

Zibo Barbecue, Why It Rose to Fame?

Jun Li^{1, a}

¹School of Foreign Languages, Hubei University of Science and Technology, Hubei, China

^a 757896170@qq.com

Abstract. In March 2023, the short videos of "Zibo Barbecue" were widely disseminated on social media, stimulating the rapid development of local and surrounding industries such as service and tourism, as well as the related capital markets. At the same time, it also posed serious challenges to the local government and management departments. The Zibo Municipal Government has laid out the regional development blueprint in advance, coordinated with various functional management departments, led the people to create a "Zibo Barbecue" catering culture IP, and provided tourists with sincere, enthusiastic, meticulous and considerate services in an all-round way. Short videos helped build a positive urban image in Zibo, and "rushing to Zibo for barbecue" was given holiday significance, and the public showed great emotional identification.

Keywords: Zibo barbecue; short videos; a culinary culture IP; government management.

1. Introduction

Zibo is a traditional industrial town in Shandong Province, China, with profound cultural heritage. Three thousand years of glorious Qi style and eight hundred years of a famous capital in ancient China, it has demonstrated the prosperity of the first of the "Five Hegemons" in the Spring and Autumn Period and the crown of the "Seven Warring States" in the Warring States Period, and has bred Duke Huan of Qi, Guan Zhong, Yan Ying and other worthy masters and celebrities. It is the birthplace of football and the world's first official institution of higher learning, "Jixia Academy". And it is also the hometown of Pu Songling, "the king of short stories in ancient China".

The data also shows that not only the barbecue industry, but also the tourism and consumer industries have seen significant improvements. According to the data released by Zibo Finance Bureau, the local general Public budgeting revenue in the first quarter was In 2023, Zibo became the top tier city of the internet. One string ignited a city. It turned out to be an immeasurable business. According to data from Dianping[1], since March 2023, the search volume for "barbecue" keywords in Zibo itself increased by over 370% year-on-year; The search volume for the keyword "Zibo Barbecue" on the entire platform increased by over 770% year-on-year, and "Zibo Barbecue" created the highest platform traffic on the entire network. According to the data released by Zibo Municipal Bureau of Statistics[2], after Zibo barbecue became popular on the Internet in March 2023, the daily average number of people received by 1288 grills in the city reached 135,800, and the turnover of key grills in the main urban area increased by about 35% year on year; The revenue of key barbecue shops in the surrounding districts and counties of the main urban area, as well as in Linzi, increased by over 20% year-on-year.

about 11.1 billion yuan, up about 4% year on year. This growth rate ranked third in Shandong Province. Data comparison shows that Zibo has successfully integrated network platform traffic with offline tourist traffic, and offline entities have received extremely impressive "traffic dividends".

According to travel data from Tongcheng[3], the search popularity for tourism in Zibo increased by 599% month on month from April 9th to 10th. Homestays and hotels were even more heavily booked. From April 8th to April 24th, the daily average information volume of new media increased 39 times. Online influencers contributed lots of posts. In new media, there were 5.078 million pieces of information related to Zibo barbecue and over 17 million pieces of information were related to Zibo. During the May Day holiday, the peak passenger flow surged to Zibo. The popularity of Zibo barbecue quickly spread to the hotel and homestay industry. According to

Tujia[4] homestay data, during the May Day holiday, the advance booking volume of homestays in Zibo surged year-on-year in 2019, with an average price of 228 yuan per room.

The nearby quoted companies[5] associated with "Zibo Barbecue" have also been influenced. On April 17th, Delis (SZ002330, with a stock price of 6.55 yuan and a market value of 4.171 billion yuan), a meat product company in Weifang (a neighboring city of Zibo), suddenly hit a bottom and rebounded, closing at the daily limit; On the same day, individual stocks related to Shandong barbecue concept, such as Huifa Food (SH603536, stock price 6.15 yuan, market value 1.505 billion yuan), Longda Food (SZ002726, stock price 8.42 yuan, market value 9.087 billion yuan), Xiwang Food (SZ000639, stock price 4.63 yuan, market value of 4.998 billion yuan) also rose, rising 5.91%, 2.38%, and 1.08% respectively.

Why could "Zibo Barbecue" become a hot topic on the internet and even touch the nerve of the capital market, bringing traffic support to multiple industries in a city?

2. A date started a series of warm stories.

During the epidemic in 2022, more than 12,000 college students from Shandong Universities were assigned to Zibo for isolation and received warm care and kindness from Zibo Municipal Government. When they were about to leave the city at the end of their isolation period, the local government sympathized with the students' boxed lunch for a long time when they stayed away from their families and booked a barbecue stand throughout the city to bid farewell to the students, and issued a sincere invitation to return to Linzi District of Zibo after the epidemic ended. After returning to school, the students couldn't forget the profound meaning and affection of the barbecue. Therefore, in the warm spring of 2023, with gratitude, they brought their classmates and friends to the reunion appointment. The heartwarming story of "college students feeling grateful and forming a group to take the high-speed rail to Zibo for a barbecue" entered the public eye through the media, and people were moved by it, which brought the emotional appeal of "Zibo Barbecue" to the circle at the beginning.

Later, one real story after another in this city aroused people's positive emotional resonance in all aspects. Through media platforms, people have seen that Zibo's landlady barbecued skewers one-to-one for one boy who was rushing to catch up with the high-speed rail, Zibo drivers picked up tourists with no charges during holidays, people worked day and night in Badaju, a internet celebrity market, police patrolled the barbecue night market to relieve worries for the customers, and the director of culture and tourism transformed himself into a recommendation officer for sincere service..... Warm stories were connected into a string, each of which deeply moved the public. From different perspectives, it highlighted the warmth that this city and its people had given back. Therefore, public opinion gave positive and sufficient feedback and affirmation to Zibo, and more and more people were empathizing and commenting on the internet, conveying the public's emotional recognition of the "Zibo Barbecue".

3. It's time to travel in the Spring.

The huge population of China means a huge amount of consumption. The three-year epidemic has suppressed the desire and potential of consumers to consume. Fully liberalizing epidemic control activates people's impulse to go out and experience a new life. The daily material needs can be met, leading to market prosperity and business innovation. With the help of online media, Zibo Barbecue has formed the most extensive and the most profound social response. People gather due to simple material needs, and cities earn significant profits to meet such basic needs. The population size lays the foundation and conditions for urban modernization development, and resource aggregation brings the driving force and guarantee for urban modernization development. "Flow economy" has become a powerful support for the smooth progress and realization of Chinese path

to modernization, and has built the most vital sustainable development mechanism for the realization of the goal of Chinese path to modernization.

4. Short videos of social media brought huge popularity to Zibo Barbecue.

In recent years, there have been numerous internet celebrity cities in China, such as Xi'an, Chengdu, Chongqing, Changsha, etc. The rapid popularity of these cities is closely related to the internet celebrity IP with its own traffic characteristics and the strong sociality of short videos, which also confirms the significant role of social media in urban image construction and cultural and tourism dissemination. Social media recreates city symbols and images through short videos, creating a unique spatial image of the "internet celebrity city".

The check-in area can be mainly divided into five categories, such as architectures(the White Elephant Residence and the Chengdu IFS Climbing Panda Landmark), characters(the little sister of the Roly-poly toy in Xi'an), transportation(Liziba Light Rail and Chengdu Wuchazi Bridge), technology(Tianyan and Guanyin Bridge) and food(Changsha tea with a beautiful appearance and Xi'an brush pastry). These internet celebrity check-in places not only have the potential to be disseminated, but also serve as a spatial media that conveys diverse information and tells unique stories to the outside world.

The presentation of "internet celebrity cities" on social media is mainly based on spatial and situational narratives. In short videos made by people checking in on "internet celebrity cities," space is the main narrative subject and essential scene, and netizens often use space to express time and drive the narrative process. For example, early netizens who went to Zibo for barbecue shared their experiences through short videos. People of different time and space could browse these short videos at any time and any place and feel the shock of spatial narrative at the visual level. It was a synchronicity experience of the same space and multiple events.

The check-in area of internet celebrities is triggered by folk discourse, driven by the self-driven rise of people's inner desire to go. The audience learn about these popular check-in places through popular short video recommendations, arrive at the locations, and then shoot video responses which are extremely easy to process. Short videos repeatedly reinforce the understanding of the city, enhance the sense of locality, and are given a festive meaning. Due to the unique taste style of Zibo Barbecue, everyone sits on a small bench self-served with crowded square tables and hot ovens. People focus on enjoying while communicating, resulting in a holiday landscape before the popularization of electronic media. Family members sat around and enjoyed the fire, reviving old memories and giving space a new life in the city's memory.

In the era when everyone is "Personal media", the best propagandist is the audience. The audience will go to the scenic spot due to the scene in cyberspace, and then publish the record in cyberspace, which has a better effect than the main publicity. On the contrary, if the audience, after generating such subjective understanding, goes to the real space and finds that it is vastly different from the individual's cognition, it will have the opposite effect. According to the audience who went to Zibo for barbecue, the space they felt on the online platform was popular, lively, and warm. When they actually went to Zibo, they saw the young post stations open to outsiders, the smiling faces of barbecue grill owners after being overloaded, and the warm- hearted strategies given by the local people, confirming that the physical world and virtual world were equivalent. The audience obtained their perception and cognition of the scenery through watching short videos, which were consistent with the audience's actual perception. It made Zibo barbecue a phenomenon level spreading event. This space blurs the geographical origin and only targets the exclusive group.

This is the construction of an emotional community that transcends individuals and collectives, as well as the destination of emotions in space. Through hot events and frequent social interactions, a wide range of collective emotions are constructed, resulting in the formation of an "emotional community." The mobile group of "rushing to Zibo for barbecue" also underwent a perception and construction process of spatial production. Due to group effects, an emotional community was

generated, which temporarily embedded the group into local culture, felt the local cultural resource management, used the short video platform to build a positive image of the city, and created a diversified city brand.

5. A culinary culture IP was created.

Zibo has created a city-exclusive catering culture IP. The amazing set of three-pieces, "oven+pancakes+dipping ingredients", and the concept of "pork belly, pancakes, and scallions" have gradually appeared on the internet and become synonymous with Zibo barbecue. At the same time, new concepts and elements such as "checking in at Zibo Railway Station" and self-created "Zibo Barbecue Gesture" have also entered people's vision, which have added more symbols and era elements to the originally simple and ordinary barbecue. It has even become a unique IP of a city. Open a "barbecue special train", set up 21 barbecue special bus lines in the city, specifically develop maps of barbecue grills, establish the "Golden Furnace Award" for famous barbecue grills in Zibo, establish a barbecue association, hold the "Zibo Barbecue Festival", and plan the "Spring Festival, Zibo Barbecue" cultural and tourism activities etc. These practical innovative measures were awesome proof of the city's efforts to build a catering culture IP in the whole chain.

Although food can have a "three minute heat", how can this heat become a fuse in exploding the core competitiveness of a city? This requires the effort of water dripping through stone and taking advantage of the situation. For diners, what they care is taste and specialty; For tourists, what they care is the environment and the mood. From the government to citizens, no one has dropped the ball, truly achieving the goal of "what everyone brings is a pleasant consumer environment".

6. Local governments coordinated management, relevant industries collaborated, and the people spontaneously participated.

Local governments worked diligently, accumulated experiences, and implemented public governance in advance. For example, the local Human Resources and Social Security Bureau had published an article titled "Eating Barbecue in Zibo Brings These Benefits", promoting talent policies and employment policies such as "26 Skills for Promoting Zibo". Financial regulatory officials, financial customer managers, and bank insurers in Zibo provided credit support to merchants. Financial institutions continuously introduced inclusive policies to promote consumption and supported local economic development, which were also essential factors. Up to now, there are more than 3060 barbecue related enterprises in Zibo. According to Tianyancha, there were 197 new barbecue companies added in the local area in March 2023 alone, nearly half of the total number of new barbecue companies added in 2022.

Each city has its own unique characteristics. Just one explosive point is needed to pry the entire city. Relying solely on the promotion of the masses and the internet, even if Zibo barbecue becomes a hot topic, it is difficult to sustain. A series of hard core measures launched by local governments have also provided important supports.

In the long run, it was both an opportunity and a test for Zibo Municipal Government to take on this huge offline "reserve". After the barbecue rose to fame, the Zibo Municipal Government and relevant departments quickly responded to the hot flow, actively reflected the social concerns, held a press conference to introduce the food brand of "Zibo Barbecue" to the society, launched a number of "Zibo Barbecue+" featured cultural tourism and theme products, formulated and released a series of incentive measures such as "Barbecue Map", "Bus Line", and "Teaching-to-eat Video", so that more people became familiar with the city.

Local departments did their best to undertake their responsibilities, managing businesses and activating resources to ensure that network traffic became offline "reserve", and "temporary phenomenon" became "one city brand". The Municipal Party Committee and the government systematically led the departments of market supervision, commerce, cybersecurity, police, cultural

and tourism, transportation, urban management, and other departments to guarantee prompt response, coordination and plan. Guided by the needs of the customers, with the purpose of good tourist experience and satisfaction, systematic plannings were conducted; Based on government services and with the goal of optimizing the business environment, some precise policies were implemented. In the process of promoting governance, various departments responded quickly, coordinated and unified regulations with network inspections and on-site promotion (Visit the barbecue courtyards, learn about barbecue management, conduct standard training for standardized business points, and exchange experiences in demonstration businesses). Social security, food safety, fire safety and other departments worked together to provide thoughtful and meticulous services for the entire barbecue industry, and to polish the new business card of Zibo barbecue. Behind the success of Zibo barbecue were the joint efforts of local governments and departments, industry organizations, and practitioners. The governments of Zibo operated efficient managements with a significant awareness of a whole, meticulously and comprehensively serving the people and resonating with the public's recognition.

The meticulous and thoughtful service provided by the municipal government, the honest and trustworthy business operations, and the enthusiastic hospitality from citizens, promoted a "urban marketing closed-loop", which was spontaneously recommended by tourists, quickly responded by the government, and actively maintained by citizens. This reflects the consistent advocacy of the Chinese Communist Party of "mobilizing the masses, organizing the masses, and relying on the masses", and creates a Zibo model of "co-creation" through the social governance of ordinary people.

After Zibo Barbecue "went out of the circle" with a high degree of human feelings on the short video platform, the municipal government always implemented the spirit of taking the people as the main body of creation, following the trend, turning "eating barbecue" into supports for the development of barbecue enterprises, turning the planning of Urban tourism industry into marketing for the development of urban modernization, and thus driving the innovation of managements and methods. Actively supporting the business behaviors of barbecue enterprises, encouraging and helping vendors expand their business scale and improve their business quality, is not only a respect for the achievements of the people's labor, but also an encouragement for their pioneering spirit.

Create a good business environment, track development trends, pay attention to changes in demand, timely introduce policies, and launch a series of convenient and beneficial service measures, demonstrating the fundamental purpose of the government to put the people at the center, think about what the people think, be urgent about what the people are worried about, and solve their concerns. By stimulating the creative vitality of the people, the potential of wisdom and innovation hidden among them can be fully unleashed.

7. Sincere hospitality from all citizens guarded the taste of happiness.

In Zibo, the air was filled not only with a strong aroma of meat, but also with a taste of happiness in this city. Tourists who had been to Zibo said, "What makes it popular is not the barbecue, but the sincere hospitality and a strong flavour of life in this city."

8. Conclusions

Social media dissemination, platform celebrity participation, mainstream media assistance, diner experience, government linkage operation, communication and fermentation of consumer opinions and emotions, these multidimensional and three-dimensional communication methods have given birth to the overall image of Zibo city in the public mind. "Hospitable", "enthusiastic", and "honest and trustworthy", become the keywords people use to evaluate Zibo, and thus evolving into a powerful persuasive force.

Zibo, a traditional industrial city seeking transformation, is showing more possibilities for future economic growth. It is not easy for other cities to replicate the success of Zibo barbecue, as barbecue is a dietary culture with regional attributes. Creating urban traffic passwords requires city specific policies, unique concepts and regional attributes, and policy support from local governments. Only when everything is in place that day can it be possible to create more urban traffic samples similar to Zibo barbecue.

At present, China is facing difficult issues in modernization construction, such as overcoming difficulties in industrial breakthroughs, promoting the innovations, strengthening the real economy, urgently improving the index of people's happy life. Only by mobilizing the masses and rallying together can China reform, innovate, solve problems, and create a new situation for the modernization construction.

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