

Study on Different Ways of Globalization, Cultural Effects Produced by Globalization and Challenges in TikTok vs. DouYin

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Abstract:

With the development of short videos, DouYin (Chinese version) and TikTok (international version) have taken the initiative in disseminating world culture. In this article, based on case study analysis, it is mainly analyzed from the aspects of generalization and comparison to find out the difficulties and solutions for globalization and cross-cultural vision communication. The results show that DouYin and TikTok are a part of globalization diffusion and have the ability to create new cultural sources. TikTok have established a communication paradigm characterized by “Eastern elements+global narrative” through technological empowerment, local operations, and the user-generated content (UGC) model. However, it also encounters challenges such as data security disputes cultural discounts and policy barriers. The research posits that its success affirms the dual role of digital platforms in cultural globalization and holds theoretical and practical significance for Chinese internet companies going global have been proved to be creative destroyers in cultural globalization. The research reports show that DouYin and TikTok’s expansion abroad validates the theory – digital platforms are both creators and destroyers for their contribution in cultural globalization. On one hand, they restructure the power architecture of cultural communication thanks to the empowerment of technology in which common users can play a more important role than traditional media; On the other hand, it reveals fundamental gap in essence between globalization and localization, as well as between commercial interests and social responsibilities. The implications of this study for Chinese Internet companies going global are as follows: it is necessary to build a three-dimensional model of “technical compliance-cultural translation-value resonance”, enhance global governance capabilities at the levels of algorithm transparency hierarchical content operation and participation in public issues and provide practical references for building an inclusive digital cultural

ecosystem.

Keywords: Globalization; Digital Platform; Culture Dissemination.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Global Expansion of Short-Video Platforms and the Cultural Communication Landscape of DouYin and TikTok

In the context of the surging tide of the digital era, short-video platforms are expanding their influence globally at an unprecedented pace. According to authoritative data from Statista in 2024, the global user base of short-video platforms has exceeded 5 billion, confirming that social media has become the core frontier of cultural transmission. Various cultural contents are continuously exported worldwide through this channel, reshaping the global cultural ecosystem [1].

Driven by this macro-trend, the globalization process of Chinese internet platforms has accelerated. TikTok, the international version of DouYin, stands out as a prime example: its download volume has consistently ranked first among global social apps for the past four years. This achievement not only demonstrates its strong global appeal but also reflects the rise and influence expansion of Chinese internet enterprise

on a macro level, social media in all parts of the world plays an important role beyond simple entertainment purposes, whereas at the micro level, it penetrates deeply into spheres like culture, education and trade, forming a beneficial trend of interdisciplinary integration. Meanwhile, this encourages intercultural communication and mutual exchange between different regions and countries and leads to cross-border cooperation among them, which is a great impetus that drives the worldwide digital economic development, the „Digital Silk Road“ [2].

Developed by ByteDance, the overseas version of TikTok, a popular global short video application outside of China, is devoted to diverse regions featuring mainly English language short videos according to the culture and habits of the people there; the hot global challenge issued in America, for example, connects with the user's special interest and preference.

significantly enhancing user engagement and local integration. Second, it formulates differentiated content review rules according to regional laws and regulations,

ensuring content compliance while respecting cultural differences and regulatory requirements. Third, it has established a wide range of links with its worldwide user base, providing a platform for global producers to interact, share their works,

encourage cross-cultural creativity and synthesis of many creative cultures. Meanwhile, TikTok's equivalent DouYin app exists for the Chinese market only. The Chinese people enjoy watching DouYin where they can browse and enjoy content in Mandarin with content trending around themes of domestic preferences, local cultural features of China, and consumer desires; therefore, DouYin also tries to carefully protect user information from being improperly gathered or used by others, ensuring users' privacy, security, and moral integrity.

DouYin draint operates according to Chinese Internet law, with strong user information management regulations and a rigorous content review system. Moreover, with the seamless docking between e-commerce and payment systems as well as domestic local services, content and commerce and services are deeply integrated. Offering people a more comfortable and diversified experience, DouYin plays an essential role in promoting China's short video industry and greatly benefits China's digital economy growth.

1.2 Research Objectives and Significance

Put aside how digital platforms work in terms of creating adaptation strategies across different cultural contexts, this study systematically explores the globalization tactics as well as the cultural communication logic of both TikTok (the overseas version) and DouYin (the domestic version). The aim is to examine two main aspects: first, by analyzing approaches such as localizing content and offering multilingual operation modes and differential regulation and governance policies, it reveals the strategies through which those platforms reconcile uniformities, for instance in terms of algorithms that determine what information will be shown (algorithmic recommendations), with local contingencies like diverse cultural contexts; second, it probes into the pattern of culture transference, such as the effects generated through the Digital Silk Road.

Oss-disciplinary content integration across culture, edu-

cation and commerce enables one to understand the reshaping of the cultural ecology of the world, enabled by platform-creating content and creative interaction among users on short-video platforms. In the final analysis, this research intends to describe adaptive strategies, which involves a platform's review system, compliance with regional policies, and culturally relevant and sensible design, that enable it to negotiate the regulation differences and cultural variance in different markets.

The theoretical dimension refers to: Integrating social media studies into cultural globalization theory so as to expand the boundaries of academic research and bridge the gap between technology and culture and to fill the gap of underutilization of cultural criticisms within academia. It proposes an analysis of the way in which digital platforms both embody and mediate cultural globalization in order to enrich scholarship regarding the exercise of power over/by digital platforms, the process of cultural hybridization driven by the digital globalization, and issues of digital sovereignty [3].

Practical implications: the research puts forward a realizable technology and culture-driven dual mechanism and framework model for Chinese internet company going global. The realization of TikTok success comes from its merging of tech advantage such as intelligent recommendation algorithm and its cultural adaptation strategy such as localization of challenge campaign and region-specific content censorship rules. Enterprises in China can use this model as guidance on how to operate across cultures, manage cultural inclusion with appropriate regulations, and transfer global values through digital platforms while still respecting the local needs.

1.3 Research Methods

By combining several research methodologies, the case study compares the distinct tactics of TikTok's global operations and DouYin's internal environment in order to reveal their operational rationale. By exploring TikTok's worldwide user base and popular content tags, data mining reveals the significant impact of cultural transmission. For example, the hashtag#ChineseCulture has received over 50 billion views,

pointing out how its international appeal is considerable as well. An analytical comparison highlights how globalisation routes followed by rivals such as YouTube Shorts and Instagram Reels were undertaken horizontally to analyse user engagement strategies, content distribution models, and the positioning of the products on the market. Moreover, by pointing out the advantages of TikTok and DouYin domestically and internationally.

the article provides a detailed discussion on the existing

competitive landscape in the worldwide short video market, which explains the positioning process of these digital platforms. Then it analyzes the development processes of globalization and proposes mechanisms. Furthermore, this paper also talks about the operation strategy of TikTok and DouYin. In addition, we examine the core value of Chinese short videos, such as content features, and how they are popularised, impacted social life. Besides, problems and trends in today's society, such as technology, ethics and politics are assessed.

2. ByteDance's Global Expansion

2.1 Technology-Driven Product Iteration

Algorithmic recommendation engines, such as collaborative filtering algorithms, boost user retention through finely tuned material dispatches fueled by user data analytics, thus increasing positive user sentiment. Localisation is often characterized by adding localized features, multilingual ads (e.g., creating holiday moments or dialect filters for Southeast Asia), putting data-driven solutions to practical use, while respecting national and local preferences and habits.

2.2 Market Entry Strategies

DouYin targets young people from outside and breaks down cultural boundaries with "entertainment-oriented content," while DouYin expands its domestic market penetration by fortifying its e-commerce and live-streaming ecosystems. In terms of funding and alliances, the 2018 purchase of Musical.ly made it possible to enter the North American market quickly, and content relationships with organizations like the BBC and Universal Music have been formed. By means of strategic planning and resource integration, these programs create a unique ecosystem that encompasses both domestic and worldwide markets. This includes strengthening local corporate foundations and extending global impact through cross-industry collaboration and cultural integration [4].

3. Content Production and Cultural Representation

3.1 Glocalization of Native Culture, Segmented by User Groups and Target Markets

The platform appeals to domestic Chinese as well as overseas Chinese by aiming for traditional Chinese culture lovers both at home and abroad, of which Li Ziqi is the best example, a creator whose content mainly covers top-

ics such as pastoral life, Hanfu, calligraphy and intangible cultural heritage [5]. The people in her DouYin videos impress domestic audiences with their cultural identity, whereas those watching her on TikTok are blown away by Chinese traditional beauty.

In terms of pop culture export, the platform focuses on global youth-centric markets, especially in Southeast Asia, South Korea, and parts of Europe and the Americas [6]. It targets young users passionate about K-pop, Chinese dramas, and short-form entertainment. On TikTok, K-pop cover dances and Chinese drama clips are widely shared, sparking secondary creation trends among young creators. These 15-30-year-old users actively participate in challenges and remixes, effectively spreading Chinese pop culture elements across various regions.

Regarding the localization of global culture, the platform aims at diverse regional markets around the world, including Brazil, Japan, and numerous other countries. It serves local content creators and consumers who enjoy fusing their cultural symbols with global trends. For instance, in Brazil, TikTok users incorporate samba elements into their videos, and Japanese users add anime-inspired effects. This user-generated content (UGC) caters to local preferences, creating a “hybrid culture” that appeals to both local audiences and those globally interested in cultural diversity.

3.2 User Participation and Identity Construction

Formation of adolescent “digital tribes”: Cross-regional interest communities built through hashtag challenges (e.g., #FYP, #ForYouPage).

Shift in cultural discourse power: Ordinary users becoming the main agents of cultural communication, challenging traditional media’s “elite narrative” model.

3.3 Economic and Social Impacts

The creator economy boosts million-follower bloggers and drives the explosion of cross-border e-commerce, like TikTok Shop has enjoyed an annual GMV growth rate exceeding 200% in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, short videos bring people around the world to acknowledge pertinent social issues such as the environment or equality—e.g., #ClimateAction has been viewed more than 1 billion times. Therefore, the creation of both areas indicates that the platform is an impetus for economic development and commercial and society discourse, underpinning the need to bring commercial value to the forefront and attract people to address social problems. [7].

4. The Challenges and Changes of ByteDance Across the World

The US has placed severe limitations on TikTok, posing a complex array of significant obstacles. With the RESTRICT Act and other legislation aiming to outlaw the platform on the grounds of national security, the US government has been a significant source of legislative threats. TikTok has previously been prohibited from being used on government-owned devices in a number of states, which has limited its use in particular industries and impeded its growth. In order to disrupt TikTok’s financial model and thwart long-term strategic planning, US politicians have repeatedly requested that ByteDance sell off its ownership of the app, threatening a total market ban if the requests are not fulfilled [8].

TikTok is still under investigation due to data security issues despite efforts like „Project Texas“, which sends US user data to Oracle servers abroad under the supervision of a third party. To make sure Chinese companies are unable to access US user data, lawmakers have launched investigations, held hearings, and interrogated TikTok execs. User trust has been diminished and regulatory uncertainty has been raised because of constant inspection.

the cultural discount phenomenon is also one problem TikTok faces, for example, certain materials with Chinese characteristics find hard to fit into the mainstream Western society because of the different values. The platform still faces certain problems like governing against rumors spread by bad elements, teenagers’ protection and so on. There is also high risk for technical decoupling. And the effects from supply chain de-Chinese firm will be dangerous to servers’ deployment and algorithm improvement.

There are three big paths towards optimization of routes which can put the focus on enhancing the audience resonance, we use content stratification tactics to first develop localized content packages according to different cultural sectors, so as to keep materials consistent with local flavor, values and language habits. In order to navigate through intricate regulatory landscape, technical compliance innovation has to focus more on increasing.

also providing experience is to advance real algorithm transparency and contribute towards building a decentralized data storage method so as to ensure online safety; it also provides experience to work with international colleges and research centers on studying cross-cultural communication, thereby helping to better understand the rules of global cultural dynamics, improving „soft influence“ ability, so as to promote smooth cross-border communication and reduce the existence of cultural barriers; the integration of various aspects above all can provide

sustainable business operation, regulatory compliance, as well as cultural adaptation simultaneously in the course of entering global market [9].

By leveraging generative AI technology to reduce content production thresholds, AIGC empowerment will help popularize “human-machine co-creation” models that combine AI efficiency with human creativity. In the meanwhile, metaverse integration seeks to create immersive cultural communication venues that conflate the digital and physical worlds by fusing short films with augmented reality (AR) and virtual socializing technology. By seamlessly combining AI-driven creation with metaverse-based immersion, these developments not only transform content production paradigms but also reinvent interactive experiences, allowing users to participate in more dynamic, participative cultural exchanges [10].

5. Conclusion

DouYin and TikTok’s globalization practices exemplify both technologically capital-driven commercial success and a microcosm of cultural communication paradigm shifts in the digital age. Through “technological adaptation+cultural translation” strategies, they have achieved two-way export of Chinese internet products and native culture, while exposing deep-seated contradictions between globalization and localization, and commercial interests and social responsibilities.

The focus of the firms remains on the top three markets: China, the US and Europe; there is not enough research on the dynamic markets in Africa and Latin America.

Quantitative analysis just relies on publicly available data and cannot go into detail to analyze the inner platform logic based on algorithmic logic.

Future research may also explore how short-video platforms permeate the cultures in countries along the B&R and the possible unethical implications of AI in cross-cultural communication. More importantly, theoretical ref-

erence can be made to guide the establishment of a more inclusive global digital cultural ecosystem.

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