Narrative Strategies for Sichuan Chinese Opera in Cultural Documentary

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Abstract

Modern society is developing rapidly, while China's intangible cultural heritage is declining in popularity among younger generations due to obsolescence, complexity, and lack of appeal. This decline causes cultural heritage to struggle to maintain relevance and connection to contemporary life. This study addresses this issue with three main objectives: 1) to examine narrative strategies that lead to successful cultural documentaries; 2) to explore the production of Sichuan Opera in cultural documentaries; and 3) to evaluate audience satisfaction with Sichuan Opera in these documentaries. The study involves 400 participants for the survey on narrative strategies before documentary development and 500 participants for assessing video satisfaction after the documentary's completion. Both groups are evaluated online via the Douyin (TikTok) platform and selected using Taro Yamane's formula. Data collection methods include 1) a questionnaire on narrative strategies, 2) a quality assessment of the documentary, and 3) an audience satisfaction survey. The data is analyzed using statistical measures such as frequency, percentage, and standard deviation.

The findings reveal seven key elements of successful storytelling: 1) storytelling techniques, 2) visual storytelling, 3) interview techniques, 4) sound and music, 5) themes and motifs, 6) ethical considerations, and 7) engagement strategies. The documentary video is assessed as having moderate quality, and audience satisfaction with the video is also moderate. Therefore, effective storytelling strategies, coupled with high production quality, reflect in achieving higher audience satisfaction.

Keywords: cultural; documentary; narrative strategies; Sichuan Chinese Opera

Introduction

As a traditional art deeply rooted in Southwest China, Sichuan opera has weathered the storms for hundreds of years, but it remains a very important traditional culture in the hearts of the Sichuan people (Luo & Zhan, 2020). It combines a variety of performance elements, such as singing, acting, reciting, and playing, and has built up its unique artistic style and aesthetic qualities (Li, 2018). For the Ba Shu region, Sichuan opera is not only a form of entertainment but also an important part of its cultural connotation (Mu, 2017). As an art form, Sichuan opera has gradually formed its unique artistic style and aesthetic qualities in the long process of development and has been widely noticed and loved. However, with the continuous development of the times, the wave of modern society sweeps in, making Sichuan opera gradually lose its former glory (Wu & Si, 2021). Especially in the wave of rapid development of modern society, due to the rapid development of science and technology, the accelerated pace of life, and the rise of popular culture, and many other reasons, Sichuan opera gradually lost its former glory and faced unprecedented problems and challenges (Wang, 2021). Especially among the younger generation, the knowledge and interest in Sichuan opera are gradually decreasing, which undoubtedly exacerbates the predicament of Sichuan opera's inheritance (Wu, 2018).

However, in response to this challenge, scholars have conducted relevant research from different angles to find ways to revitalize Sichuan opera. In this process, documentaries, as an intuitive, vivid, and authentic way of cultural communication, are highly expected (Wan, 2020). Documentaries are highly expected not only because they can visualize the cultural form and historical lineage of a country or region, but also because they have a strong sense of documentary and intimacy (Zheng, 2021). When the documentary meets Sichuan opera, we can let the audience not only appreciate the artistic beauty of Sichuan opera but also deeply feel the cultural heritage and local characteristics behind it through a well-planned narrative approach. This narrative includes an engaging story that incorporates the history, characters, and plots of Sichuan opera; it can also show the influence of Sichuan opera on all walks of life; and perhaps, through interactive narration, it can involve the viewers in the heritage of Sichuan opera as well.

In terms of research methodology, this study uses questionnaires to explore in depth the narrative strategies of documentaries in preserving and passing on Sichuan opera. The greatest value and significance of this study is that it hopes to provide new ideas and methods for the inheritance and

development of Sichuan opera so that this unique art form can be revitalized in the context of the new era. Therefore, this research is based more on the study of Sichuan opera itself than on Sichuan opera itself. From this perspective, our work may be more than that. To sum up, the greatest significance of this study is not in analyzing how documentaries can help the inheritance of Sichuan opera, but in finding new paths for the protection and innovation of traditional culture.

Therefore, improving narrative strategies significantly impacts the preservation and promotion of Sichuan opera. A well-crafted narrative engages wider audiences, increasing awareness and appreciation of this traditional art form. Visual storytelling and sound design enhance cultural understanding, making the opera more accessible to younger generations. Ethical storytelling builds trust and authenticity, encouraging deeper audience connection. Ultimately, these strategies help sustain Sichuan Opera's relevance in modern media landscapes.

Research objectives

1. To study narrative strategies that lead to successful cultural documentaries.

2. To explore the production of Sichuan Chinese opera in cultural documentaries.

3. To evaluate audience satisfaction with Sichuan Chinese opera in these documentaries.

Scope of Research

1. Population and Samples

1.1 Population: The population consisted of Douyin (TikTok) users. In 2023, Douyin reported 746.5 million monthly active users, with 50% using the platform daily. About one-third of these users were aged 20-24 years (Verot, 2023).

1.2 Sample: A survey of 450 participants was conducted before developing the video to identify key strategies for cultural documentaries. After the video was developed based on these strategies, a group of 500 viewers was used to assess their satisfaction. Both samples were drawn from Douyin users, with a 0.5 error rate, a 95% confidence level, and a 5% margin of error, calculated using Taro Yamane's formula.

2. Research variables

2.1 Independent variables: Narrative strategies of cultural documentary in Sichuan China.

2.2 Dependent Variable:

1) Video quality using narrative strategies for cultural documentaries in Sichuan, China.

2) Video viewer satisfaction using narrative strategies for cultural documentaries in Sichuan, China.

3. Narrative Strategies: The seven key elements of successful storytelling: 1) Storytelling Techniques, 2) Visual Storytelling, 3) Interview Techniques, 4) Sound and Music, 5) Themes and Motifs, 6) Ethical Considerations, and 7) Engagement Strategies.

4. Research Area: The focus of the study is the folk Sichuan opera group located in Deyang City, Sichuan Province, China. The research will focus on the development and inheritance of Sichuan opera culture.

5. Contents of the documentary: Sichuan Opera culture.

6. Type of creative media: A cultural documentary with content about Sichuan opera.

7. Social media platforms: Douyin (TikTok).

8. Media development time: Developing a cultural documentary featuring Sichuan opera takes approximately 1 year.

Literature Reviews

1. Related theories

Successful Storytelling Strategies

Based on the analysis of data, theories, related research, and viewer feedback, seven key storytelling strategies have been identified for cultural documentaries:

1) Storytelling Techniques: Successful documentaries, as noted by Nichols (2017), and Rabiger (2009), use a clear narrative arc with techniques such as tension–building and resolution to engage the audience.

2) Visual Storytelling: Bordwell and Thompson (2013), and MacDougall (2006) emphasize the importance of visual elements like composition, camera angles, and lighting to convey emotions and communicate complex ideas non–verbally.

3) Interview Techniques: Barbash and Taylor (1997) and Bernard (2011) highlight the need for establishing trust, asking open–ended questions, and editing footage to reveal insights that advance the narrative.

4）Sound and Music: According to Chion (2022) and Aufderheide (2007), sound design and music are crucial for setting the tone, evoking emotions, and providing narrative continuity.

5) Themes and Motifs: Nichols (2017) and Renov (2004) discuss the use of recurring ideas or symbols to convey deeper meanings and unify the narrative, enhancing thematic resonance with the audience.

6）Ethical Considerations: Ruby (2000) and Heider (2006) stress the importance of ethical storytelling, focusing on representation, consent, and the impact of the documentary on its subjects.

7）Engagement Strategies: Nash et al. (2014) explain how interactive elements, direct addresses, and diverse perspectives help create a more engaging and immersive experience for viewers.

These strategies, informed by leading scholars, contribute significantly to the effectiveness of narrative techniques in documentary filmmaking.

Narrative methods in social interaction

The narrative method is crucial for the success of social documentaries as it influences both the visual impact and the audience's experience and satisfaction. Wang, Y. (2023) highlighted that using narrative techniques effectively in Sichuan opera docudramas enhances the film's expressive power and audience engagement. Similarly, Zhao (2021) found that a well-crafted narrative strategy can significantly increase the audience's understanding and acceptance of traditional culture, reinforcing their sense of social identity. These studies provide a theoretical foundation for exploring narrative methods in Sichuan opera documentaries.

Strategies for High-Quality Communication of Opera Culture

Wang, Y. (2022) discusses the importance of using new media technologies for the communication and survival of traditional opera culture, highlighting how media convergence has transformed the landscape of cultural dissemination. Similarly, Wang, S. (2022) explores the challenges and opportunities that arise from integrating traditional opera with new media, particularly focusing on how these technologies can attract younger audiences and ensure the continued relevance of traditional forms like Wuyin Opera.

Application of Narrative Strategy in Cultural Documentaries

Narrative technique, as a vital element in cultural documentaries, has an extensive impact on the audience's viewing experience and social identity. Literature has revealed that a great story

method can not only improve the picture quality and creative impact of documentaries, yet also substantially enhance audience complete satisfaction and cultural understanding (Jiang, 2023; Wang, Y., 2023). These researches supply the academic basis for this paper to explore how to understand the cultural inheritance and technology of Sichuan opera through reliable narrative techniques.

Unique Characteristics of Sichuan Culture

Sichuan culture stands out for its rich history and distinctive local traits. As part of the Bashu Cultural Area, it features ancient sites like Sanxingdui, a vibrant teahouse tradition, and famous cuisine. The region's inclusiveness, blending Chu, Qinlong, Tibetan, and Yi influences, fosters vitality and innovation. Sichuan Opera exemplifies local artistic creativity with its unique style and performances. The region's cuisine, including hot pot and Mapo tofu, reflects the locals' passion for food. Additionally, the hospitable and cheerful nature of the Sichuan people adds to the cultural allure.

Criteria for Evaluating Satisfaction

Criteria for satisfaction evaluation are based on established theoretical models and empirical research. Key dimensions include reliability, responsiveness, and perceived quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Recent studies also emphasize emotional fulfillment, ease of use, and overall user experience (Homburg et al., 2006). The SERVQUAL model, assessing satisfaction through the gap between expectations and perceptions, is widely used (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Additionally, satisfaction should consider long-term aspects such as trust and loyalty (Gustafsson et al., 2005).

Summary in the research on "Narrative Strategies for Sichuan Chinese Opera in Cultural Documentary", the related theories guide key narrative decisions. Successful storytelling strategies, such as clear narrative arcs, visual storytelling, and sound design, will be applied to engage viewers and communicate the opera's cultural depth (Nichols, 2017; Bordwell & Thompson, 2013). Interview techniques and ethical considerations will help create authenticity and trust (Barbash & Taylor, 1997). The integration of new media for cultural preservation (Wang, Y., 2022) and narrative methods for enhancing social identity (Zhao, 2021) will ensure that the documentary resonates with both traditional and modern audiences.

2. Researches Related

Zhao's (2021) research study additionally validated the impact of narrative strategy on the target market's feeling of social identity, pointing out that a great narrative strategy can dramatically improve the target market's understanding and acceptance of typical society. These studies offer an important theoretical basis for this paper to check out the application of narrative methods in Sichuan opera documentaries.

Fan (2023) explored Sichuan Opera's international promotion in the internet era. Despite its cultural value, it has less global visibility compared to Sichuan Cuisine and giant pandas. The study identifies the challenges and advantages of internet–based promotion, emphasizing real–time, interactive engagement. It recommends modernizing content, adapting methods for various audiences, and expanding communication channels to enhance global reach.

Wang, Y. (2022) discusses the importance of using new media technologies for the communication and survival of traditional opera culture, highlighting how media convergence has transformed the landscape of cultural dissemination.

Wang, S. (2022) explores the challenges and opportunities that arise from integrating traditional opera with new media, particularly focusing on how these technologies can attract younger audiences and ensure the continued relevance of traditional forms like Wuyin opera.

These studies contribute valuable insights into how narrative strategies and new media technologies can enhance the preservation and promotion of Sichuan opera. Zhao's (2021) research highlights that effective narrative strategies deepen audience understanding and acceptance of traditional culture, which is crucial for fostering a sense of social identity. Fan's (2023) work emphasizes the importance of modernizing content and using interactive, internet–based promotion to enhance global reach. Both Wang, Y. (2022) and Wang, S. (2022) focus on media convergence and how new media can attract younger audiences while ensuring the relevance of traditional opera. These perspectives support the exploration of narrative methods in promoting Sichuan Opera through documentaries.

Research Methodology

1. The research utilized three tools:

1.1. Survey forms.

1.2. Video quality assessment using narrative strategies for Sichuan Chinese Opera in cultural documentaries.

1.3. Video viewer satisfaction assessment using narrative strategies for Sichuan Chinese Opera in cultural documentaries.

2. Data Collection: The researcher collected data independently from the online platform Douyin (TikTok) in two rounds. The first round involved surveying key strategies and elements that viewers wanted in cultural documentaries, which took 45 days to complete. The second round took place after developing the cultural documentary based on the preferred strategies and elements, and involved gathering viewer satisfaction data online over 60 days.

3. Data Analysis: The research analyzed data using descriptive statistics, including mean, percentage, and standard deviation.

Research Results

The research findings regarding narrative strategies leading to successful cultural documentaries were derived from a survey of 450 online viewers. The study also included an evaluation of the production quality of Sichuan Chinese opera in cultural documentaries by five experts and an assessment of audience satisfaction from 500 viewers. The researcher presents the findings in three key areas:

1. The results of the study on narrative strategies that contributed to the success of cultural documentaries.

Table 1 Basic information of the 450 respondents

No.	Basic information items	Frequency	Percentage
1.	**Gender**		
	Male	147	32.7
	Females	148	32.9
	(Sth. or sb) else	155	34.4
	Total	450	100

No.	Basic information items	Frequency	Percentage
2.	**Age**		
	Under 18 years of age	77	17.1
	18–25 years	66	14.7
	26–35 years	96	21.3
	36–45 years	71	15.8
	46–55 years	62	13.8
	55 years and over	78	17.3
	Total	**450**	**100**
3.	**Educational level**		
	Less than high school	78	17.3
	High school diploma	68	15.1
	Associate degree	80	17.8
	Bachelor's degree	68	15.1
	Master's degree (MSc)	86	19.1
	Advanced degree	70	15.6
	Total	**450**	**100**
4.	**Area of residence**		
	North China	74	16.4
	Eastern China	74	16.4
	South China	70	15.6
	Western China	57	12.7
	Central China	55	12.2
	Northeastern China	71	15.8
	Other (specify)	123	27.3
	Total	**450**	**100**
5.	**Average monthly income**		
	Less than $5,000	78	17.3
	5,000–10,000	100	22.2
	10,001–15,000	93	20.7
	15,001–20,000	89	19.8
	Over $20,000	90	20
	Total	**450**	**100**

No.	Basic information items	Frequency	Percentage
6.	**Hourly and daily viewing of Sichuan Opera documentaries**		
	Less than 1 hour	111	24.7
	1–2 hours	127	28.2
	2–4 hours	94	20.9
	4–6 hours	83	18.4
	More than 6 hours	35	7.8
	Total	**450**	**100**
7.	**Popular channels for watching Sichuan Opera documentaries (please select all that apply)**		
	• Participation in film festivals	37	8.2
	• Educational institutions Cultural and performing arts programs	39	8.7
	• Libraries and cultural centers in China.	33	7.3
	• CCTV cameras and provincial television stations.	25	5.6
	• iQIYI	31	6.9
	• Tencent video	37	8.2
	• Youku (website)	29	6.4
	• Bilibili	30	6.7
	• Douyin (TikTok)	97	21.6
	• Microsoft	35	7.8
	• Microblog	34	7.6
	• Other (specify)	23	5.1
	Total	**450**	**100**
8	The Satisfaction of Watching a Documentary on Sichuan Opera		
	Very happy	96	21.3
	Happy	99	22
	Neutral	67	14.9
	Unsatisfactory	95	21.1
	Very dissatisfied	93	20.7
	Total	**450**	**100**
9	Recommend Sichuan Opera Documentary to others based on your experience.		
	Definitely recommend	88	19.6
	Recommend	87	19.3
	Not sure	97	21.6
	Not recommend	92	20.4
	Not recommend at all	86	19.1
	Total	**450**	**100**

Table 1 presents the general information from a survey of 450 respondents conducted via Douyin (TikTok). Among the respondents, 34.4% did not specify their gender. The majority, 21.3%, were aged between 26 and 35 years. This was followed by 17.3% who were over 55 years old and 17.1% who were under 18 years old. Most respondents held a master's degree, accounting for 19.1%, while 17.8% had an associate degree, and 10% did not specify their place of residence. Additionally, 16.4% lived in Northern China and Eastern China.

The average monthly income of the respondents ranged from $5,000 to $10,000. Most viewers spent less than 1 hour per day watching the Sichuan opera documentary, representing 28.2%, followed by 22.2% who spent 1–2 hours per day, and a smaller percentage, 7.8%, who watched for more than 6 hours per day. The majority preferred to watch the documentary through Douyin (TikTok), accounting for 21.6%, with the second most popular source being educational institutions and performing arts programs, at 8.7%.

Regarding satisfaction with watching Sichuan opera, 22% of viewers felt satisfied, 21.3% were very satisfied, and a smaller portion, 14.9%, felt indifferent. Most viewers were uncertain about recommending the cultural Sichuan opera documentary to others, representing 21.3%, while 92% indicated that they would not recommend it, and 19.6% expressed confidence in recommending it to others.

Table 2 Viewers' opinions on successful narrative strategies for cultural documentaries collected from 450 online viewers.

No.	List of Narrative Strategies	Viewers' opinions level n=450		Meaning
		Mean	S.D.	
1.	**Interview Techniques**			
	1.1 Voices from the community	3.960	0.745	Important
	1.2 Expert testimony	3.633	0.583	Important
	Total	**3.797**	**0.688**	**Important**
2.	**Sound and Music**			
	2.1 Narrative	3.756	0.733	Important
	2.2 Cultural soundscape	3.693	0.664	Important
	Total	**3.724**	**0.699**	**Important**

No.	List of Narrative Strategies	Viewers' opinions level n=450		Meaning
		Mean	S.D.	
3	**Storytelling techniques**			
	3.1 Personal narratives	3.940	0.639	Important
	3.2 Chronological structure	3.616	0.555	Important
	3.3 Non–linear structure	3.484	0.500	Neutral
	Total	**3.680**	**0.599**	**Important**
4	**Engagement Strategies**			
	4.1 Calls for action	3.729	0.799	Important
	4.2 Interactive elements.	3.584	0.692	Important
	Total	**3.657**	**0.751**	**Important**
5	**Visual Storytelling**			
	5.1 Photography	4.018	0.852	Important
	5.2 Archived video	3.558	0.853	Important
	5.3 Repeats	3.222	0.636	Neutral
	Total	**3.599**	**0.852**	**Important**
6	**Themes and Motifs**			
	6.1 Identity and belonging	3.660	0.838	Important
	6.2 Change and continuity	3.529	0.734	Important
	6.3 Conflict and resolution	3.382	0.684	Important
	Total	**3.524**	**0.763**	**Important**
7.	**Ethical Considerations**			
	7.1 Cultural sensitivity	3.318	0.670	Neutral
	7.2 Informed consent	3.196	0.624	Neutral
	Total	**3.257**	**0.650**	**Neutral**
	Overall Total	**3.602**	**0.739**	**Important**

Table 2 shows the opinions of 450 viewers regarding successful cultural documentary storytelling strategies. Overall, the viewers rated these strategies as highly important (Mean = 3.602, S.D. = 0.739). When ranking the strategies from most to least important, the findings revealed the following:

Rank 1: Interview techniques were considered the most important (Mean = 3.797, S.D. = 0.688), particularly the aspects of Voices from the community and Expert testimony.

Rank 2: Sound and music were also rated as highly important (Mean = 3.724, S.D. = 0.699), with emphasis on Narrative and Cultural soundscape.

Rank 3: Storytelling techniques ranked third in importance (Mean = 3.680, S.D. = 0.599), including elements like Personal narratives, Chronological structure, and Non-linear structure.

Rank 4: Engagement Strategies were rated highly as well (Mean = 3.657, S.D. = 0.751), particularly Calls for action and Interactive elements.

Rank 5: Visual Storytelling was considered important (Mean = 3.599, S.D. = 0.852), focusing on Photography, Archived video, and Repeats.

Rank 6: Themes and Motifs were deemed significant (Mean = 3.524, S.D. = 0.763), particularly in terms of Identity and belonging, Change and continuity, and Conflict and resolution.

Rank 7: Lastly, Ethical Considerations were rated as moderately important (Mean = 3.257, S.D. = 0.650), with a focus on Cultural sensitivity and Informed consent, as shown in the table.

2. The outcomes of the production quality of Sichuan Chinese Opera in these cultural documentaries.

Table 3: Basic information on the five experts

No.	General Information	Frequency	Percentage
1.	**Gender**		
	1.1 Male	0	0
	1.2 Women	5	100.0
	Total	5	100
2.	**Age**		
	2.1 Under 25 years of age	0	0
	2.2 25–34	0	0
	2.3 35–44	2	40.0
	2.4 45–54	1	20.0
	2.5 55 years and over	2	40.0
	Total	5	100
3.	**Educational level**		
	3.1 Bachelor's degree	1	20.0
	3.2 Master's degree (MSc)	0	0
	3.3 Doctoral degree	3	60.0
	3.4 Other (specify)	1	20.0
	Total	5	100

No.	General Information	Frequency	Percentage
4.	Area of specialization		
	4.1 Mass communication	2	40.0
	4.2 Advertising	0	0
	4.3 Cultural documentaries and performing arts	0	0
	4.4 History and Sichuan Opera	1	20.0
	4.5 Visual storytelling and documentary production	2	40.0
	Total	5	100
5.	Relevant experience		
	5.1 Less than 5 years	0	0
	5.2 5–10 years	1	20.0
	5.3 11–15 years	1	20.0
	5.4 More than 15 years	3	60.0
	Total	5	100

Table 3 provides general information about the five experts who evaluated the quality of the Sichuan Opera cultural documentary. All of the experts were female, making up 100% of the group. Regarding age, 40% were between 35 and 44 years old, another 40% were over 55 years old, and 20% were between 45 and 54 years old. The majority, or 60%, held doctoral degrees. In terms of expertise, 40% specialized in mass communication, another 40% were experts in visual storytelling and documentary filmmaking, and 20% specialized in history and Sichuan Opera. Additionally, 60% of the experts had more than 15 years of experience, 20% had 11–15 years of experience, and 20% had 5–10 years of experience.

Table 4 Quality Evaluation of Video Sichuan opera Cultural Documentaries by 5 Experts

No.	Quality Evaluation Items	Quality Level n=5		Meaning
		Mean	S.D.	
1. Storytelling techniques				
	1.1 Expert testimony	4.600	0.548	Very Good
	1.2 Personal narratives	4.400	0.548	Good
	1.3 Emotional engagement	3.800	0.837	Good
	1.4 Voices from the community	3.400	0.548	Moderate
	1.5 Disappearing cultures	3.200	0.837	Moderate
	Total	3.880	0.833	Good

No.	Quality Evaluation Items	Quality Level n=5		Meaning
		Mean	S.D.	
2. Image quality				
	2.1 Naturalness of image transmission	4.800	0.447	Very Good
	2.2 Color and brightness of video	4.400	0.548	Good
	2.3 Image clarity	3.200	0.837	Moderate
	2.4 Use of state-of-the-art technology in image transmission	2.800	0.837	Moderate
	2.5 Ordering and alignment of images	2.600	0.548	Moderate
	Total	3.560	1.083	**Good**
3. Professionalism and expertise				
	3.1 Expertise in video production and creation	3.800	0.447	Good
	3.2 Ability to meet client needs and requirements	3.800	0.837	Good
	3.3 Professionalism of videographers and video editors	3.600	0.894	Good
	3.4 Troubleshooting the video production process	3.400	0.548	Moderate
	3.5 Use of state-of-the-art technology and equipment in video production	3.200	0.447	Moderate
	Total	3.560	0.651	**Good**
4. Stimulating interest and participation				
	4.1 Engaging narratives and storytelling	4.000	0.000	Good
	4.2 Appreciation and interest of videos	3.600	0.894	Good
	4.3 Use storytelling techniques to engage and excite the audience	3.400	0.548	Moderate
	4.4 Use of communication tools to stimulate interest in content	3.400	0.548	Moderate
	4.5 Content-induced interest	3.000	0.000	Moderate
	Total	3.480	0.586	**Moderate**
5. Editing and content creation				
	5.1 Using graphics and animation in editing	3.800	0.837	Good
	5.2 Appropriateness of ordering and editing	3.600	0.894	Good
	5.3 Diversity of content presentation	3.600	0.548	Good
	5.4 Providing easy-to-understand information	3.200	0.447	Moderate
	5.5 Completeness and accuracy of information	3.000	0.000	Moderate
	Total	3.440	0.651	**Moderate**

No.	Quality Evaluation Items	Quality Level n=5		Meaning
		Mean	S.D.	
6. Tone				
	6.1 Natural sound	4.000	0.000	Good
	6.2 Interest aroused by demonstration of sound	3.600	0.894	Good
	6.3 Harmony of sound and image	3.200	0.837	Moderate
	6.4 Clarity of sound	2.800	0.447	Moderate
	6.5 Use of technology in recording	2.800	0.837	Moderate
	Total	3.280	0.792	Moderate
	Overall Total	3.533	0.791	Good

Table 4 presents the quality assessment of the Sichuan Opera cultural documentary, as evaluated by five experts. The overall quality was rated as good (Mean = 3.583, S.D. = 0.706). When analyzed by specific aspects, ranked from highest to lowest mean scores, the findings of the top 3 were as follows:

The first aspect, Storytelling techniques, was rated as good (Mean = 3.880, S.D. = 0.833). Specifically, expert testimony was rated very good (Mean = 4.600, S.D. = 0.548), personal narratives were rated as good (Mean = 4.400, S.D. = 0.548), and emotional engagement received a good rating (Mean = 3.800, S.D. = 0.837).

The second aspect, Image quality, also received a good rating (Mean = 3.560, S.D. = 1.083). Within this category, naturalness of image transmission was rated very good (Mean = 4.800, S.D. = 0.447), color and brightness of video were rated as good (Mean = 4.400, S.D. = 0.548), while Image clarity was rated as moderate (Mean = 3.200, S.D. = 0.837).

The third aspect, professionalism and expertise, were assessed as good (Mean = 3.560, S.D. = 0.651). Expertise in video production and creation was rated as good (Mean = 3.800, S.D. = 0.447), as was the ability to meet client needs and requirements (Mean = 3.800, S.D. = 0.837), and the professionalism of videographers and video editors was also rated as good (Mean = 3.600, S.D. = 0.894).

3. The findings on audience satisfaction with Sichuan Chinese Opera as depicted in these documentaries.

Evaluation of audience satisfaction with a Sichuan Opera culture documentary based on narrative strategy involves collecting 500 viewers. The researchers are introduced as follows:

Table 5 Basic information on 500 persons

No.	Basic information	frequency	percentage
1.	**Gender**		
	Male	254	50.8
	Females	237	47.4
	(sth. or sb) else	9	1.8
	Total	500	100
2.	**Age**		
	Under 18 years of age	123	24.6
	18–25 years	22	4.4
	26–35 years	161	32.2
	36–45 years	89	17.8
	46–55 years	81	16.2
	55 years and over	24	4.8
	Total	500	100
3.	**Educational level**		
	Less than high school	71	14.2
	High school diploma	67	13.4
	Associate degree	102	20.4
	Bachelor's degree	49	9.8
	Master's degree (MSc)	98	19.6
	Advanced degree	113	22.6
	Total	500	100
4.	**Area of residence**		
	North China	76	15.2
	Eastern China	73	14.6
	South China	66	13.2
	Western China	77	15.4
	Central China	79	15.8
	Northeastern China	60	12
	Other (specify)	69	13.8

No.	Basic information	frequency	percentage
	Total	500	100
5.	**Average monthly income**		
	Less than $5,000	132	26.4
	5,000–10,000	66	13.2
	10,001–15,000	160	32
	15,001–20,000	54	10.8
	Over $20,000	88	17.6
	Total	500	100
6.	**Hourly and daily viewing of Sichuan Opera documentaries**		
	Less than 1 hour	128	25.6
	1–2 hours	121	24.2
	2–4 hours	74	14.8
	4–6 hours	82	16.4
	More than 6 hours	95	19
	Total	500	100
7.	**The Satisfaction of Watching a Documentary on Sichuan Opera**		
	Very happy	53	10.6
	Happy	95	19
	Neutral	103	20.6
	Unsatisfactory	161	32.2
	Very dissatisfied	88	17.6
	Total	500	100
8.	**Recommend Sichuan Opera Documentary to others based on your experience.**		
	Most likely	72	14.4
	Possible	53	10.6
	Not sure	140	28
	Unlikely	117	23.4
	Very unlikely.	118	23.6
	Total	500	100

Table 5 presents the demographic data of 500 viewers who watched the Sichuan Opera cultural documentary on the online platform Douyin (TikTok). The majority of the viewers were male, with 254 individuals accounting for 50.8% of the total. Most viewers were aged between 26 and 35 years, representing 32.2%, followed by those under 18 years old at 24.6%. The next largest

group was aged 36–45 years, comprising 17.8%, while the smallest group consisted of viewers over 55 years old, with only 24 individuals, making up 4.8%.

Regarding educational background, the largest group of viewers held a higher education degree, numbering 113 individuals, or 22.6%. The second largest group consisted of viewers with a diploma, totaling 102 individuals or 20.4%. Those with a master's degree (MSc) followed closely with 98 individuals, accounting for 19.6%, while 71 viewers, or 14.2%, had an education level below high school. The majority of viewers resided in central China, with 79 individuals making up 15.8%, followed by 77 viewers, or 15.4%, who lived in western China, and 76 viewers, or 15.2%, residing in northern China.

When considering monthly income, most viewers earned between $10,001 and $15,000, representing 160 individuals or 32%. The second largest group, comprising 132 individuals or 26%, earned less than $5,000, while those earning more than $20,000 made up 17.6%, with 88 individuals. Most viewers watched the Sichuan Opera documentary for no more than 1 hour per session, with 128 individuals accounting for 25.6%, followed by those who watched for 1–2 hours, with 121 individuals or 24.2%. A total of 95 viewers, or 19%, watched for more than 6 hours.

Regarding basic satisfaction with the Sichuan Opera documentary, the majority of viewers did not enjoy it, with 161 individuals or 32.2%. Another 103 viewers, representing 20.6%, felt indifferent, while 95 viewers, or 19%, enjoyed the documentary. A large number of viewers, 140 individuals or 28%, were uncertain about recommending the Sichuan opera documentary to others. Additionally, 118 viewers, or 23.6%, indicated they were unlikely to recommend the documentary, while only 72 viewers, representing 14.4%, were highly likely to recommend it to others.

Table 6: Audience Satisfaction with Sichuan Opera Culture Documentaries Based on n=500

No.	Audience Satisfaction	Audience Satisfaction Level n=500		Meaning
		Mean	S.D.	
1. Calls for action				
	1.1 The video makes you feel involved in conservation.	3.946	0.604	Agree
	1.2 Videos to promote the legacy of the younger generation	3.690	0.588	Agree
	1.3 The video encourages people to preserve national culture.	3.573	0.559	Agree
	1.4 Video makes me want to share information with others.	3.679	0.998	Agree
	1.5 This video demonstrates the value of actors and teachers passing on performance knowledge.	4.278	0.448	Agree
	1.6 The videos have made me interested in participating in culturally relevant activities.	3.316	0.465	Neutral
	Total	**3.747**	**0.704**	**Agree**
2. Video quality				
	2.1 High video image clarity.	4.060	0.501	Agree
	2.2 Video sound is clear and uninterrupted.	3.657	0.538	Agree
	2.3 Video editing is smooth and professional.	3.540	0.499	Agree
	2.4 Video length is appropriate.	3.386	0.671	Neutral
	2.5 The video has good color and lighting quality.	3.417	0.719	Neutral
	2.6 Rationalize the arrangement of various elements in the video.	3.338	0.494	Neutral
	Total	**3.566**	**0.627**	**Agree**
3. Content understanding				
	3.1 Video content is clearly explained.	4.063	0.496	Agree
	3.2 The purpose of the video is easy to understand.	3.681	0.574	Agree
	3.3 The information provided in the video is clear and uncomplicated.	3.563	0.542	Agree
	3.4 The video uses plain language.	3.524	0.737	Agree
	3.5 A clear summary of the content at the end.	3.347	0.784	Neutral
	3.6 New Generation of Successors to Continue the Breath of Sichuan Opera	3.185	0.840	Neutral
	Total	**3.561**	**0.728**	**Agree**

No.	Audience Satisfaction	Audience Satisfaction Level n=500		Meaning
		Mean	S.D.	
4. Attract attention				
	4.1 The video should first attract attention.	3.946	0.604	Agree
	4.2 The entire video content is lively and interesting.	3.657	0.538	Agree
	4.3 The video is creative and innovative.	3.540	0.499	Agree
	4.4 The video is entertaining and not boring.	3.308	0.632	Neutral
	4.5 The use of graphics or animation helps to attract attention.	3.104	0.813	Neutral
	4.6 The presentation of information was interesting.	3.194	0.842	Neutral
	Total	3.458	0.727	Neutral
	Overall Total	3.583	0.706	Agree

From Table 6, the research results revealed that out of 500 viewers, the majority expressed a high level of satisfaction with the cultural documentary (Mean = 3.583, S.D. = 0.706). When considering individual aspects, ranked from highest to lowest mean scores, the findings top 3 were as follows:

First: In the Calls for Action aspect, the group of viewers was highly satisfied (Mean = 3.747, S.D. = 0.704). Specifically, they were very satisfied with "This video demonstrates the value of actors and teachers passing on performance knowledge" (Mean = 4.278, S.D. = 0.448). They also expressed high satisfaction with "The video makes you feel involved in conservation" (Mean = 3.946, S.D. = 0.604) and with "Videos to promote the legacy of the younger generation" (Mean = 3.690, S.D. = 0.588).

Second: In the Video Quality aspect, the viewers were also highly satisfied (Mean = 3.566, S.D. = 0.627). They particularly appreciated the "High video image clarity" (Mean = 3.566, S.D. = 0.706), followed by their satisfaction with "Video sound is clear and uninterrupted" (Mean = 3.657, S.D. = 0.538) and "Video editing is smooth and professional" (Mean = 3.540, S.D. = 0.499).

Third: In the Content Understanding aspect, the satisfaction level was also high (Mean = 3.561, S.D. = 0.728). The viewers were particularly satisfied with "Video content is clearly explained" (Mean = 4.063, S.D. = 0.496), followed by "The purpose of the video is easy to understand" (Mean = 3.681,

S.D. = 0.574), and they were similarly satisfied with "The information provided in the video is clear and uncomplicated" (*Mean* = 3.563, S.D. = 0.542).

Discussion

This study finds that the Sichuan Opera documentary on Douyin primarily attracts young adults aged 26–35 who prefer shorter viewing sessions, reflecting current digital media trends. The documentary's appeal to a well-educated audience highlights its cultural value. However, the mixed recommendations suggest limited engagement beyond this group, potentially due to its niche focus (Xian, 2023). Interview techniques, particularly community voices and expert testimonies, are deemed the most effective storytelling strategies, supporting the importance of authentic voices in documentaries. Sound and music, especially cultural soundscapes, are crucial for enhancing the narrative, aligning with Chion's (2022) emphasis on sound design. Personal narratives and varied structures, though important, rank slightly lower, indicating they serve as supplementary elements rather than primary ones (Eckert, 2022). Integrating these elements into a strong narrative framework can create a more immersive experience that fosters empathy.

The quality assessment of the Sichuan Opera documentary by five female experts in mass communication and related fields rates it as good overall. High ratings are given to storytelling techniques, particularly expert testimony and personal narratives, enhancing credibility and emotional impact. Emotional engagement is rated positively, indicating effective viewer connection, vital for cultural heritage preservation. Image quality is favorably rated, especially for naturalness in transmission, though clarity needs improvement (Green et al., 2012). Professionalism in production, including video quality and client satisfaction, is highly regarded (Green et al., 2012; Mihelj et al., 2019).

Analysis of 500 viewers shows a predominance of males aged 26–35, reflecting digital media trends. The educated demographic suggests appeal due to the documentary's cultural content. Regional interest is noted, with most viewers from central China (Chabrowski, 2022), aligning with Xian's (2023) observation of regional resonance. Despite mixed reactions (Zheng, 2023), high satisfaction with "Calls for Action" indicates success in engaging viewers in cultural preservation. The documentary's high video production quality meets technical standards, with clarity supporting effective narration (Green et al., 2012; Chion, 2022).

These findings contribute to the broader field of cultural documentary filmmaking by highlighting the need for culturally sensitive yet technically polished storytelling approaches that resonate with both regional and global audiences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that the Sichuan opera documentary successfully employs several key storytelling strategies that resonate with viewers. However, to broaden its appeal, the documentary could benefit from incorporating more universally engaging elements or enhancing its existing engagement strategies. Future research could explore the impact of these strategies on different demographic groups to further refine cultural documentary production. While the documentary is generally well-received, with strong storytelling techniques and professional production, there are areas for improvement, particularly in image clarity. Addressing these areas could enhance the documentary's overall quality and its ability to engage a broader audience. The documentary succeeds in engaging a specific audience, particularly those with an interest in cultural preservation and education, but it may benefit from strategies to broaden its appeal and address the mixed reactions observed among viewers.

Suggestion

1. For future research on Sichuan Opera documentaries, it will be essential to explore more targeted approaches to audience engagement, particularly among different demographic groups. Studies will likely benefit from examining the effectiveness of shorter, more engaging content formats that align with current digital consumption trends among younger audiences. Researchers will also focus on identifying the specific elements of storytelling, such as the use of community voices and expert testimonies, that have the greatest impact on viewer engagement. Additionally, it will be important to investigate how different cultural soundscapes and musical elements contribute to the overall narrative and emotional appeal of the documentaries.

2. Future research will further explore how documentaries can be tailored to appeal to both educated audiences and a broader viewer base. This will involve testing various strategies for presenting cultural and historical content in ways that are accessible and engaging to diverse audience segments. Finally, there will be a need to examine the potential of interactive features and

clear calls to action to enhance audience participation and cultural preservation efforts, ensuring that future documentaries not only inform but also inspire and motivate viewers to engage more deeply with the subject matter.

New Knowledge

New knowledge from this study includes

1. Audience Preferences for Digital Content: Young adults aged 26–35 prefer shorter viewing sessions for cultural documentaries on platforms like Douyin, highlighting a trend toward brief, easily consumable content among this demographic.

2. Effective Storytelling Techniques: Community voices and expert testimony are identified as the most impactful storytelling strategies in documentaries, emphasizing the importance of authenticity and credibility in engaging audiences.

3. Cultural Resonance with Regional Audiences: The documentary resonates more strongly with viewers from its region of origin, central China, indicating that regional cultural content tends to have a higher appeal among local audiences.

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