinds of posts. This thesis uses "case study" as the whole research method framework, by researching @uktimes, @薛之谦, @萌大雨 YUYU as case analysis of each case study respectively. In each chapter, I also use virtual ethnography and observation to analyze them one by one, and get the final conclusion after summing up all the results from each case.

## 3.2 Choice of subjects in the case study

In the initial stage of the essay, I first selected eight Wanghong on Weibo, who are well-known in different areas, including economics, entertainment, education, beauty, history, culture, literature, and humor. In the end, I chose three of them @uktimes (Education & Entertainment), @薛之谦 (Star), @萌大雨 YUYU (Beauty). The main reason for choosing these three is that they are all the Wanghong who have strong reputations on Weibo in 2016-2017 (Weibo VIP, Orange VIP in 2016, Golden VIP in 2017) and a large number of fan base groups; their contents are all used to became the hot topic in the Weibo Hot List (on the web version of Weibo, click on the search box to see real-time charts in the drop down list); their followers are much larger than the following; they received a lot forwards, comments and likes for each posting (average number is more than 1000 in total per post).

## 3.3 Method

@uktimes

As the first subject for the case study, I conducted a long-term and real-time observation of her. My observation of @uktimes started on October 31, 2016, and from October 31 to November 7, I chose to record the total number of followers of @uktimes (20:49) at regular time every day and used the Gooseeker to catch the data of latest five pages of new followers added before 20:49. (At Weibo, the system is limited and the number of follow-ups traced by outsiders is limited to the latest five pages.) Due to the large amount of data, I eventually selected 510 results from October 31 to November 4 to do the statistical research, and finally got the statistic of fans of @uktimes (Including their number of fans, their geographical distribution, and gender balance). I also collected data on @uktimes's Follows by the same method as above. Differently, due to the small number of her Follows, so I only selected all her viewable Follows on November 4 (100 people in total) and the statistic of the fans of Follows.

Different from the overnight fame achieved by @薛之谦 and@萌大雨 YUYU (@薛之谦 got attention once again mostly because an interview video flowed into the network; @萌大雨 YUYU became famous because a before-after makeup video), the main reason I observed the followers and follows of uktimes in this case study is that @uktimes would publish more than one post per day, and just because her efforts, in other words, she posts attractive contents long-termly, (not precluding the blogger has a PR team behind her to operate this account) her number of followers is in a long-term, steady growth. So in this case I analyzed her follows and followers.

In terms of content, I chose 75 posts from September 12, 2016, to September 18, 2016, in @uktimes' posts, and decoded all posts from Style, Form, Content, Source; besides that, to clarify the audience's preferences more clearly, I decoded the most popular 20 posts in these 75posts (according the sum of reposts, comments, and likes), and drew

conclusion.

In addition, I used PKUVIS as a visualization tool to analyze the top one of these 75 posts "A series of photos in Paralympic games." Visualization expression can more intuitively indicate the status of post's reposting.

@薛之谦

As @薛之谦 has ever been a well-known public figure in the television era, I focused on how he stood out depending on Weibo in this case, especially in the era of the internet everyone can become famous and be over the hill easily. Based on this, I observed all the posts that he published from 2014 to 2016, paying particular attention to the content forms that first appeared in these posts(these forms were personally defined by me, such as long, text-based version post, long-form advertisement post). Like @uktimes, I made a summary of the style for the most popular posts, which was chosen form every month in 2014-2016, totally 36 posts. In addition, through my long-time continuous observation to Internet users, they seem to be a stronger reaction to the advertisements he posted, so I have also collected all of the ads he released in 2016 for analysis.

@萌大雨 YUYU

The observation of @萌大雨 YUYU does not require a strict real-time control, but what caught my attention was a node: before and after the most famous video of @萌大雨 YUYU went viral. So, my focus is twofold: first, why an ordinary video got popular; and second, how she worked to maintain that fame after that wave. Because the field of Make-up and Beauty where @萌大雨 involved in has become a worldwide influence area, I also observed the reaction to this video on Facebook and Twitter platforms in addition to Weibo.

## 3.4 Problem and ethical concerns

Observations on the Internet have largely ensured that I, as a researcher, can collect data without intervention or involvement, but I am not able to avoid the subjective I have in the process of encoding and decoding data. For example, in the case study of @uktimes, I can not completely objectify the content of her posts, and I can not completely define Funny, Serious, Moving, Positive (Feel good), and Trite, only divided mostly based on think of the "ordinary person" feelings from my point of view.

In addition, I tried to contact my three subjects via Weibo message, intending to conduct an in-depth interview, which of course did not attract their attention. It may well be a pity that many of my research questions and conclusion are on the surface without detecting into substance.

In terms of data collection and processing, there are some ethical questions about Internet research, including whether it will harm my research subjects and how to think about public sphere versus private sphere. (Markham & Buchanan, 2012) Since all three of my research subjects are online celebrities with more than a million followers per person, I primarily conducted objective observations and records of them; besides, they did not publish posts involving personal sensitive issues, in other words, they released content is accessible to all Internet users. In addition, according to Garcia et al.'s discussion, "the size and nature of the online forum" (Garcia et al., 2009) is an important factor to consider when space is a public space or private space. Regardless of Weibo (where an account can be registered for everyone), or my three research objects, the size of their account can be regarded as public space. The contents I observed, included, collated are the same to be seen by their million readers, so my research does not hurt their real life, internet life, personal reputation.

# 4. What do audiences like? A case study of @uktimes.

## 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will use @uktimes as research object to analyze how the style and content of posts affect popularity as analyzed through reposts and follows. First, I will give a brief introduction to @uktimes. Next, I will analyze her followers and follows. Then I will focus on her posts, summarizing the style, form, content, and source of them.

As a well-known blogger in Sina Weibo (hereinafter referred to as Weibo), @uktimes has been awarded the Gold V certified user on Weibo. Gold v certification is an upgrade version based on the Orange v certification. Orange v certified users need to meet the following conditions: binding phone number, adding a profile picture, the number of followers not less than 50, the number of followings not less than 50, at least 2 Orange v certified friends, active posts. Gold V certified users are based on this condition, besides that, the user's monthly reading volume is requested to be more than 10 million, and the number of followers more than 10,000. As a certified user, her certification information is "Famous British and Chinese culture free lance in Sina Weibo." From the opening of microblogging in 2012 so far, she published a total of 12,000 more than posts, which has already successfully helped her gain more than 12 million followers. @uktimes writes from the UK for a Chinese audience. When I quote her blog, I have translated her words into English, and include the original Mandarin in parenthesis.

In her self-introduction, she wrote: "Official Account: ukuk520, I will publish every interesting thing of foreign countries~ [Note: fragile heart, like memes, advertising dog". (订阅号：ukuk520,国外各种好玩哒，我啥都发~ (注：玻璃心，喜释梗，广告狗) Fragile heart is a network language in Chinese social media, and means that the

blogger is sensitive and does not want negative comments. The mention of "advertising dog" is a playful metaphor, which tells readers that she will feed herself by taking advertisements. This profile shows us her official account in Wechat (A cross-platform instant messaging service developed by Tencent in China.[4] As Wechat's user population is huge, so the Official Account is often used by Wanghong.)

In Weibo, everyone can choose certain "tags." The tag can be a subjective summary of their own, and it can also about interests, hobbies, career description. Through the tags, bloggers make a simple classification for themselves, therefore let other people recognize them in a quicker way and make a convince for everyone to find somebody who have common hobbies with them. In @uktimes' tags, she does the following description for herself: (see Figure 12)



标签信息

标签： 留学生  英国趣事  国外趣事  英國

Figure 12. Tags of @uktimes.

"International Students," "British anecdotes," "Foreign anecdotes" and "Britain"("留学生", "英国趣事", "国外趣事", "英国"). In fact, @uktimes was originally named "The British Student Newspaper" (2012.11-2013.8). During this period, she always posted summary information of studying in British. As her number of followers grew, she extended the content to include British anecdotes, and changed her Weibo account name from "The British Student Newspaper" to "The British Times " (2013.8-2014.8). During "British Times" period, she published content mainly from the British anecdotes with some foreign anecdotes; from August 2014, "The British

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[4]  Definition of Wechat on Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WeChat

Times" officially changed its name to" The British Newspaper Sister" (@uktimes is her domain name and can be regarded as her English account name) and continues with this name till today, which suggests that this blog has had a strong anthropomorphic characteristic, and gender differentiation has emerged. This series of changes also laid the groundwork for her subsequent interaction with other Wanghong.

From the information above, we can see that @uktimes draws attention to herself with her own strengths, and because her followers are numerous, which means she can have an impact in a certain range or field (Bakshy, 2011); at the same time, through public exposure, she also brought a certain amount of economic interests to herself. In fact, it is self-evident that Wanghong can profit economically through attention, even for large profits. Although there is no evidence that @uktimes' account was a product/thing promoted by a company since its establishment, it is undeniable that nowadays she really belongs to Gushan Culture Company. (Feng, 2016) Xiaofei Wu in his article summarizes the profit model of Wanghong as follows: 1. Personal + third-party platform, which means that individuals operate after the original primitive accumulation of the third-party platform or the personal brand, may also be active on other platforms at the same time, but its original platform for accumulation is still the main body of his/her content creation and economic income; 2. Personal + social platform + team operation, refers to the production of content through online social platforms, The team is still the core figure, in the front of the industry chain, but the team is not the only network redo first fame; 3. individuals + incubation company + social platform, refers to the small famous Wanghong hatching with Wanghong company and signing a contract, the company will take Wanghong for training, teach them how to interact and communicate with fans, how to better present themselves, and sometimes also act as a network of spy, broadcast barrage and Weibo comments to form a scale effect to attract more fans. (Wu 2017, 19-20) From this classification, @uktimes should be attributed to the third.

However, even if we are not sure whether this account is due to @uktimes individuals or the team behind her, the number of followers at 20:49 on 04.11.2017 is 14863632, and at 20:49 on 04.11.2016 was 12587063. It totally increases of 2276569, with an average daily growth of 6237 people. In this regard, the way that @uktimes attract fans still deserves our continued discussion.

## 4.2 Content

The posts that @uktimes published can be divided into three phases. The first phase is to introduce information on studying in the UK, as well as students or content about students. This stage is roughly from April 11, 2013 until May 22, 2013, (Posts from November 2012 to March 2013 have been deleted by blogger). In this phase, the blogger posted translated information from English-language websites, and the contents always combined Chinese and English. That means she had a clear orientation for attracting certain kinds of followers at the beginning: people who will go to the UK to study or have been in the UK are very welcome to follow her, and this sort of people always have a certain English ability or are interested in studying information.

From May 23, 2013 to January 2014, @uktimes was no longer simply publishing information on study abroad; news related to the United Kingdom were translated and shared as blog posts. Meanwhile, some anecdotes and news from countries other than the UK also appeared on her blog, but the contents about the United Kingdom still accounted for the vast majority of her posts.

From 2014 to now, the contents of @uktimes' microblog embrace a variety of information from around the world: news and everyday anecdotes are the types of content most often collected and translated by @uktimes. In addition, she also undertakes some advertisement from advertisers, completed the transformation from the spontaneous personal blogger to the marketing blogger.

## 4.3 The collocation of Followers and Follows

To collect information about followers of @uktimes, I use a web crawler named Gooseeker which can collect information about the followers of the target object.[5] The information includes nicknames, domain names, gender, follows, followers, amount of microblog, addresses, profile, following methods. The data collection process lasted five days (from October 31, 2016, to November 4, 2016), and information about a total of 510 followers was collected. The crawler collects information about a maximum of 100 followers each day, so this means that I gathered data about 100 of @uktimes's new followers on each of these days. I also recorded the total daily change in the number of followers of @uktimes (see Table 1)

I used the same method to collect the information of follows. @uktimes follows a relatively small number of users, which is also comparatively stable, from 503 on October 31 to 506 on November 4, so on November 1, I gather and summarize information and data of one hundred people who @uktimes followed on Weibo.

## 4.3.1 Followers

I made a five-day observation and a record of the followers of @uktimes; they were processed at the same time(20:49).

The table below is a record shows the number of followers in these five days.

| Date&Time | Amount | Increase |
|---|---|---|
| 2016.10.31 20:49 | 12,568,232 | |
| 2016.11.01 20:49 | 12,574,459 | 6227 |
| 2016.11.02 20:49 | 12,577,913 | 3454 |
| 2016.11.03 20:49 | 12,580,245 | 2332 |
| 2016.11.04 20:49 | 12,587,063 | 6818 |

Table 1: Total number of followers and number of new followers on each day.

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[5] Gooseeker: http://www.gooseeker.com/

From Table 1 we can see, the average daily increase in followers of @uktimes is about 4708 people over these five days, which can be considered as a significant growth. Compared to 14,861,632 followers of 04.11.2017, the number of @uktimes' followers have shown steady growth throughout the year.

In Sina Weibo, individuals cannot view all of other follows and followers (up to five pages at a time). Based on the rapid growth in the number of @uktimes daily followers, I collected data on the 510 followers who began to follow @uktimes during these five days.
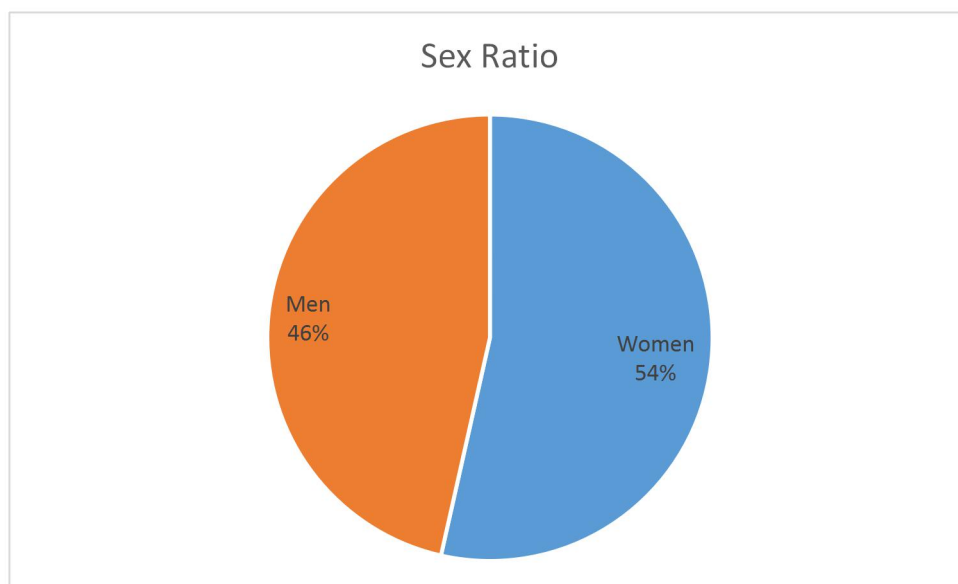


Figure 13: Gender balance of new followers of @uktimes.

From the distribution of men and women (See Figure 13), there are 8% more women followers than men followers.

This set of data is in line with the conclusion of Chen Feng's 2016 Sina Weibo study that 53.1% of new users in Weibo are women in 2016 (the total amount of population evolved in the survey was 8,373); and women followers of @uktimes account for 54% of the whole amount of new followers, which is very similar as the new women

users in Weibo.[6]



Figure 14. The geographical distribution of @uktimes new followers.

In terms of geographical distribution, (See Figure 14) the number of followers in Guangdong is the largest among the known provinces, up to 50; and the number of followers from the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Canada, and Australia also accounts for a large percentage comparing with that of other countries. From the geographical distribution of followers, it is also consistent with the distribution structure of the population in China's provinces.[7]  (See Figure 15)

[6]  2016 Sina Weibo study. http://tech.qq.com/original/archives/a124.html

[7]  2015 Weibo user development report. http://data.weibo.com/report/reportDetail?id=333
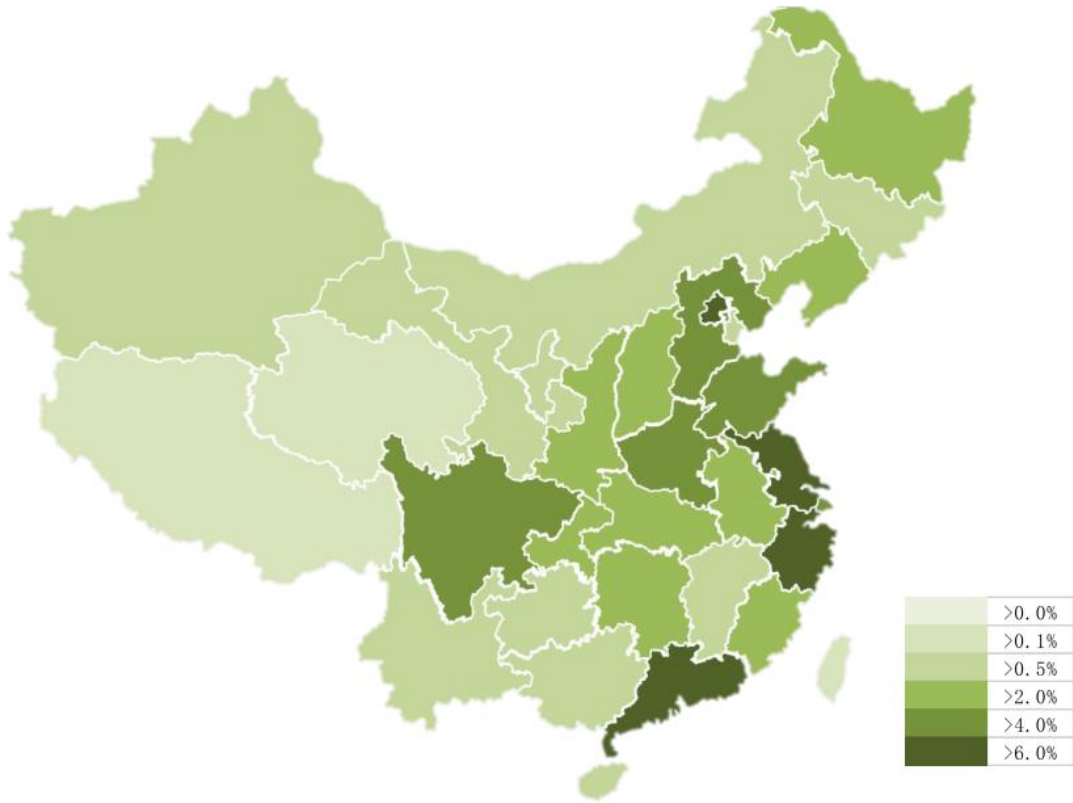
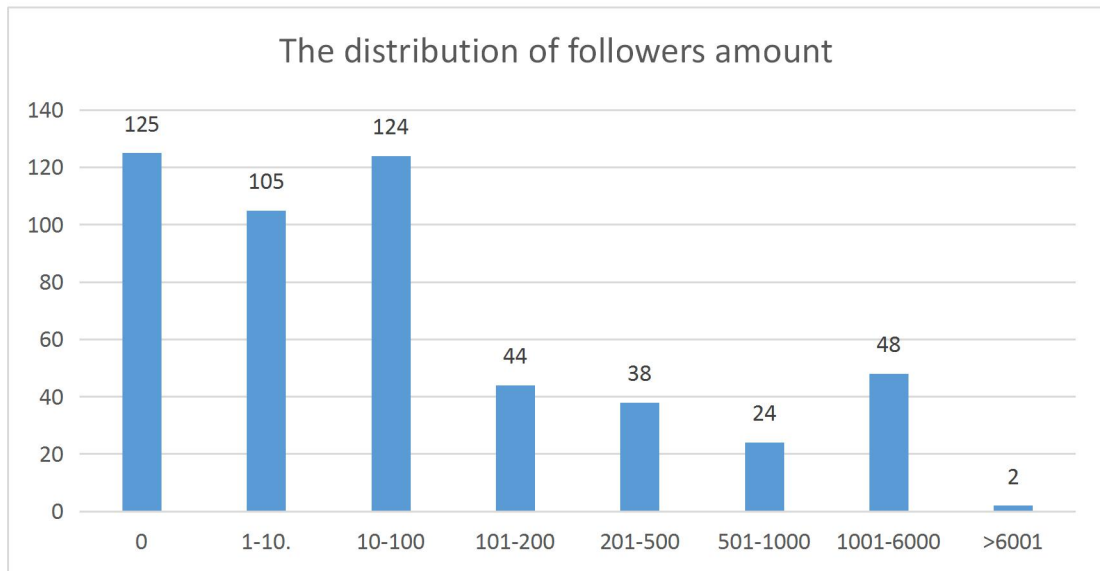Figure 15. The distribution structure of the population in China



Figure 16. The distribution of followers amount of @uktimes's new 510 followers.

This set of data shows how many followers each of @uktimes' followers had. We can see from the Figure 16, 125 of them have zero followers. (See Figure 16) Among these people, there may be some new Weibo registered users, but also may be fake

followers. In China, we generally call it " 僵尸粉 ", literally translated as "zombie fans," they are malicious registered users who are automatically generated by the system. In "A Criticism to Society (As Seen by Twitter Analytics)," Cresci defines fake followers in Twitter accounts: "Fake followers are Twitter accounts specifically created to inflate the number of followers of a target account, in order to increase its popularity and influence." (Cresci & Petrocchi, 2014) Purchasing fake followers can allow users to have a large number of followers in a short time, this false popularity can bring "borrowed boom" for the blogger. Nowadays, fake followers generated automatically by the system, who do not have any activities, have been unable to meet some bloggers' needs for "authenticity", so now there are emerging a lot of fake accounts which are difficult to identify, "especially when they are created by sophisticated programs or controlled by human beings directly. "(Zhang and Lu, 2016) Fake followers will undermine the balance and fairness of Weibo, Twitter and other social platforms balance, (Doland, 2014; Cresci et al., 2015) so many researchers are committed to how to identify and eliminate such fake followers (Cresci et al., 2015; Zhang and Lu, 2016).

## 4.3.2 Followings

Similarly, according to Sina Weibo regulations, users can only view up to five pages of microbloggers' follows, so I extracted the last five pages of the users that @uktimes' follows, which gave me information about a total of 100 users (see Figure 17). The total number of other people followed by @uktimes is small and relatively stable, about 500 people.:
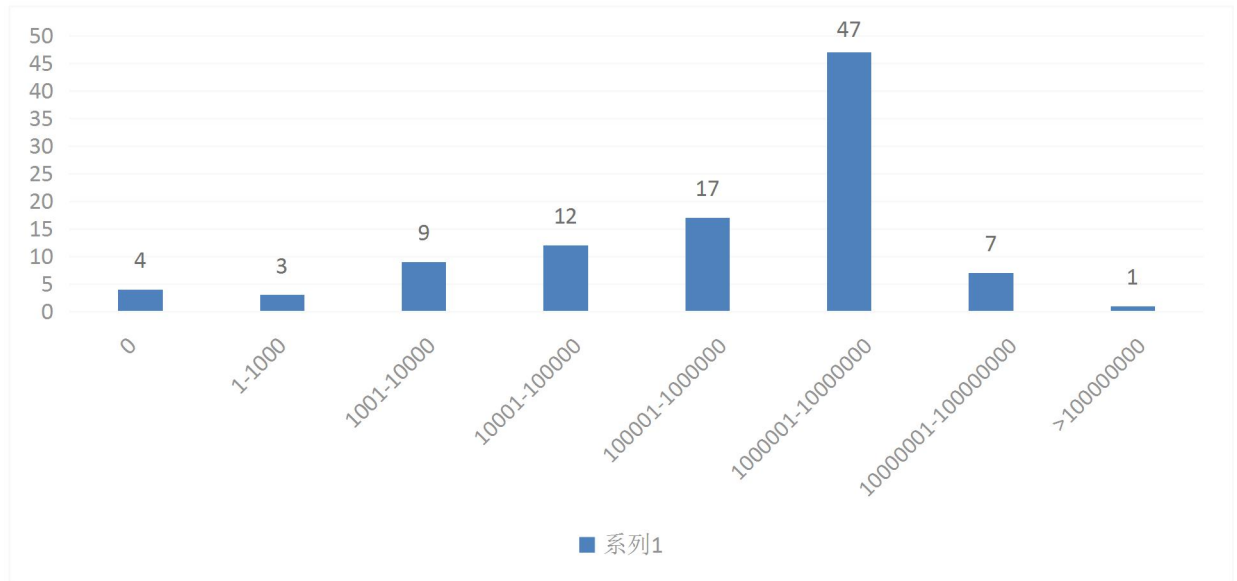
Figure 17: The number of users who follow each of the 100 most recent users that @uktimes follows.

It is possible to follow both people and topics, and follows of @uktimes' that have 0 followers are topics with a hashtag. Among the last 100 of her follows that I could access, there are 55 people in possession of more than 1 million followers. This is half of her recent follows, which means that a large proportion of her follows are also a group of influential Wanghong.

## 4.4 Content analysis

I selected the week of 37 in 2016 (September 12 to September 18) as my observation period. This week is a relatively normal week, but it is noticed that 15th was a Chinese traditional festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, and the festival lasted three days. I recorded a total of 75 posts in this week, collecting their release time, the amount of Reposts, Comments and Likes respectively, and and they are classified according to the style, form, content, source.

### 4.4.1 Style

I have already mentioned that @uktimes generally posts anecdotes about life in Britain and abroad, but within this, her posts do have different styles, and analyzing

this was my next step.

Regarding Style, I divided all posts into five categories: Funny, Serious, Moving, Positive (Feel good), and Trite. Sometimes a post can have some different styles; then it will be sorted by the most important and significant feature. Overall, a significant proportion of the posts that lead people to positive emotions (including Funny 35%, Positive / Feel good 17%, Moving 17%) are based on the posting style of @uktimes this week.
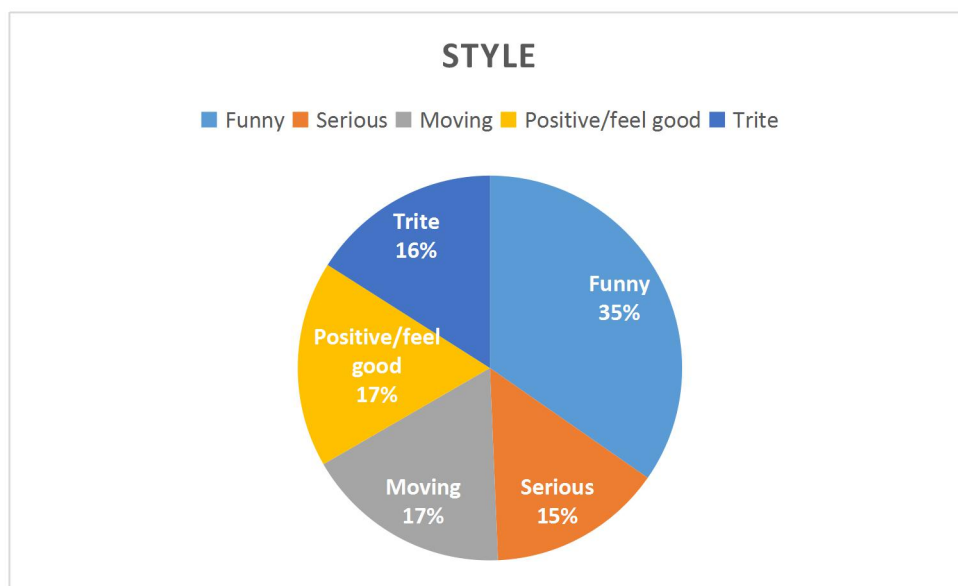


Figure 18: The distribution of different style of posts published by @uktimes.

## 4.4.2 Form

I looked at formal differences between posts. I classified all posts as Text, Photo, Emoji, Video, Gif, #Topic#, Link, and each post is not only classified as one category, one post can simultaneously contain the photo, video, gif, etc. For the category *Text*, because text maybe the most important way when microblogger releases post, so this *Text* means posts only include text.

From the table below we can see that in the 75 posts analyzed, photos are the main way to present the post, while the figure of pure Text is a few, only two in
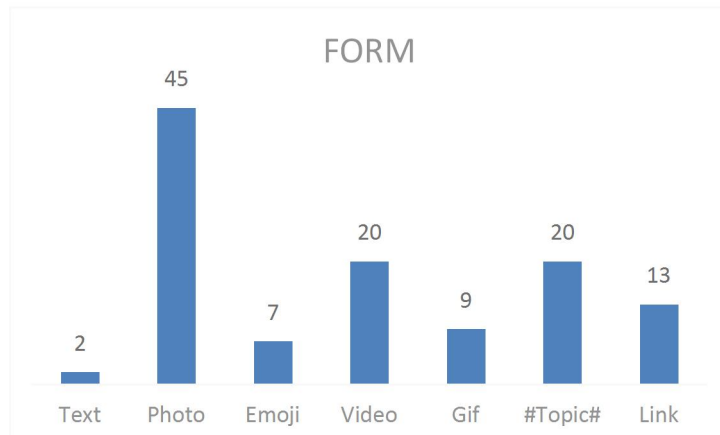
seventy-five.



Figure 19. The distribution of different forms of posts published by @uktimes.

### 4.4.3 Content

I categorized the posts into ten groups based on their content: Child, Old, Animal, Emotion, Health, News, Celebrity, Interaction with the follower, Interaction with Wanghong, and Advertisement (including Soft sell, Hard sell, Public Service Announcement and Rewards / Prizes). The proportions they occupy are shown in the following figure:
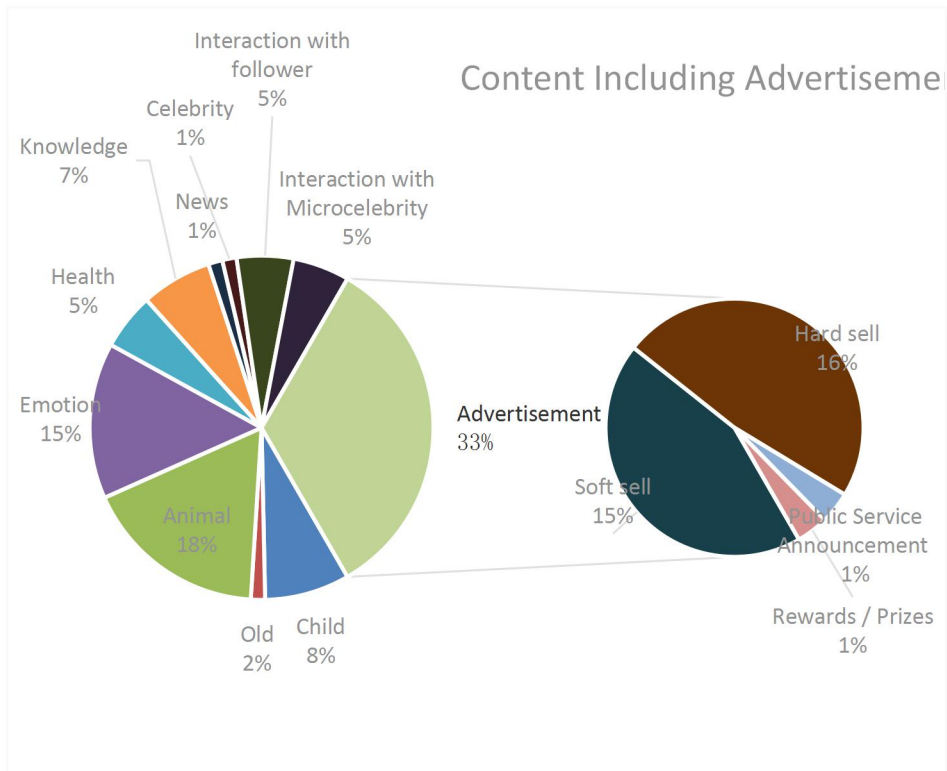
Figure 20. The distribution of different contents of posts published by @uktimes (including

advertisement).

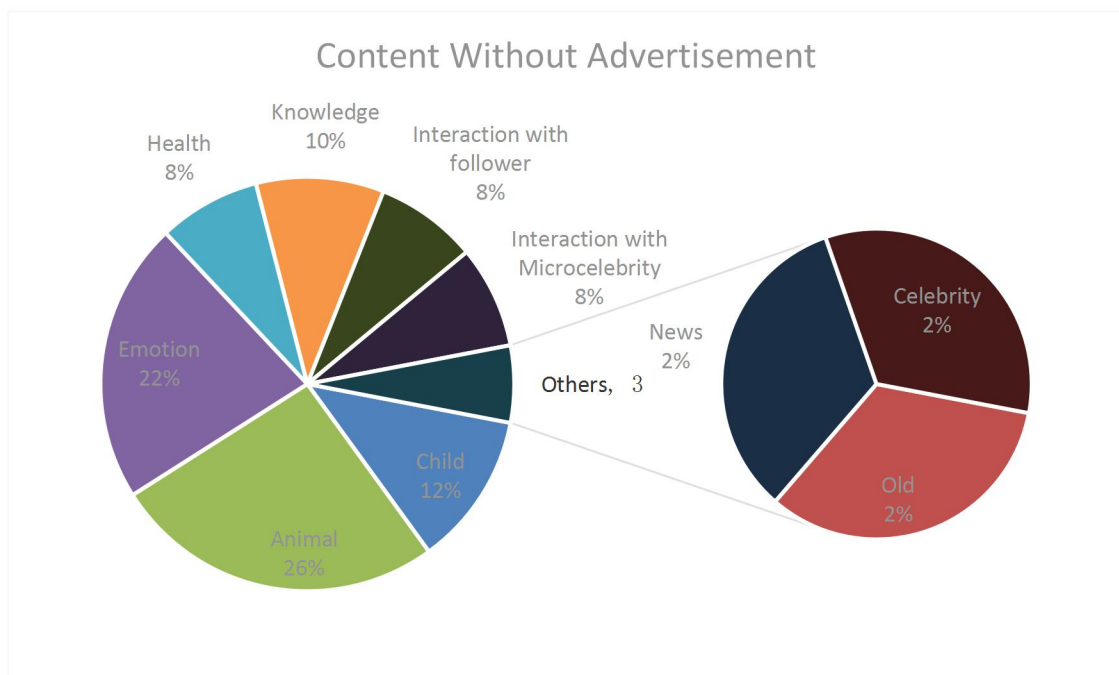When Advertisement is excluded, the proportion of other contents is:



Figure 21. The distribution of different contents of posts published by @uktimes. (without advertisement)

From what @uktimes posed on weibo, we can conclude that: content about Animals takes the most space, up to 26%, while content about News, Celebrities(which means traditional celebrities but not Wanghong) and the Old takes comparatively less space. (However, in some classification like "Emotion," stories may have something to deal with old people. Consider that @uktimes want to express more about the emotion and feelings aspect, I classify them to the "Emotion" catalog.

### 4.4.4 Source

I divided the source of @uktimes's posts into four types: Original, Reproduce, Translation and Information collection. Among these, Translation becomes a relatively specific source. Due to her advantage in English translation, some of her Weibo content comes directly from websites aboard (such as The Huffington Post and BuzzFeed). She translates these nouveau posts, edits them, rearranges them, and then harvest a post in a new version. The Information collection means content that @uktimes gathered from other place without pointing out the specific resource, or content with blurry sources and @uktimes used them with no "repost" sign. Although these posts look like original stories, the reader can easily discriminate that they come from other authors. The 75 posts' resources are listed here:
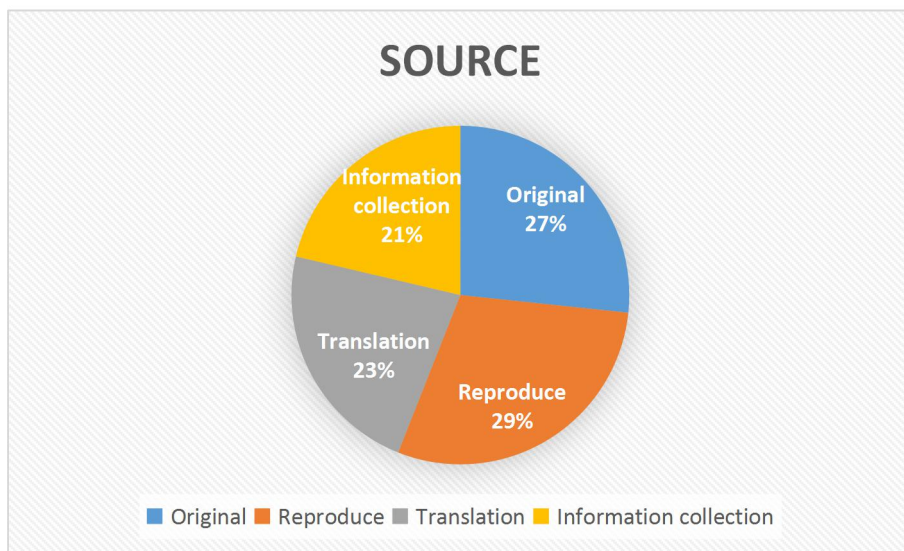


Figure 22. The distribution of different sources of posts published by @uktimes.

I sorted these a total of 75 posts by sum the number of Reposts, Comments, and Likes, and list the 20 most popular posts to analyze.

| ID | Title | Reposts | Comments | Likes | Sum |
|----|-------|---------|----------|-------|-----|
| 1 | A series of photos in Paralympic games | 19401 | 4882 | 65270 | 89553 |
| 2 | Graphic interpretation of BBC Documentary：obesity | 40258 | 28634 | 20446 | 89338 |
| 3 | A fat cat with unhappy feature | 28106 | 15394 | 26994 | 70494 |
| 4 | DIY video：British royalty | 38293 | 5634 | 21176 | 65103 |
| 5 | An Thai funny advertisement | 24145 | 7912 | 23894 | 55951 |
| 6 | The sounding medal for paralympic games | 5091 | 1926 | 47227 | 54244 |
| 7 | A boy dressing like a beautiful girl | 5506 | 7848 | 22747 | 36101 |
| 8 | An old man with Alzheimer sings well | 10611 | 1977 | 22054 | 34642 |
| 9 | Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II drives car | 5320 | 3189 | 20292 | 28801 |
| 10 | An Indian girl gives up her relationship with her boyfriend because of her dog | 4276 | 5503 | 16978 | 26757 |
| 11 | A repost of other Wanghong about a boy recognizing dinosaurs | 13139 | 1214 | 5599 | 19952 |
| 12 | 400 students sing for their teacher fighting cancer | 5424 | 1503 | 12734 | 19661 |
| 13 | An advertisement of Nestle with | 11295 | 2138 | 5277 | 18710 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | endorser of William Chan | | | | |
| 14 | A video shows some life easy tricks | 13419 | 737 | 4521 | 18677 |
| 15 | Ripping skin from Angora rabbits | 6225 | 5443 | 6980 | 18648 |
| 16 | An euthanasia dog | 4601 | 4496 | 8700 | 17797 |
| 17 | Encouraging repost last post by giving rewards | 12835 | 1971 | 2864 | 17670 |
| 18 | A repost of other Wanghong with comment | 5965 | 5430 | 5809 | 17204 |
| 19 | A soft advertisement of car with the theme of Mid-autumn Festival | 6086 | 3119 | 7832 | 17037 |
| 20 | If the hotels change the bed sheets | 2756 | 5215 | 8988 | 16959 |

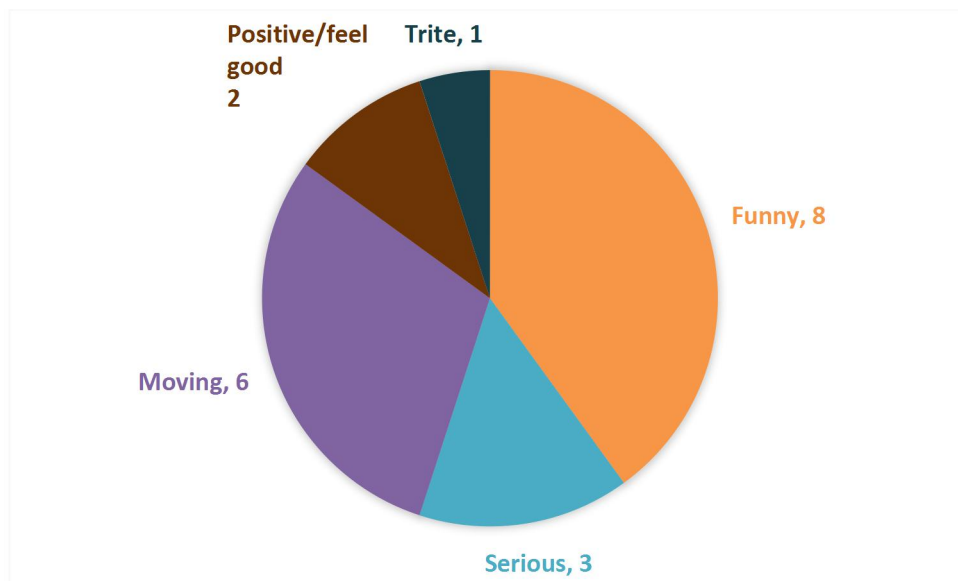Table 2. The 20 most popular posts published by @uktimes.



Figure 23. The distribution of different styles of the 20 most popular posts published by @uktimes

There are eight posts evolving in Funny style, (See Figure 23) which is the same as we have seen in the total of 75 posts. Funny style always occupied the vast majority. Funny is the most popular style for the audience, and in order to cater for her audience,

@uktimes also made Funny as her microblog's theme. In Neil Postman's book Amusing Ourselves to Death, he expressed such a point:

> *For Las Vegas is a city entirely devoted to the idea of entertainment, and as such proclaims the spirit of a culture in which all public discourse happening the form of entertainment. Our politics, religion, news, athletics, education and commerce have been transformed into congenial adjuncts of show business, substantially without protest or even much popular notice. The result is that we are a people on the verge of amusing himself to death. (Postman,1985)*

He predicted that such a phenomenon where would be fulfilled with entertainment. And after 30 years, the culture is also moving in his predicted direction: the rapid development of science and technology and the rapid expansion of information push people increasingly to pursue the entertainment of life, and which the entertainment also reflects the people on the psychological pressure on the social resistance and resistance. Under this entertainment trend, people rely on Weibo, Wechat and other fast transferring information's tool, and most people like more relaxed and enjoyable content.

The favor of entertainment information for human quickly reflect the capital market. In 2015, Forbes released 10 Highest-Paid YouTube Stars, where the main funny-video-based blogger account for seven.[8] It is no wonder that bloggers like @uktimes will choose this style.

However, it is worth noting that the most popular post in 37 weeks is "A series of

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[8] YouTube's millionaires: the highest earning users revealed.
http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/youtubes-millionaires-top-10-highest-earning-users-revealed-pewdiepie-taking-top-spot-12m-1524384

photos in Paralympic games," , whose style is Moving. This set of photos captures the moving or exciting moments of the Paralympic Games, although the number of Comments is relatively small, the number of Likes is much higher than the number of other posts Likes.

In Figure 24, we can see that the nine pictures released by @uktimes show Paralympic athletes' amazing explosive power in the game, and many audiences can be shocked by this visual impact. Ordinary people may not be empathetic, but deeply touched Internet users will encourage this spirit via Likes. In addition, the fact that a user relays posts with positive energy will also give her social networking friends a positive suggestion.
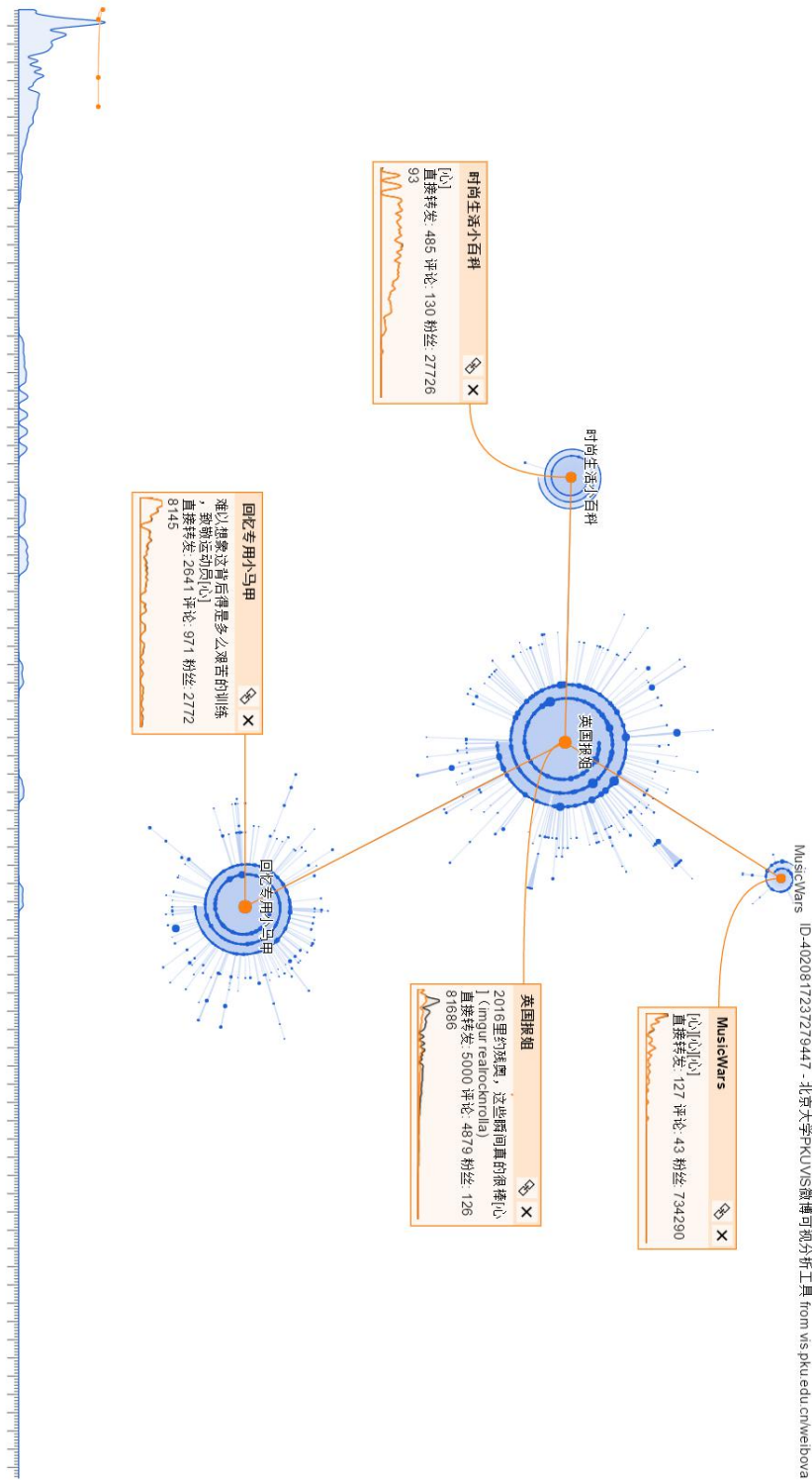


Figure 24. The most popular post published by @uktimes during Week 37.

I used PKUVIS as the visualization tool, and make a visual analysis of the post "A

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series of photos in Paralympic games" (see Figure 25). Peking University PKUVIS WeiboEvents is a Weibo analysis tool developed by Peking University Visualization and Visualization Research Group. It provides you with an intuitive view of the events in a Weibo forward process, so you can quickly find the key events in the event, the key post, important point of view, and through the visual methods, it can help you better analyze Sina Weibo incident occurred and development process. In the figure, I mark each important repost's node on the map, where we can see besides @uktimes, there are another three accounts make the important effect. @ MusicWars have 734290 followers, @时尚生活小百科 have 2772693 followers, and @ 回忆专用小马甲 have 27728145 followers. Although not all of these three accounts follow @uktimes (@MusicWars does not), a blogger with a large number of followers can greatly increase the forwarding capacity, which would also present in the original post. Such a way of mutual attention is a simple, mutually beneficial and win-win way to propagandize both their own and others. Like the circle of celebrities, Wanghong interacts with each other also imply the inequality of the social circle, even when it appears that Wanghong has the same voice right as ordinary accounts. (Page, 2012) The other three accounts are not all affiliated with the same communication company of @uktimes, but they all interact and connect with her by way of reposting, and commenting. In the process of reposting and commenting, they either affirm the opinion of the original poster, or challenge her point of view, but no matter what kind of attitude of the comments, it is no doubt that they deepened @uktimes' impression to their own followers. Reposting among Wanghong is multi-layered, and their interaction is very common. (Ke, 2013) It is this connection that enlarges their multi-level geometric propagation effects. (Guo & He, 2013)

As the PKUVIS analysis shows, from the releasing time of the post "A series of photos in Paralympic games," people's reposting behavior started with her as the center. With the help of reposting by three Wanghong, @ MusicWars, @时尚生活小百科, @回忆专用小马甲, it is no doubt that the number of reposting of @uktimes increases rapidly.

As the Chinese scholar Ao argues, Wanghong "usually has a very strong agenda-setting ability, and is good at using all kinds of hot network events to extend and operate his/her own IP image. The explosion topic in the network can help Wanghong amp up a large number of publicity in a short period determine the speed of spread of Wanghong."(Ao, 2016) Therefore, just like the above example, due to the 2016 Paralympic Games held in September, the topic of the Paralympic Games has naturally become one of Wanghong discussed subject.

Figure 25. Visual analysis of the post "A series of photos in Paralympic games" by PKUVIS.

Figure 26. The distribution of different contents of the 20 most popular posts published by @uktimes.

Emotion and Animal account for the larger proportion both in the total of 75 posts or in the most popular top 20 posts. The most popular post, @uktimes only text one note: 2016 Rio Paralympic, these moments are really terrific (2016 年里约残奥，这些瞬间真的很棒). Although that post was closely related to the press (the Paralympic Games held in Rio de Janeiro from Sept 7 to Sept18, 2016), the main theme of the bloggers was to show the admiration for every athlete. As a strong emotional expression, I put this kind of posts into the category of Emotion.

For account personality shaping, @uktimes can not only reflect certain personal characteristics, but also know how to interpret personality within the expectations of the audience. From the content, although much of them permeates her own value and worldviews, the connection with audiences can be said to be more like a commercial mechanism. In this mechanism, @uktimes has been transformed from a personal account to an official account, which still exists the personality, but most of the information she posts is to entertain or cater for the audience tastes, rather than express her emotions. This can also be reflected in her recently created personal affiliate account (@报姐).

In the top post of @uktimes' personal account, @报姐, (which has a red "Pin" logo), she published such words: This is an account where I grumble, post emoji, curse; so you do not need to follow (我这号吐槽，发表情包，骂人用的，不用关注哈); even so, there are still more than 30000 followers who chose to follow her. Compared to the official account which may publish more than 10 posts every day, she only released 43 posts on the personal account from the start of her blog on September 8, 2016, to December 2016, and she has not followed anyone; the content of the personal account @报姐's Weibo are mostly about personal thoughts, emotions, daily life status. Although the number of reposting, comment and like of @报姐's post is much less than that of @uktimes' post, it seems more real. In rare cases, @报姐 would interact with her official account @uktimes, by reposting @uktimes' post with some simple comments. Although the account @uktimes was given some personality, it seems that this account is more like a working one: @uktimes attracts the attention of the audience by some consciously, rationally and subtly strategies. Compared to @uktimes, @报姐 instead represents the identity of a natural person.

## 4.5 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, we can see that @uktimes as a Wanghong is a secret, mysterious, and invisible feature. And the real controller behind "her" may be one person or a team. But no matter what kind of controller, she or they are presenting @uktimes as a real personality, while they also strictly control the publish content, most of which can trigger people to start up optimism and positive attitude. Thanks to this kind of content control, @uktimes can attract long-term, stable followers.

By virtue of her own strengths, @uktimes shows her expertise in a way that the audience liked and established a smart, humorous and caring image for himself. After

attracting enough fans, she can generate practical benefits and economic interests in a variety of ways, such as through endorsements.

# 5.Joker VS Jokes, Why does he become famous again?

In this chapter, I will take the practice of Xue Zhiqian regained fame on Weibo as an example to analyze how he uses humor to develop an audience and to project a particular kind of authenticity.

## 5.1 Introduction

Xue Zhiqian (薛之谦, English name is Joker) is a male Chinese pop music singer. By participating in a Chinese reality show (My Show), he got public's attention. After a relatively short popular period, his music career went stagnant because of the economy, his company and other reasons. Although he did not give up struggling on the way of music, he could not be as famous as other popular music stars. This situation we can see from his former posts, here is the first post he published on Weibo:



Figure 27: The first post in @薛之谦: "This is the first time I use Weibo; I will talk with you on the offical website"

Up to December 2016, the post "This is the first time I use Weibo; I will talk with you on the official website" (第一次用微博 25 号晚上我回到官网跟大家聊聊), the number of comments are more than 15,000, but almost all of these are recent. The post was first published in the year of 2010, and that year, the number of comments was only 279; repostings' number is more than 2000, but in 2010 there were only 56 repostings. (See Figure 27) The post became popular in May 2015, when some fans

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began to comment and repost this post; and from the end of February in 2016, a large number of followers were into this posts and left their comments, which undoubtedly means that through some efforts, Joker has returned to the public view, and attracts public's attention once again.

In 2016, Joker's career has seen a significant turnaround. During this year, he participated in and recorded 34 episodes of TV programs, and besides performing well on traditional media, in Sina Weibo, the number of his followers rose sharply to 26000000. Figure 28 shows the homepage of Joker's Weibo account @薛之谦.
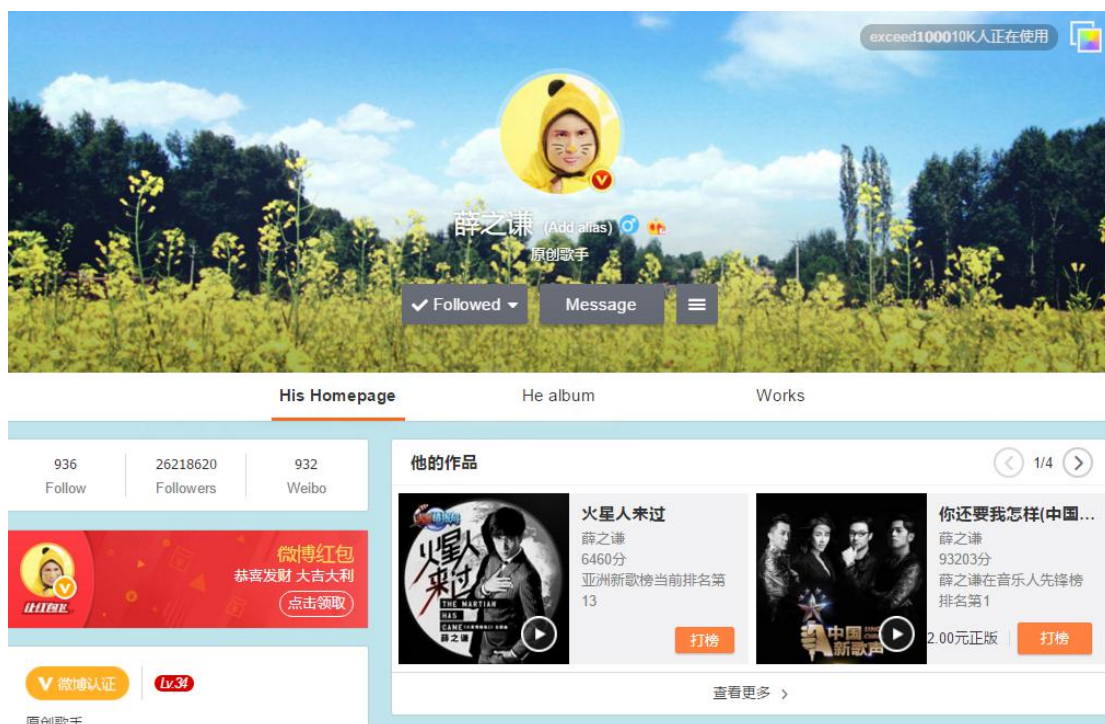


Figure 28: Screenshot of the homepage of @薛之谦.

In his top Weibo, the numbers of reposts, comments, likes are even more amazing; and compared to his first post, the popularity of nowadays' Joker is totally different from his popularity in 2015. The Figure 29 below shows his top post.

Figure 29: The top post in @薛之谦

In Weibo (English Version), the post with the symbol 📌Pin, means it will always stay in the top of the blog's homepage, which is set up by the blogger.

This top post is a new song Joker released in 2016, calls *I seem to have seen you* (我好像在哪见过你). In the text, he wrote, "this song .... is my favorite in this album,   ... is written with tears ... is selfish ... is to sing to the people who have the story .... "(这首歌....是这张专辑里我最喜欢的...是流着泪写完的...是自私的...是唱给有故事的人听的....). And he shared the link to this song in the end.

## 5.2 What did Joker do？

From the posted that can be traced back, in the early period, most of the posts released by Joker were about daily life or work, and many of them have obvious tendency to self-ridicule, as shown below:

Figure 30: post by @薛之谦 on 2010.12.30.

The last photo before going to bed .. I wore this hat for the whole day .. Just hanging around ... my dad saw me, and he is speechless ... I see the scar on my nose, and I am speechless ... really obvious ... I am dizzy .... (睡觉前最后一张..这帽子带一天了..就这么在家晃啊...我爸看见我无语了....我看我鼻子瞌的一条疤无语了...真明显.....我昏....) The background of the photo is very cluttered, and Joker himself pouted with

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a cartoon hat, giving the audiences a lovely impression; although the quality of photo is quite bad, this blurriness enhanced the authenticity of the photo: compared to some elegant photos manipulated by companies, this photo is more like an ordinary person's selfie, which also deepened intimacy with the audience.

There are 1939 comments under this post, which can be broadly divided into two categories. Some people thought that Joker's behavior was silly and cute, and they used words such as "silly," "cute," "moe "to describe it."萌" (and in English, it is Moe, which is a loanword from the Japanese slang "萌え." When the Moe culture was introduced into China, the manifestation of Moe culture in China has been very different from that of Japan. In addition to preserving the denotation of characters cute image in Japanese Moe culture, it is also evolved into cute behavior in China, (Hu, 2015) which is usually named by Internet users as "卖萌"(literal translation is selling Moe, which can be comprehended as behavior subject deliberately make cute behavior to please audiences), including a set of action such as pouting or acting the fool. Moe culture can cross gender, age, counties and ethnic; Moe culture can penetrate into all levels in the network framework. In this post, Joker took his selfie with a pouting face, and wearing a cute headgear with Tony Tony Chopper, who is a famous cute figure in Japanese animation *One Piece*. That undoubtedly made him attract some fans.

The other followers expressed concern for his injury. Joker's followers have somehow formed a community of interest, but in this group, the association between each member is looser. (Luo, 2013) This leads anyone to have the right to express their preferences in the comments without being disturbed by people. Some followers would claim themselves to be his "wife," "girlfriend" in comments, and nobody objects to this. This fantasizing is typical of fans' relationships to their idols. Stephen Hinerman in "'I will be here with you,' Fans, fantasy and the figure of Elvis" wrote:

*Fantasies are, then, one way humans have to negotiate a troubling situation. They bridge the gap that is created when desire is prohibited but the longing for full satis- faction is still there. Fantasies allow us to "close the distance' between what we need or want and what we can have. (Stephen, 1992)*

By commenting, followers find ways to give vent to their fantasies, and they themselves seem to be in the private domain of celebrities, obsess with the imagining intimacy.

Beginning from April 2014, Joker started publishing long, text-based version posts, in which he told funny stories about his own life, and created by himself. On May 14, 2014, he added the following sentence at the end of a post: "I am Xue Zhiqian. My wish is ... world peace". Since then, this sentence has become his iconic speech, and subsequently appeared in many posts. These words have become tightly associated with him, so once someone says, 'My wish is world peace,' people will naturally think of Joker.

On August 29, 2015, Joker released the first long-form advertisement post. At this point, the popularity of Joker had picked up somewhat, but not strongly. In this post, he wrote the following passage: "And my dad also likes to jumping shot .... You know what is the jumping shot ... It means the photographer shot when he is jumping... every photo should be done in the air .... "

This is obviously a joke, but the post is equipped with the following pictures: (See Figure 31)

Figure 31.a) photos in the advertisement.

More interestingly, at the end of the article, he wrote, "You will never imagine .... This is an advertisement."; In the end, in order to reflect the performance of the product, Canon M3, he added several high-quality photos. (Including product's feature)





Figure 31. b) photos in the advertisement.

To judge from his later success, this form of advertising does not cause audience resentment, on the contrary, many followers are happy and look forward to his "fancy" ads.

I counted all of the posts Joker published in 2016. During this year, Joker made a total amount of 156 posts, of which 76 are advertisements. In these 76 advertisements, 11 of them publicized his own brand of men's clothing, "DangerousPeople", 5 were for the programs he participated in, 1 is for his Hot Pot restaurant (no obvious advertising signs, only presents brand logo in photo), 1 is to attracting advertisers for his own Weibo account, and the rest are all endorsements for a variety of brands.

Traditionally, celebrity endorsements are generally simple and routinism. According to a typical advertising script, celebrities pose in front of the camera, playing the roles advertisers expect. This kind of ad is still applicable in the Internet era. For celebrities who are highly popular online, most of them are also exposed frequently in traditional media, and fans stickiness is very high, so they do not have to exaggerate their performance to attract the attention of advertisers.

Figure 32: Tweet by @AdrianaLima on 2016.03.01.

Figure32 shows the endorsement advertising by Victoria's Secret Supermodel Adriana Lima (@AdrianaLima) for VogueEyewear on Twitter. This is a photo taken by others, Lima hands the glasses frame, which can be regarded as to emphasize glasses product in the multiple color; and in the text, Lima used a hashtag to highlight the product.

Figure 33: Post by @稀土部队 on 2015.02.18

Another example is the famous Chinese actor Ziyi Zhang (Weibo account is @稀土部队). During the Spring Festival in 2015, she reposted a post published by her own press releasing official account (@透明的稀土). (Figure 33)In this post text, #手机淘宝春晚红包 # (means Spring Festival lucky in TaoBao app) is presented as a topic, which was launched by two official accounts for a website belonging to the Alibaba company, respectively managing mobile online shopping and investment management (@手机淘宝 and @ 阿里娱乐宝). The final link directs readers to the Taobao app in the mobile client (Taobao is China's largest online shopping site), allowing users to get lucky money while encouraging them to shop. As an endorsement, Ziyi Zhang reposted it with two emoji to promote the site. The red lantern refers to the Spring Festival, and the red envelope refers to lucky money and also the subject of this post.

Figure 34: Post by @杨洋 icon on 2016.11.03

Another example is Yang Yang (@杨洋 icon), a very popular Chinese star in recent years. In this post, (See Figure 34) Yang Yang posts a selfie of himself, where he occupies the right side of the picture, while the product (抱抱果 of 百草味®, a snack of jujube with walnut, literally interpreted as Hugging Nuts) dominates the lower left corner in this photo; in text, Yang Yang wrote: "Come and Hug!" There is also a link to the 百草味® shopping store. Such a way of advertising is more common in social media now, celebrities and goods are often ingeniously combined in a composition. Compared to carefully posed, well-lit studio photographs, which always contribute to a sense of alienation with real life, everyday photos are more likely to be adopted by

advertisers in social media.

Joker's format of advertising is unique among the celebrities. He is good at writing funny articles, and these articles attracted a large number of followers due to their natural, unpretentious style. In the first advertisement I referred to above, he overturned the traditional impression that stars should behave decently when they are exposed in front of the camera, his unusual body gives an unreal sense; the advertise is lead into the article by trivia beyond expectation; besides his advertising style is very consistent with his usual posts, so whether it is his own mental work, or is supported by his team behind him, even comes from the script cleverly planned by advertisers, this advertising and his Image perfectly merge together. Due to this unique style of performance, he became popular for advertisers in 2016.

In addition, followers unexpectedly expressed no objection to Joker's advertising behavior, and although nearly half of the posts are advertisements in 2016, many followers commented without the negative attitude.

For example, follower @唷_沈 commented that (Figure 35): An advertisement can be made so fresh and shameless, you are indeed my honey. (广告能打的这么清新脱俗这么死不要脸 不愧是我脑公) Although in this review, fresh (清新脱俗) and shameless (死不要脸) are two opposite words, in China's network language environment, especially in this text, this evaluation does not reflect the audience's discontent but subtly accept the advertise with ridiculous attitude.



唷_沈 : 广告能打的这么清新脱俗这么死不要脸 不愧是我脑公
2015-8-29 15:09                                          Reply | 👍 826
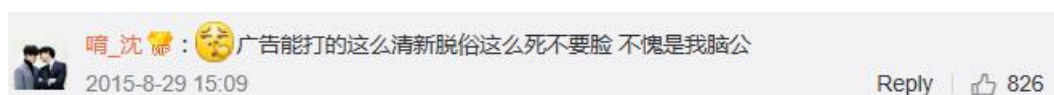
Figure 35: Comment by @唷_沈 on 2015.08.29

In addition, because Joker's ads often appear in unexpected ways at the end of the

article, so some followers often use the form of his lyrics "简单点，说话的方式简单点" (Be simple, making speaking way be simple ) as ridiculed imitation, such as @带上小皇冠 comments：简单点，打广告的方式简单点🐱. (Be simple, making advertising be simple🐱)(Figure 36)
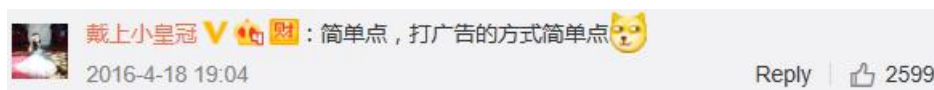


Figure 36: Comment by @带上小皇冠 on 2016.04.18

Some followers would even comment to express they are looking forward to Joker's funny advertising under some daily posts.

## 5.3 Why did he succeed?

In addition to Joker's own continuous efforts, the use of social media has become a vital weapon which led to his re-capturing the audience's attention.

First of all, the Internet has long been a platform for people to discuss 'real celebrities', (Senft, 2013) so some traditional stars are very eager to exposure on Internet, in order to further increase the visibility; besides that, as Hearn and Schoenhoff have argued of the celebrity industry in the mid-twentieth century, "the more the publicity and image management machine developed, of course, the savvier the public grew about its mediating role, demanding increased access to the ordinary or "authentic" person behind the star" (Hearn & Schoenhoff 2015, 197). As a social media platform, Weibo is not only very convenient to people's desire to establish close relationships with the stars, but also helps them understand the star's true personality. As somebody who joined Sina Weibo early on, Joker is very aware of the importance of establishing a unique character on such a platform: his early posts had laid a "humor" tone to the whole style. I have to mention the consistent character construction set by Joker

whether in traditional media or social media. Crystal Abidin in the article "Agentic cute (^. ^): Pastiching East Asian Cute in Influencer Commerce" (2016) mentioned that influencers' cute is manipulated, with some scripts. In social media, figure's character, appearance, or posture are not the only ways in which a person can be cute, and humor is the style Joker selected. In early 2016, an interview with Joker by CCTV spread broadly on the Internet. In this interview, apparently Joker was not reminded that it was a live broadcast (or he deliberately pretended not to realize this), and he repeatedly said in front of the camera, "3,2,1, go!" This silly behavior was called "Moe" by net users, and Joker also performed intriguingly in the following interview. Since this interview happened in 2015, and it was again raised in 2016 and widely spread. Whether the reason for the new interest in the video in 2016 was an intentional plan or the power of net users is difficult to determine, but there is no doubt that this piece of video, coordinating his text on Weibo, has shaped his humorous character, which also laid the image of his character for his future career (whether for product endorsements, or on television programs, he is expected to show as this role). Humor and self-deprecation are clearly a simple language symbol to break the gap between stars and ordinary people, and this approach is easier to achieve the interaction between stars and fans. In the environment of Weibo, fans believe that they are closer and understand a star's "real" personality better than ever before.

There are many celebrities have tried the similar way, such as Anna Kendrick. (@AnnaKendrick47, an American actress and singer, her post's style is also funnier, and makes her followers feel more close and real) The following Figure 37 shows a Tweet released by Kendrick on October 21, 2015; she made a joke of a commonplace thing happening in Word for people, which ultimately won her 416 retweets, 9300 comments, and 27000 likes. And her Twitter is also full of interesting text or pictures.
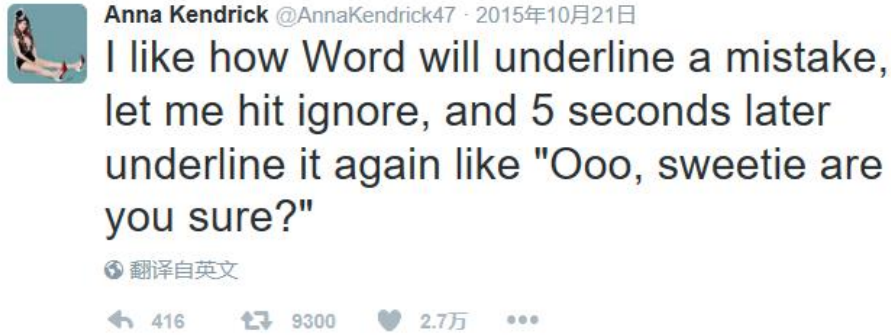
Figure 37: Twitter by @AnnaKendrick47 on 2015.10.21.

When he posts advertisements, which he always hides in long posts, Joker also has a certain consideration. According to Chen Feng's 2016 Sina Weibo study, 81.5% of users believe that posts combining both text and pictures are more attractive; and according to the previous analysis of the contents of the @uktimes' Weibo, we found that Funny style is more popular and more acceptable to audiences; in addition, 13.8% of Weibo users do not consider products that celebrity star forwarded or recommended, and this type of advertising accounts for the second place in all relatively non-exclusive advertising form. (Chen, 2016)

When I count every month most popular post (sum of reposts, comments, and likes ) in @薛之谦 account from 2014 to 2016, a total amount of 36, the style distribution is as follows:
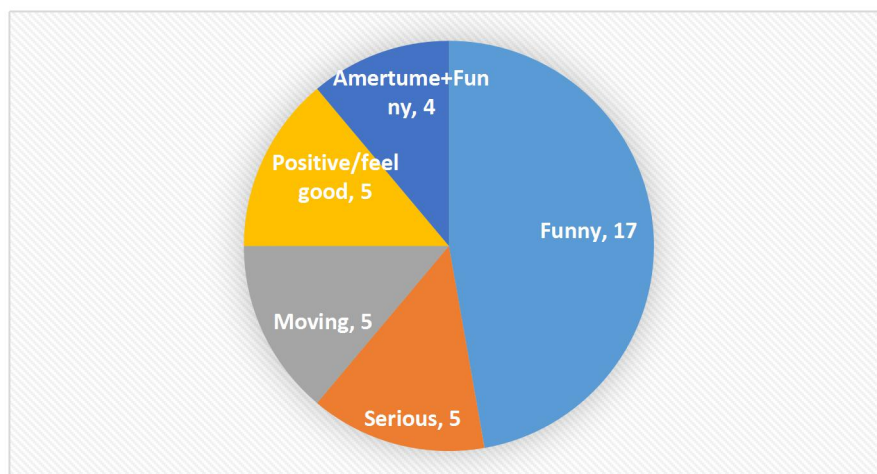


Figure 38: The distribution of different style of top post from each month in three years by @薛之谦.

In Figure 38, we can see that the number of Funny accounts for nearly half of total posts, which presents that followers love Funny style most which it is the same as the analysis of @uktimes followers.

This can also explain why Joker chose humorous style and illustrations to publish advertising at the beginning. This is an opportune way to encourage audiences to accept his advertising.

## 5.4 Chapter conclusion

Overall, Joker has built a self-branding for himself: humorous, harmless, authentic. This authenticity first manifests in his posts where his daily life was extensive exposed. In addition, he reveals a lot of "real" emotions on Weibo. Moreover, his expression is very arbitrary and not like official statements. His advertising is creative and proposal is also different from traditional celebrity endorsements online. Most of his endorsing products are cleverly arranged in texts or videos, but in many cases, he personally acknowledges that this is an advertisement. Although we can not explore how much profits his endorsement brings to business, at least we can see from his followers' comments that such an endorsement does not harm his influence on Weibo. The fact is that authenticity plays a crucial role for Wanghong in establishing intimacy with followers.

# 6. Wanghong practice as a makeup artist: @萌大雨 YUYU

In this chapter, I will discuss a very common Wanghong practice, which is the practice of being a "real" Wanghong. Unlike @英国报姐（@uktimes), their personal identities can be known, and in a sense, their life and experience are more like traditional celebrities. People who want to find them can contact them in their off-line life, and that kind of Wanghong can be recognized in public. My example of this type of Wanghong is the makeup artist @萌大雨 YUYU in Sina Weibo as an example, and I will analyze her performance across platforms: on Sina Weibo, Miaopai, Meipai, and other social media. While @uktimes became popular due to her specialized content, and Joker became popular after having had a traditional music career, @萌大雨 YUYU received a lot of sudden attention as an ordinary person. In this chapter I will analyze in what ways @萌大雨 YUYU plays upon her ordinariness and authenticity to grasp fame after her video goes viral. and how she stands out considering so many bloggers are engaged in aesthetics labor.

## 6.1 Introduction of @萌大雨 YUYU

In May 2016, a short video was widely disseminated on the Chinese Internet. The video's picture is divided into two parts; the left one shows a girl with a delicate face, which is very similar to girls who are considered as beautiful by the Chinese. She has a small face and innocent, bright eyes, and her skin is ivory and smooth. The girl shown on the right is significantly different from the left one. Compared to the left image, the face in the right image is larger and rounder, and people would also think that this face has some obvious disadvantages, such as the dark skin tone, facial redness etc., and because of her casual sitting posture, she looks fatter than the left one. Although the same clothes imply that the two girls in the picture are the same person, it is still hard to believe that fact. (Figure 39)

Figure 39: Screengrab of a video

This girl is @萌大雨 YUYU (Sina). She is different from @英国报姐 (@uktimes) who is trying to hide her identity and avoid her personal life to be exposed to the public. Because @萌大雨 YUYU is well known for her videos, her identity was exposed even before she was famous. Figure 2 shows the information on her mainpage, in which her location (河南, Henan), birthday (24.05.1995), and personal profile (一个随时会删博的吃播博主 tb：8544650, a blogger who maybe erase her blogs anytime) are published voluntarily. (See Figure 40)
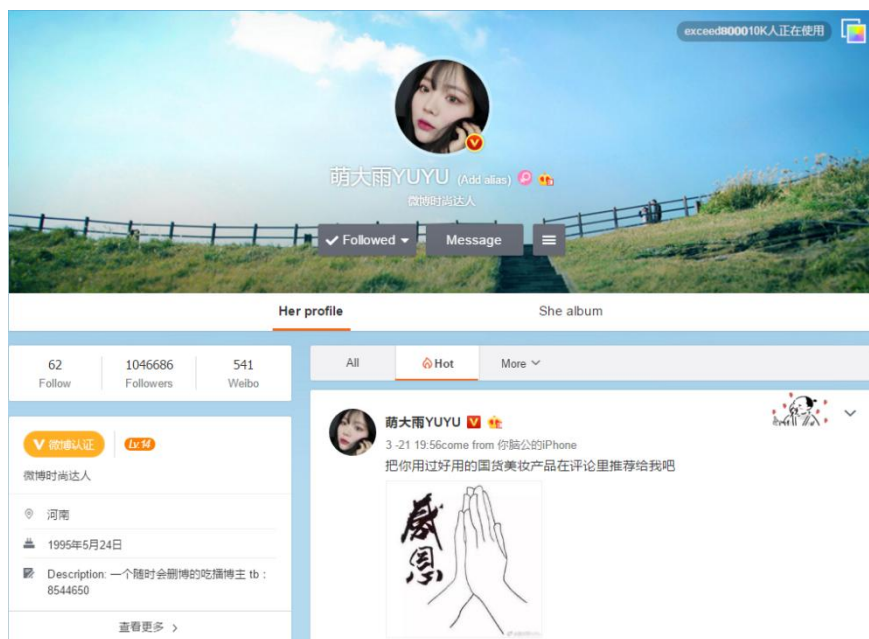


Figure 40：Weibo mainpage of @萌大雨 YUYU

## 6.2 The process of getting fame

As early as before @萌大雨 YUYU's viral video became popular, she was active in Sina Weibo and Meipai(美拍, Meipai is a short video shooting and hosting service, whose video and live webcast link can be shared directly on Weibo.) In her early posts, she has released some selfies, self-represent videos, and some simple makeup tutorial videos. But when her "comparison video" went viral, she was able to attract much attention in a very short time. In Sina Weibo and Meipai's timeline, we can find that she has a certain "aspiration" to become famous, just like many young people. During the period from January to March of 2016, most of the photographs she released were her selfies with exquisite makeup. However, in social media, every day tens of thousands of people publish their photos, many of which are girls looking sweet and gorgeous, so it is hard to become famous only relying on beautiful pictures. As early as before @萌大雨 YUYU's viral video became popular, she was active in Sina Weibo and Meipai. From April 2016, we could find that @萌大雨 YUYU started to take another strategy, by publishing photos before and after applying make up on Weibo, and doing makeup on the live webcast in Meipai platform (Fig 41).



Figure 41: "Trust me", Post by @萌大雨 YUYU

In fact, it is not a very strange thing for people to understand that people would change their appearance to a great degree through wearing makeup. On the Internet, people coined term "Asian four witchcraft" to ridicule four unnatural behaviors (Nyan, 2015). The first behavior is that Chinese people like to use Photoshop to edit their photos before they publish them. Generally, there is a big difference between the original photo and the edited photo, especially for portrait photography. The second behavior is Japanese makeup techniques. People will look like two different people before and after wearing makeup. The third is plastic surgery, which has become a very normal thing for Korean people. And the last thing is transsexual surgery in Thailand. Although this argument is a kind of ridicule, it actually contains a criticism of the abnormal states. In order to pursue online vanity, women are willing to use Photoshop and other tools to beautify their figures where they are not so perfect. With the development of more convenient editing applications on smart phones like Meitu Xiuxiu (美图秀秀), the time used to modify pictures is shortened, and the location is no longer limited, so pursuing online reputation costs less and less. But in recent years, with the continuous development of video software and applications, people are no longer just satisfied with static gorgeousness, but also want dynamic gorgeousness: people want to achieve a state of harmony both online and offline. Make-up has become the way to reach their goals, and so naturally, teaching makeup skills by shooting a makeup process has become a good career for a lot of fashion women and even for men. It is very common to see online makeup artists. Nearly every platform has a label of "makeup" to help users find interesting persons. However, it is relatively rare to see a before/after photo with such a big difference after making up as shown in figure 1. Not every blogger has the courage to expose their real face (especially a very unconfident one) to their whole network. In this way, @萌大雨 YUYU has taken a very brave step.

In fact, I think that if she uploaded selfies alone, or it just happened in an era that people could not have access to the facility for uploading video and that can

conveniently be viewed online, @萌大雨 YUYU may not be so well known. Today, when all information can be transmitted at high-speed, people will not be surprised by beautiful photos, because the behaviors behind the scenes are known. People are familiar with the most common techniques of shooting or editing photographs. For example, in the last three pictures in Fig 41, @萌大雨 YUYU used a posture that tightened her chin and highlighted her clavicle, whilst she made the overall tone brighter compared to the first picture. These changes are subtle and easily be attributed to the effect of wearing makeup, but it is also not difficult to notice for people who are keen on taking photos or selfies, or who have literacy of taking photos. That may lead to some queries about "vanity or narcissism" (Senft & Baym, 2015). Although many scholars argue that the selfie is the same as the text, is a conventional form of empowerment and self-representation in the internet age (Senft, et al, 2015), we can not avoid the behaviors that so-called "ordinary people" often look and criticize the others selfie, even they themselves are deeply involved into the selfie. In *Seeing Ourselves Through Technology: How We Use Selfies, Blogs and Wearable Devices to See and Shape Ourselves*, Rettberg argues that young women are often stereotyped as being "narcissistic" (Rettberg 2014, 17-18). In the long-term male rights-led Chinese society, this phenomenon is more serious. It is noteworthy that more and more people are beginning to realize the importance of self-presentation, such as the Chinese scholars Ding and Zhang notes that selfie behavior and positive emotions showed a significant positive correlation,(Ding, et al, 2016) and Ma said that selfie is an act of the female consciousness awakening by "breaking the traditional male culture" (Ma, 2012).

Moreover, it is this concealment and subtlety that causes Lazar to call this work well engaged by aesthetic labor as "elided labor." (Lazar, 2017). Admittedly, this kind of "elided labor" often appears in selfies, but for some makeup artists who focus on producing the video (or graphics), the complex details and obvious change in outcome can grab lots of attention. In recent years, on the main Chinese social platform Weibo, women's behavior and voice have been significantly affected by the influence of

postfeminist thought. Women are not only willing to pursue femininity, but are encouraged to work hard and labor to achieve this femininity. Western scholars generally agree that when post-feminism recognizes women as unique, (Phoca, 1999) it also shakes the theoretical foundation of the previous generation of feminism, that is, gender equality in the absolute sense. (Faludi, 1991) However, placing this postfeminism in such a rapidly developing Third World country as China has become more complex. In fact, China had not been able to participate in the vigorous expansion of the feminist movement in the past few times. This makes the postfeminism in the late 20th century after the introduction of China, with the traces of the previous several female campaigns thought. So on the internet in China, you will find women's view of equality of men and women as well as recognition of individual differences. Behind these phenomena, however, is actually that the Internet has given voice to women who have long been silent in Chinese society. The detailed "labor instruction" was displayed, and the immediate results of the labor are bound to be sought. Because of this, @萌大雨 YUYU's videos have been clustered by the Chinese women net users.

## 6.2.1 The first batch of fans: the victory of attention economic

As I mentioned above, in fact, there are many makeup artists on the internet, but people who can be recommended or instantly found are very few. @萌大雨 YUYU caught people's attention by showing the contrast of her face before and after making up. However, it is worth to be noticed that her earliest viral video only lasts 6 seconds. (Fig 39) However, in the next few days, @萌大雨 YUYU chose to catch this opportunity and uploaded a 4 minutes 47 seconds full video about makeup on the platforms Sina Weibo, Meipai and Miaopai respectively with titles "那个传疯了的视频的化妆教程在这里，我叫它网红妆，是不是很 low" (Here is the whole tutorial about the makeup viral video, I call it Wanghong Makeup, is it really low)" (Weibo & Miaopai) and "#5分钟美拍##直播化妆##一秒变美#中间有彩蛋，昨天上热门的妆", (#5 minutes Meipai##live makeup##become pretty in one second #there is a surprise

in the middle, yesterday's popular makeup video)(Meipai). The video was well edited, and marked the names of the products. Although her initial popularity is a little bit unexpected, her follow-up move was deliberate and purposeful.

Interestingly, this purpose is hidden subtly, and she received very little criticism from people who felt disgusted or regard it as product marketing and self-hype. There are some reasons:

1. The video content is real and practical.

@萌大雨YUYU's face has some common problems which also happen on ordinary Chinese girls, such as facial features are not symmetrical, rough skin and so on. These problems have been improved after makeup, and this gives most of the female netizens a hint: we can also look like her through a certain makeup technique. The way that one can change oneself through skill and technique, or redefine oneself, is considered to be able to achieve the "market values" (Evans & Riley, 2017), women through the personal ability to achieve femininity, and it is the commodity by visual sale to others and is highly respected. Under this 4 minutes 47 seconds makeup tutorial video, the most popular comments are as follows:

> 怪阿姨cui: 这他妈的才叫化妆教程好吗!!! (This is exactly damn makeup tutorial video!!!)

And another reply with 2591 likes is:

> Sukierbb: 我想说 这绝对是我见过最实在最实用的化妆教程 (I want to say, this is absolutely the most real and practical makeup tutorial I have ever seen)

In the aspect of video edit, it does not only contain the perfect part, but also retained a "foolish" part that could have been edited out: 3 minutes and 25 seconds into the

video, she puts fake eyelash glue on her face accidentally, and has left the following 7 seconds video of the process in the final version. When the video was uploaded on Meipai, she also pointed it in the title "there is a surprise in the middle," this relaxed attitude makes it easy to get audiences' goodwill and identity, and also increases the authenticity of the video. And this "notions of authenticity" is critical in both Chinese and Western make-up tutorials (Evans & Riley, 2017).


Figure 42: Screenshot at 3:25 on Miaopai.

2. The rise of short video shooting platform.

In the article "Instafame: Luxury Selfies in the Attention Economy," Alice E. Marwick supplements the definition of microcelebrity, which was "originally conceived as a practice primarily to foster direct relationships with audience members, now developed to include a specific type of visual self-presentation strategy. "(Marwick, 2015) The supplements and extensions of microcelebrity are based on her observation of Instagram, and she concludes that people who have instafame on Instagram are still those with traditional celebrities' characteristics ", such as "thin but buxom bodies, sports cars, and designer clothes" (Ibid)). To some extent, this matches my observations on Weibo. I searched for "美妆"（makeup） on Weibo, and most popular makeup artists are gorgeous, and the things they showed or used are relatively

high-end. In addition, they always endorse the product which is generally considered as the advanced product. However, @萌大雨 YUYU and @papi 酱 I mentioned above are quite different. The background of their videos is casual and even messy, (there is often a worn chair in the video of @papi 酱, and @萌大雨 YUYU's boyfriend is still lying behind her.) In the content, @papi 酱 often ridicules daily trivia what would happen to every ordinary people , and in the video of @萌大雨 YUYU, she always uses cheap or reasonably priced cosmetics. In addition, the style of her makeup is fresh and natural, which conforms to Chinese women is aesthetics. They create an atmosphere of intimacy and reality.

3. Strong visual impact

The huge gap before and after wearing makeup is not only attracted to the attention of Chinese Internet users, but also to the world's attention. Only a few days after the publication of the official version of @萌大雨 YUYU's video, the YouTube blogger named Margara Francis uploaded the video to her personal channel on May 14, 2016, titled: "The Real Power of MAKEUP | Chinese Version | No Face Transplant." But it is interesting to note that the foreigners commenting on this video appear to have a higher aesthetic tolerance for Asian faces than the original Chinese audience did. Under this video, some people commented:

주사빈：shes got great skin to start with, that's half thing eased already

Rizu：but she was already pretty?? she added the eyebrows and that was enough in my opinion xD she looks pretty either way

Ena Sim：She just needed eyebrows and her hair done.

In the same video, comments on Weibo also have some similar contents, but they are mainly still to express surprise and admiration.

The comments on Weibo include some negative and passive remarks, but this kind of comment was immediately rejected by female internet users:

@我是六加七：真不懂有些人在酸什么她至少很真实不是吗她没有去整容谁不爱美你不爱美吗 你又丑又懒还整天酸人化妆前后反差你怎么不上天和太阳肩并肩地球容不下你吗你好看你咋没红起来你敢在微博上发你的素颜视频吗人画个视频又是酸人住出租房又是酸人后面脏乱我就觉得这妹子很真实比那些玻尿酸脸的网红真实爱咋咋地(Really do not understand what some people are deriding? At least she is real, is not she? She did not take plastic surgery. Who does not want to be pretty? Do not you? You are ugly and lazy but only deride, the difference of wearing makeup. How dare you? Could not the earth keep you? If you look so pretty why you do not become famous? Do you dare to post your bare face videos on Weibo? You mock her living in a rental flat, and the dirty background, but I think this girl is more authentic than those Wanghong injecting Hyaluronic acid!)

Whether in Weibo, or other platforms, or on YouTube, surprisingly, the views from female internet users have reached a relatively harmonious consistency. In some early research, some scholars argue that selfies are often associated with people's narcissistic personality, and the narcissistic emotion will infuriate the audience if they are careless, which results in the emotion of resistance from the audience. But because @萌大雨 YUYU's appearance to a certain extent does not have "aggression," and her authentic behavior can eliminate the audience's jealousy, especially for women in the audience.

While the views of Chinese female netizens and YouTube users almost reached an agreement, the voice of opposition appeared. Many male netizens worried or even cursed girls who wear makeup, saying that they may become the victim of their masks.

In an interview, @萌大雨 YUYU said that even some men in real life who recognized her would judge her to her face, even scolded her.

On the other hand, the Facebook page Shanghaiist, which posts content about China in English, also uploaded @萌大雨 YUYU's full makeup video, but with the title of "'There are no ugly women, only lazy ones.' - Helena Rubinstein". It is apparently different to the tolerant comments from YouTube users, although they are referring to the same video, such a title seems to offend women, under this video in Facebook, the most popular comments are these:

Bill Ess：　If women don't wear makeup, they're lazy. If women do wear makeup, they're deceitfully hiding their real faces. We just can't win.

Michelle Rogers：　A woman without make up is neither ugly nor lazy. Letting the misogynist patriarchy dictate beauty ideals...tsk, tsk.

Rose McGann ：... Wtf??? If I'm lazy for not feeling like I have to paint my face on every single day just for the sake of conforming to the current synthetic standards of "beauty" today then yeah I'm lazy and I'm proud of it. Also what does that make men? The majority don't shave, makeup, perm, not half the stuff a lot of women feel expected to do. There are no ugly people, just perspectives warped by a corrupt culture.

Actually, I think that such comments were misled by this insensitive title, while were also guided by the concept of neoliberalism for what is a true person for oneself. The First of all, in the sub-cultural perspective of the Chinese network, more and more women realize that they should be led by themselves. A traditional Chinese concept, that "a woman would make up her face for one who likes her" has become increasingly unpopular, more and more women are aware that they are the masters of their own behavior and purpose. Making up, getting dressed, is actually a process to

make their own physical and mental pleasure, which is not necessary for every woman, and most important for women is choosing by themselves. Unfortunately, this concept is still less in the male consciousness, which is a possible reason leads to his radical behavior from the man above. In addition, "Western neoliberal notions of authenticity" seem to strongly reject the act of changing oneself through aesthetic labor (Evans & Riley, 2017), does it also mean that they would like to put women personally think of happiness and freedom aside?

After successfully attracting fans, how to set up self-branding, keep fans sticky is another task for @萌大雨 YUYU as a makeup artist.

## 6.3 Self-branding: establish and maintain

At the beginning of @萌大雨 YUYU becoming famous, a very attractive point is that she could use some cheap price cosmetics to complete a delicate face. That means her self-positioning has some limitations, as using too expensive cosmetics is likely to make her lose some of the followers. So after that, she still presents the products with reasonable price, generally not more than RMB200 (USD30), whether from a sponsor or by herself.

At the same time, she also has her own Taobao store (Chinese largest online retail shopping platform). Although she does not have her own brand, she would generally sell things she used in her makeup video, and the goods generally cost no more than RMB50 (USD7.5). She simply notes her Taobao store number in her description on her Weibo mainpage, but in her posts, she hardly mentions it directly or promoted it, which avoids the suspicion of advertising for her followers. In fact, however, from the number of reviews from Taobao, in the last month shows that her store has sold more than 700 things. In this respect, she transforms people's attention into real value in a true sense.

### 6.3.1 Friendly style of the posts.

In general, the style of makeup videos is more serious than @萌大雨 YUYU's typically are, even including the early posts before @萌大雨 YUYU became popular. She always showed her quiet, elegant side, whether on videos or photos. But as she got fame, her style of speaking and posting has changed a lot. For example, in her post on August 15, 2016, she wrote:



Figure 43: @萌大雨 YUYU' post on 15.08.2016.

@萌大雨 YUYU：发现国外很多博主都开始双丸子头，我决定我也来一个。梳完之后我觉得我肯定输在了刘海，结果…笑不出来。(Finding a lot of foreign bloggers have started to tie double buns, I decided to do a same one. After finishing I think I failed definitely because of the bangs, the result ... could not laugh.)

As a makeup artist, she needs courage to self-deprecate. But from the feedback in the comments, it seems most of her fans are able to and willing to accept her style, and are very much in favor of this personality. From their point of view, this is a natural, not contrived performance. And she also chose a few comments to reply to, although the number of replies is very small, the establishment of this intimacy for the fans is still very necessary. Just like Abidin implies, "the intimacies negotiated are

impressions that are felt by followers as opposed to whether or not these intimacies are actually "authentic" or "genuine"."(Abidin, 2015)

### 6.3.2 Be good at catering to the topic.

Whether Chinese netizens or foreign netizens, viewers noticed the man behind her without exception in in her most famous video: he dressed casually, played on his phone from the beginning to the end, and even did not pay any attention to the shot. And because his legs are long, netizens began to call him "leg bro"(腿哥). @萌大雨 YUYU and her boyfriend seize the opportunity, they responded to this topic quickly and changed her boyfriend's Weibo account as: @白腿哥哥 (white leg bro). @萌大雨 YUYU would post some content related to her boyfriend, but it is different from the simple show off their good relations, she always posts some interesting life details, even includes video to help her boyfriend make up. This interaction between the couple effectively wins fans good impression, both Chinese netizens and foreign netizens thought this sort of interaction was "so cute." Here, the Wanghong effect of @萌大雨 YUYU has successfully impact on her boyfriend, @白腿哥哥 also gets more than fifty thousand fans.

### 6.4 Chapter conclusion

@萌大雨 YUYU establishes a true self-image for the Internet users, and she exposes herself in our vision, far more than "good" - she demonstrates her own shortcomings, but at the same time depicts a transition process. Her success implies that every ordinary person can easily become a better self. Compared to the subtle strategic layout make by @uktimes, the posts of @萌大雨 YUYU are more casual and free. The audience easily overlooks the effort she made behind her screen, thinking that her success was so easy, but also get rid of some wary of "fans" and "celebrities".

In addition, she uses funny ways to reduce people's criticism of selfie/make-up as equivalent to narcissism, and her success suggests that Chinese women are

increasingly starting to empower themselves in the web.

# 7. Conclusion

After completing the analysis of the practice of these three people, we can conclude that the three Wanghong I have analyzed in this thesis has very similar traits to the microcelebrities that are frequently researched by Western scholars. Although a small number of "Wanghong" go viral almost overnight by accident，if they want to maintain the status of "being famous," they need to be as determined as other "Internet users" who pursuit social fame dedicatedly, to get a strong capacity of agenda-setting. To maintain this reputation, a very vital factor is to establish and maintain self-branding, a specific performance is to anthropomorphize a distinctive personality.

In the examples I have analyzed, a successful online personality is based on a particular strength. To become and remain successful, a Wanghong must amplify their ability as much as possible, at the same time as knowing how to control their strength in the right and attractive range to reach success. In this article, theses three Wanghong I studied, @uktimes, @薛之谦, @萌大雨 YUYU all try to establish a more realistic "personality" to engage with the fans. Moreover, they also want to maintain this "personality" to gain the long-term trust of the fans. Of course, at the meantime, making good use of humor as a way of expression has also become the commonplace of these three Wanghong to maintain their fame - which is related to the relaxed and entertaining overall network environment that the current Internet users are strongly pursuing. They use the different way to show their humor: @uktimes often publish interesting domestic and foreign news; @薛之谦 tends to write some intriguing short posts or articles; @萌大雨 YUYU would release some interesting scenes of her daily life by posts. Although these three Wanghong use the different methods of humor, it can be seen that catering to the overall atmosphere of the Internet and engaging themselves in the Internet "carnival" has become one of their

code of conduct as Wanghong.

Authenticity and a sense of being natural are also important. For a Wanghong who is exposed in public as a natural person, his or her life will be in the "on-line" state at all times. If a successful personality can bring him or her fame, then maintaining a constant personality will determine how long and how far his (her) fame will for. at the meantime, Wanghong, or the team behind a Wanghong, must be very good at managing the linkage of multi-platforms.

In future research, I would be very interested in a comparison of Western and Chinese social media's KOL (Key Opinion Leader). What is their response to sudden emergency respectively, what will they do, and what is the effect of their response. I believe that if we can probe into their different operating principles and mechanisms in depth, it will bring great convenience to data analysis and public opinion analysis.

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