

# New Media Content Marketing Strategies in the Context of Carnivalization Theory: Taking Lei Jun's Personal Little Red Book Account as an Example

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**Abstract:** As the Internet has grown, the new media communication environment typified by networks, mobile clients, and cell phones has progressively taken over as the primary means of information delivery and reception. Upon analyzing how businesses are creating new media, we see that many of them are using a content marketing strategy that exhibits the traditional "carnivalization" traits. As a result, this research uses the Little Red Book (LRB) account of Chinese Xiaomi founder Lei Jun as an example to examine the new media content marketing strategy against the theoretical backdrop of carnivalization. This research employs a case study methodology grounded in the semiotics of communication, drawing on Bakhtin's carnival theory to provide meaningful lessons for the content creation methods of other media platforms.

**Keywords:** New media management and marketing, Carnivalization theory, Little Red Book platform, Communication semiotics, Content marketing

## I. INTRODUCTION

The quick advancement of Internet technology and the widespread use of intelligent terminals have made new media the primary means of receiving and disseminating information, radically altering people's habits of thought and manner of life.

Simultaneously, the volume and caliber of new media material keep increasing, and an increasing number of businesses are harnessing the potential of new media for content marketing. Because of new media's low barrier to entry, people are more inclined to publish comments and engage in online activities. This freedom also helps Bakhtin's "carnivalization theory" gain traction. As a type of cultural critical theory, carnivalization theory highlights how individuals unleash and express themselves collectively and carnally through certain forms in particular cultural and social contexts. This hypothesis is a significant discovery for comprehending how people create and consume material in the age of new media. New media's rapid and interactive qualities allow users to have a more active role in the creation and distribution of material, creating a carnivalesque kind of new cultural environment.

The case study method entails examining and evaluating a specific thing in order to comprehend its properties and development process. In this work, Lei Jun's LRB account is analyzed using the case study methodology. In order to determine the characteristics of carnivalization based on the semiotics of communication with regard to the linguistic and non-linguistic symbols in the notes, we first systematically sort the samples of LRB notes with the highest degree of popularity (number of likes). Finally, we extract the representative note cases. When combined with the representative comments, we distill the key components of the theory of carnivalization to explain the beneficial effects of the construction or introduction of these elements on the content marketing.

Thus far, the majority of studies on bingeing theory have focused on literary works; the suggested approach of using carnivalization theory to sell new media content has received less attention. In order to investigate how the theory impacts the audience, the Internet, and social reality, as well as to offer helpful references and lessons for the content creation methods of other media platforms, this article examines the characteristics of bingeing in Lei Jun's LRB account.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Relevant Studies on Carnivalization Theory

China began studying Bakhtin and carnival theory rather late; literary criticism was the first field of study for carnivalization theory. Among the first academics to engage with Bakhtin and the theory of the carnival was Prof. Xia Zhongxian, vice president of the Bakhtin Society of China. She first suggested in 1994 that, in Bakhtin's opinion, the carnivalesque, as a theoretical term, is not the same as the carnival, despite having originated from it. Carnival style includes all forms resembling carnival as well as the culmination of all

carnival-related festivities, customs, and activities. Due to the development of carnival style, carnivals are no longer restricted to a specific day, time, or location, giving them a worldwide meaning and influence on many facets of life [1]. Moving ahead to the present, researcher Li Jinhua argues that Bakhtin's theory of carnivalization exposes a universal human carnival spirit that is based on universal carnival and the folk stance. The network has an aesthetic interest: the combination of extensive participation in experience with technology and commerciality. As economic development and technological advancement continue, the sense of individualization has become more and more prominent. This is happening against the dual background of carnivalization and the aestheticization of daily life [2]. Yuko Bae, a scholar, believes that Bakhtin's theory of carnivalization is in line with the unique literary phenomenon in cyberspace given the rapid advancement of economy and technology in today's society. From the former's theoretical perspective, cyberliterature exhibits the traits of the national online carnival, the carnival of self-emotional release, the carnival of tongue-in-cheek language, etc. [3]. Consequently, a "world free from the rights, statuses, and identities of the first world, in which all people participate and have equal dialogues" is what the carnivalization theory describes as emerging [4].

## **2.2. Relevant Studies on Content Construction of New Media**

The use of new media tools to publish marketing content, images, text, audio, video, and other media to provide customers with pertinent information about the business is known as content construction in the age of new media. This includes the creation of moving images (which often include a range of emoticons), pictures, text, and more. Due to the variety of new media, the speed at which content is disseminated, and the reasonable creation, release, and delivery of useful information to the user, enterprise content marketing has created many opportunities for achieving the goals of enterprise network marketing [5]. According to academics Zhang Xiaojian and Ma Yuzhou, content-based new media marketing is a significant form of marketing that has been a driving force behind the positive impacts of consumer awareness and consumption behavior in new media channels since the inception of marketing [6]. In the new communication paradigm, the "human" itself becomes the primary means of communication due to the diversity of media forms and the features of new media, such as mass, interactivity, and ultra-space and time. Personal expression is also fully embodied. It has consequently grown to be a well-liked carnival feast where various flowers bloom. Human-society communication and engagement have entered a new phase known as the "self-media era," where the goal of self-expression is accomplished through emergent media [7]. Nevertheless, it is still important to be aware of the fact that the current short-video industry is characterized by a lack of market regulation, a homogenization of creation, and other challenges. As a result, the production of short-video content is dependent on the government, platforms, society, and other entities to support content innovation, implement thorough governance, and innovate commercial manipulation in order to foster the growth of the industry ecosystem [8].

## **III. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

### **3.1. Carnivalization Theory**

The theory's primary source is Bakhtin's theory of carnivalization, which highlights the contrast between the official world during the carnival and the unofficial, non-church, non-state free life. It also notes that carnivalization is characterized by universality, witticism, subversion of hierarchy, duality, and relativity. The application of carnivalization theory has greater room for growth in the context of new media. The content marketing approach of LRB, a new media platform, heavily draws from the central tenet of carnivalization theory. The way that Lei Jun, the creator of Xiaomi Technology, constructed his account's content further exemplifies the usefulness of the carnivalization approach.

### **3.2. Communication Semiotics**

The study of media symbols is the focus of semiotics of communication, which also views all communication phenomena as issue domains and the reference and representation of meaning as a natural place to start. Its fundamental reasoning is that symbols and communication are inextricably linked, that the meaning of symbols is created during communication, and that the laws governing their creation and modification form the foundation of human meaning production and cultural formation. This study examines Lei Jun's LRB account's content from the standpoint of linguistic symbols, using semiotics of communication to examine elements like the video notes' title.

#### IV. SAMPLE SELECTION AND DESIGN

##### 4.1. Range of Sample Selection

Little Red Book, the most popular social networking platform right now, serves as the survey object for this investigation. The "Lei Jun" personal account searches and browses, selecting the top 50 video and graphic notes, and then selects the six most representative sample notes, respectively. Ultimately, the six most typical sample notes—three of which are graphic notes and three of which are video notes—are chosen for the content marketing case study from the standpoint of carnival theory.

Table 1 Sample notes

Title/Content Extraction	Types of notes
<b>Assuming one's followers exceed 1 million ask fans how they intend to give gifts on air</b>	Graphic notes
<b>Please recommend some songs for driving</b>	Video notes
<b>Personally deliver Xiaomi SU7 to Shanghai owner</b>	Video notes
<b>Lei Jun says he's sociopathic, flirts with his clothes, shows off his WeChat steps after strolling through a car show</b>	Video notes
<b>Evening Cherry in Xiaomi Science Park</b>	Graphic notes
<b>If you're shopping at Xiaomi Home, post a photo in the comments section</b>	Graphic notes

##### 4.2. Reasons for Taking "Lei Jun" Account as the Research Object

As the creator and CEO of Xiaomi Technology, Lei Jun possesses significant leadership and influence in the industry. His actions, remarks, and social media personas can frequently garner a great deal of attention within the business. Being a well-known businessman, a lot of people are likely to rapidly become interested in and discuss the published information on his account. It is feasible to comprehend how he uses social media platforms for brand communication and word-of-mouth marketing by looking at this account and his interactions with individuals.

Simultaneously, Lei Jun's account frequently shares content about industry trends, technological advancements, and Xiaomi products. Lei Jun's deft application of the carnivalization theory distinguishes these materials from the previous marketing materials. It showcases Xiaomi's technological prowess and product benefits while also showcasing Lei Jun's distinct, creative thinking and marketing approach. It is feasible to comprehend how Lei Jun applies the carnivalization theory to create marketing content and methods, as well as the effects of these strategies on product sales and brand image, by looking at his LRB account.

#### V. CASE ANALYSIS

First, we will condense the carnivalization components that are shown in the case. First, it involves building a "carnival plaza" for everyone's amusement. The culture of clowning and equal trade is the second factor. The third is the defiance of custom. This leads to the development of a basic framework for carnivalization theory, which will serve as the foundation for the case study that forms the bulk of this paper.

The rise of new media platforms in the modern era is inextricably linked to their more varied communication qualities, and communication semiotics—a discipline focused on applying semiotics principles to analyze and address a wide range of communication phenomena and the issues that underlie them—is a popular and useful theoretical approach in communication science[9]-[11], and the majority of communication symbols in new media can be classified as either verbal or non-verbal. In light of this, we decide to concentrate on examining the verbal and non-verbal symbols found in the case report, including the pop-up interface, camera language, copywriting, and video visuals. We may better understand the link between the marketing and the developed theoretical framework of carnivalization by looking more closely at these components. The following diagram illustrates the case study's primary analytical framework, which is based on communication semiotics and the carnivalization theory:

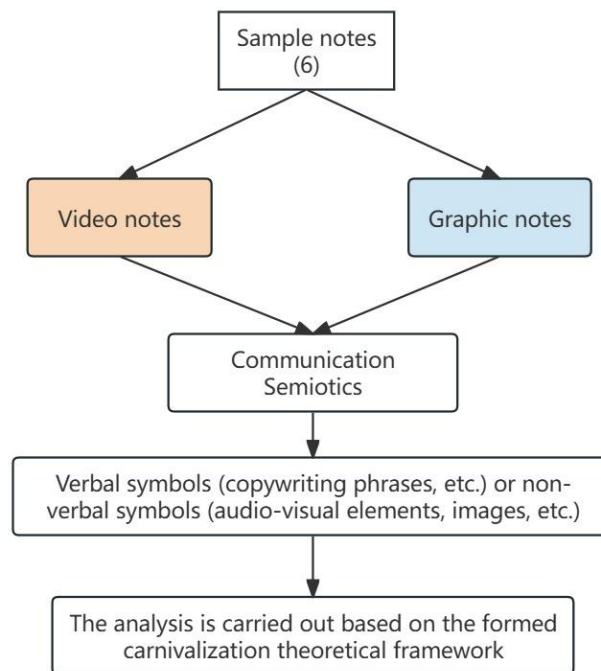


Fig. 1 Main analysis architecture

### 5.1. Constructing "Carnival Square": Creating an Immersive Carnival Atmosphere of Wit and Entertainment

Lei Jun's personal account deftly employs the carnivalization theory's universal entertainment qualities and incorporates the "folk culture of wit" into each sharing, drawing the attention of most users while unintentionally narrowing the gap between the brand and its customers.

A top-level visual note labeled "If my fans in this app break 1 million?" may be found on the account. The top graphic note served as the catalyst for a nationwide entertainment explosion. Lei Jun made a lighthearted and hilarious suggestion in this email to engage with fans: if the fan base reaches one million, he will accept gifts from them during the live broadcast. The pro-people exchange like this sparked the LRB users' enthusiasm right away. Lei Jun has adopted the manner of conversing with friends and family, including using phrases like "listen to everyone," "still want to see," "how," and other similar expressions. This has filled the entire interaction process with warmth. The whole interactive process is full of cordiality and fun. In this "carnival square," users can freely express their views and emotions and enjoy the joy of communication with others.

Lei Jun shared an intriguing message on LRB on April 26, 2024. He talked about what he heard and saw at the car show this time. Lei Jun joked, based on the nonverbal messages in the video, that he had changed his attire to prevent "clashing" with Steve Jobs and Elon Musk. In addition, he disclosed that he had more than 50,000 steps on WeChat and claimed that visiting the car exhibition made him feel like a man with social phobia. People can relate to him more easily because of his genuine, humorous shares. Lei Jun's response in the video footage also produced the effect of gagging at the same time. An artificial intelligence (AI) voice asks the questions, and Lei Jun responds with clever language by giving a serious response to the elaboration. This creates a kind of contrast that makes the entire video seem playful and ornamental. Many users were drawn to join in the conversation because of the laid-back attitude. Users have communicated with Lei Jun and shared their opinions in the comment area.

By use of this content marketing series, Lei Jun has effectively established a "carnival square" on LRB. Users can express their feelings and get both physical and mental pleasure in this square. In addition to raising users' emotional worth, clever and engaging marketing like this also subtly strengthens the brand's marketing impact.

### **5.2. Clown Culture and Equal Communication: Promoting Individuality and Freedom, Opening the Way for Extensive Communication**

A striking example of this communication technique is a visual note that reads, "If you are shopping in Xiaomi House, post a photo in the message area." Lei Jun asked followers to send their own pictures and stories of their experiences in the millet home in the message section of this note, which was written in language symbols. Fans are encouraged to join by this open and interactive marketing strategy, which also gives them a sense of equality in communication with the business. Every voice may be heard and everyone can create content here. Fans have shared their happiness at purchasing their preferred products or their reactions to using the newest tech gadgets on this platform by posting pictures of Xiaomi Home. These real and vivid shares let fans feel the sincerity and heart of the brand and enhance their sense of trust and belonging to the brand.

The note that reads, "Please suggest songs to listen to while driving," further captures the carnivalesque vibe. In this note, Lei Jun records a video of himself driving from the viewpoint of a car using the non-verbal visual symbols of the film and asks viewers to suggest songs that would be appropriate to listen to while driving. In addition, the title of this video message conveys Lei Jun's appreciation and support of fans' uniqueness through spoken symbols, which strengthens a fan's sense of community and gives them a sense of the brand's warmth and concern.

Fans have started recommending their favorite songs in the comments section. One of the most well-liked remarks garnered attention: a user suggested the song "Are you OK?" The song, which had previously been a secondary production of Lei Jun's accented English, skillfully combined the self-deprecating aspects of the carnivalization theory with signs of the love and support that fans had for Lei Jun.

Fans are able to sense the brand's openness and tolerance in this environment of free and equal communication, and they can even collaborate and co-create the brand with it. They can now actively contribute to the brand's development in order to jointly generate greater value; they are no longer just passive beneficiaries. Lei Jun's account has effectively incorporated the egalitarian and self-deprecating nature of clown culture into its marketing through these two notes, creating a channel for wide dissemination of information. This type of communication builds a stronger emotional connection between the company and its followers in addition to increasing the brand's affinity and impact.

### **5.3. Subversion of Tradition: Abandoning Authority and Distance in Traditional Marketing**

The traditional marketing paradigm is going through extraordinary changes and challenges as a result of the digital era. Lei Jun has also disrupted the authority and distance of the traditional marketing model in the content marketing operation of his personal account and opened up a brand-new, approachable, and full of daily atmosphere marketing method with his keen business insight and forward-looking strategic vision.

Let us start by using "late cherry blossoms in Millet Science and Technology Park" as an illustration. Beautiful scenery in the park is depicted in this note, but the images also have a deeper meaning because Lei Jun shared his personal perspective. Comparably, among non-verbal symbols, an image has a powerful impact on communication. The cherry blossoms in full bloom in the first image strengthen the association between the copywriting phrase and the verbal symbol, "without realizing it, spring is almost over." With a smile on his face and positioned at the punch card in the second picture, Lei Jun effectively establishes a more personal connection with the customers. These two very daily photos are very common. People share the flavor of daily life as well as a sense of intimacy.

Let's examine the video remarks that Lei Jun provided on "Shanghai delivery." This note is in the third person in this film, which allows the viewer to experience the "Xiaomi U7" delivery process firsthand through nonverbal cues in the visual camera. Every moment, including the vehicle's display and owner's reception, is captured authentically and without undue alteration or packing. Customers may sense Xiaomi's products' value and the company's regard for them through this authentic, colorful expression, which also captures the spirit of the carnival—that anybody can be "crowned king." Lei Jun and the interaction's proprietors are also very kind and natural; their laughter and chat create a laid-back vibe that is felt by all.

This kind of interaction, to a certain extent, breaks the barrier between traditional corporate executives and consumers and also allows consumers to feel the sincerity of the entire Xiaomi brand.

The way that Lei Jun operates with his personal narrative perfectly encapsulates the philosophy of carnivalization's subversion of tradition. He eschewed the remoteness and authority of traditional marketing in favor of a more casual, everyday relationship with customers. Simultaneously, this violation of tradition and disruption of the marketing system surely gave Xiaomi's brand building new life and inspired fresh ideas and perspectives for the entire new media marketing sector.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The fast-paced evolution of new media has given rise to diverse groups' aspirations for self-expression, transported the carnival square of communal celebration, gathering, and communication, and introduced some richly innovative artistic expressions. The LRB account of Lei Jun's content marketing strategy is examined in this study. There are still a lot of issues with this work because of its low academic standard. For instance, the carnivalization theory case study in new media content marketing is not limited to a single medium, LRB, and the author lacks the time and resources to thoroughly examine the case's internal features and the phenomenon of the carnivalization of various new media contents. Furthermore, the major case did not receive enough attention from the coding process, and the author was only able to perform a qualitative study of the theoretical framework rather than a quantitative analysis of the case's carnivalesque features. Consequently, using the carnivalization theory as a backdrop, the aforementioned two aspects can be leveraged as innovations in further study to enhance the research system of new media content marketing strategy.

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