

Research on the Catalytic Role of Short Video Media in Popular Culture Dissemination

Yumeng Zhan *

Media Communication and Cultural Studies, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU, United Kingdom

* Corresponding Author Email: 1415840404@qq.com

Abstract. With the continuous development of digital technology, the forms of media have undergone great changes, which have greatly changed the environment of dissemination of popular culture. Its range of dissemination has transcended geographical restrictions, and the means of dissemination are diversified. They show the characteristics of "short cycles and rapid iterations". New requirements are brought forward to the adaptability of the platform of dissemination. Based on the advantages of a low production threshold, accurate allocation and a strong interactive effect, short videos have quickly settled in the scene of popular culture dissemination and have become the key link that connects the production and consumption of culture. It has a deep influence on the production logic and transmission ways of popular culture. Based on the integration media and participatory culture theory, this paper first analyzes the internal connection between the characteristics of contemporary popular culture dissemination and the media attributes of short videos. Then, this paper discusses how short videos reduce the threshold of creation, conform to the characteristics of popular culture and form the key link in building a cultural dissemination community. Finally, this paper puts forward the optimization strategies from the perspectives of platform, creation and regulation. By clarifying the relationship among them, this paper provides a theoretical basis for the healthy development of popular culture in the digital age.

Keywords: short videos, popular culture, dissemination mechanisms, media characteristics, participatory culture, optimization strategies.

1. Introduction

As media technology develops, cultural dissemination always follows its footsteps. From print media to electronic media, with the emergence of new media technology, cultural dissemination forms will undergo corresponding transformations. In the digital era, short videos have quickly become the most commonly used way for the masses to acquire information and participate in dissemination logic activities, and have greatly transformed the logic of production and dissemination of popular culture. In academia, the discussion of media and dissemination is contentious, and the specialized study of the impact of short videos on popular cultural dissemination is descriptive, and lacks a systematic exploration of the driving mechanism of its emergence. Based on the contemporary communication context and considering the uniqueness of short videos as the entry point, this paper discusses how short videos promote popular cultural dissemination. This research expands the theoretical perspectives of media and cultural studies, and has reference value for the operation of the platform, the behavior of creators, and regulatory measures, and has theoretical and practical significance.

2. Contemporary Characteristics of Popular Culture Dissemination

The surging global trends and the widespread application of digital technology have jointly reshaped the current landscape of popular culture dissemination, resulting in significant differences from the traditional model. In terms of dissemination scope, geographical and national boundaries are increasingly being crossed. Popular cultural symbols from specific regions can quickly spread globally through digital platforms, thereby promoting the integration of "global trends" and "local characteristics". For instance, indigenous music has gained international attention through short

videos. In terms of dissemination entities, professional institutions are no longer the sole creators [1]. With the help of digital tools, ordinary people have become the core force in popular culture dissemination, changing the traditional "one-way output" dissemination model. In terms of dissemination speed, influenced by the fast-paced lifestyle, popular culture exhibits the characteristics of "short cycles and high update rates". A certain trend may briefly become popular and then be quickly replaced by new elements. These characteristics reflect the vitality of contemporary cultural dissemination and also indicate the need for more advanced communication platforms - that is, media forms that better meet their constantly changing communication needs.

3. Media Communication Characteristics of Short Videos

The technological innovations in the media field have driven the development of communication forms towards a lightweight direction. The core media characteristics of short videos align with the dissemination of popular culture, as shown in Table 1. The key to the popularity of short videos is that the video length is consistent with the unit of time for absorbing information by users. At the same time, cultural content can break through the time and space constraints of users' information consumption. Intelligent recommendation provides technical support for the dissemination of short videos. By mining user behavior data, interest tags are formed to achieve content dissemination and improve the matching degree of cultural information and users. The UGC community is one of the prominent features of short video media. Low-threshold creation tools and dissemination channels are provided to users, breaking the past monopoly of professional institutions in content creation. A refined interaction mechanism gives short videos stronger social attributes. Comments, likes, sharing, and other interaction functions provide instant feedback for videos, turning passive viewers into active users. The dissemination of short videos based on the ecosystem. Multi-channel dissemination and community dissemination effects are used to construct a hierarchical cultural dissemination network. This not only ensures the continuity of dissemination, but also increases the range of dissemination.

Table 1. Media Dissemination Characteristics of Short Videos

Feature Categories	Specific manifestations:	The supporting role in the dissemination of popular culture
Content Duration Feature	Compact and concise, suitable for users' fragmented information reception habits.	Breaking through the limitations of time and scenarios, expanding the coverage of popular culture dissemination in fragmented time periods
Technical Distribution Feature	Centered on intelligent recommendation algorithms, achieving precise content matching through user profiling.	Improving the matching efficiency of cultural information with target audiences and reducing the waste of dissemination resources
Content Production Feature	Building a UGC ecosystem, providing low-threshold creation tools and distribution channels.	Breaking the monopoly of professional institutions, enriching the sources and perspectives of expression of popular culture content
Social Interaction Feature	Equipped with interactive functions such as comments and likes, establishing an immediate feedback loop.	Promoting the transformation of audiences from passive reception to active participation, deepening their understanding and recognition of popular culture
Operation Mode Feature	Adopting ecological operation, combining multi-channel distribution and community dissemination.	Forming a multi-level dissemination network to ensure the sustainability and breadth of popular culture dissemination

4. Core Catalytic Mechanisms of Short Videos in Popular Culture Dissemination

4.1. Lowering Barriers to Dissemination and Creation

The extensive application of digital technology significantly stimulates the public's demand for cultural expression. Video sharing networks are technically designed to meet this demand. Video sharing networks make the content creation process as simple as possible by providing editing software, special effect templates, music library, etc. to reduce the technical requirements of content creation for non-professionals. "Dream Avocado" was previously only a building designer and not a film production professional; within less than 1 month, he used self-study tutorials and artificial intelligence tools to finish his animated short film "Stereotypical Universe." The whole process used about 1000 dollars in computing resources [2-3], and the video was viewed more than 10 million times on multiple platforms. This directly reflects the practical effect of reducing communication creation barrier by short video. This effect has four main support links as shown in Table 2, each of which can reduce the barrier. Lightweight and simplified creation tools expand the possibility of participation. The popularization of mobile phones has made content creation no longer bound to professional equipment, people can create anytime and anywhere without limits. Simplified distribution channels also help. One-click publishing and multi-platform synchronization mechanisms mean creators do not need to master special distribution methods, can directly broadcast on multiple platforms. Platforms also provide traffic support mechanisms for new creators on the distribution network. Platforms provide traffic support mechanisms for new creators on distribution network, providing a basic exposure opportunity for early creation, reduce the possibility of high-quality creation being missed. This low-barrier effect breaks the monopoly of traditional communication channels by professional institutions, allowing more people to participate in the creation and dissemination of popular culture.

Table 2. Core Factors Contributing to Lowered Barriers in Distribution and Creation

Elements	Proportion
Technical tool support	34%
Lightweight creation equipment	21%
Simplification of dissemination process	25%
Support policies for novice users	20%

4.2. Aligning with Pop Culture Distribution Characteristics

Because of its unparalleled production and distribution mechanisms, short videos have become the original momentum for popular culture dissemination. Its content production is no longer bound by traditional modes anymore. No one needs to be a designer to produce comics, just as no one needs to be a musician to create a song, creators need to follow the pace of developing culture and quickly transmit the constantly updating hot topics and popular culture, this process is exactly the popular culture itself. Compared with other popular culture dissemination ways, the algorithm recommendation like a speed booster, based on user data and real-time popularity to quickly promote the good content to the right audience, making the cultural dissemination "instantaneous," popular culture dissemination paths become greatly shortened.

At the level of content presentation, short videos use fragmented narration, divide complicated cultural symbol into simple and easy-to-understand visual units to achieve three-dimensional dissemination of culture from different perspectives and different dimensions. Intelligent regional adaptation function activates local dissemination network, making international culture integrate into local culture. The local culture of each region can also disseminate to other regions through the short video platform, both parties jointly build a diversified and dependent popular culture dissemination system.

4.3. Building a Cultural Communication Community

There are two main sources driving the popularity of short videos in disseminating culture: interaction and emotion. Interaction gives birth to cultural identification in two ways: topic comments are open for interpretation of culture and users get to understand culture better through collision of opinions; topic tags and challenge activities promote group participation and convert individual interests into user-induced dissemination [4]. As for emotion, popularity of short videos gives birth to dissemination of culture through story-telling which accelerates formation of cultural circle. Users gather around similar aesthetics or values and enjoy culture together beyond space. As shown in the cross-space flow of content, popularity of culture transcends space and interaction gives birth to consensus. Popular culture beyond space forms a vibrant community for dissemination. With the support of social and emotion, breadth and depth of dissemination of culture are enhanced by short videos.

5. Specific Manifestations of Short Video Media in Promoting Popular Culture Dissemination

5.1. Accelerating Dissemination Processes

In the digital media era, short videos, with technological advantages and dissemination ways, promote popular culture spreading rapidly quickly through building a personalized content warehouse for users based on behavioral data analysis through intelligent algorithms and presenting cultural works in “digital express” form precisely pushed to the viewing field. Compared with traditional media, this “time - space shortening” effect is obvious. The “real-time creation - real-time release” mechanism of short video website greatly encourages people to create and release “cultural live broadcast” in “real time”. Whether it is impromptu performance in street or popular culture events, it can become dissemination materials quickly. The social system built by short video website turns all users into “key nodes” of cultural dissemination. Dissemination network will be formed through behaviors established by users like likes, comments and sharing. The characteristics of short video content corresponding to the multi-platform distribution can make the same cultural works release their “first performance” on all social and news website and complete multi-dimensional dissemination mode. The same cultural works can finish the process of popular culture transferring from small mass attention to mainstream discussion in a short time through breaking through the social circles and crossing the geographical boundaries.

5.2. Expanding the Base of Content Creators

According to the traditional dissemination model, the strong power of popular culture is professional cultural institution, media and famous artists. While people just be the audience to receive content, it causes have few views and narrow view about popular culture. However, the eruption of short video has destroyed this model and enlarged the number of disseminators [5]. By the help of simple creation tool and open platform, common user gets great power and become the new disseminators of popular culture. They shoot daily scene to create personalized content, re-create popular culture and share views about culture. Small business and local cultural institution also can use short video to promote their popular culture products. For example, the tourism department of local government also use short video to promote their unique culture and make it popular. Because of the new disseminator, the popular culture break through professional culture and embrace different views and creativity. It enriches the structure of popular culture and makes it be spread to more people.

5.3. Reshaping Communication Formats

The specific media characteristics of short videos not only accelerate the dissemination speed, change the dominant dissemination entity of popular culture, but also fundamentally reshape its dissemination form. This transformation enables popular culture to break away from the traditional

linear dissemination model and create a more flexible and diverse dissemination environment. Traditional popular culture dissemination usually follows this process: "professional production → media distribution → audience reception", during which the audience cannot participate in the intermediate stages of the dissemination process. However, short videos have established a non-linear dissemination form: "production - distribution - interaction - dissemination". Taking the widely popular "Theme Three" dance in 2023 as an example. According to the official "Popular Culture Dissemination Report" released by Douyin in January 2024, after the initial video was released, users created over 1.8 million derivative works, covering more than 20 styles - including campus, workplace, and ancient style adaptations. Related topics received over 58 billion views. To clearly show the key differences between the initial dissemination stage and the derivative dissemination stage of the "Theme Three" dance, the following table compares key aspects such as the dissemination entity and content format (Table 3). After users receive the content, they can participate in the dissemination through comments and reposts, and can also create new content through derivative works, thus becoming new dissemination nodes. This novel dissemination model prevents popular culture content from becoming rigid and monotonous. Instead, it evolves endlessly through uninterrupted communication and replication, producing different styles, and every form will subsequently generate new periods of diffusion whereby the vitality of popular culture undergoes a process of dynamic change and extension of its influence.

Table 3. Comparison of Initial and Secondary Creation Dissemination for the “Subject Three” Dance

Comparison dimension	Initial dissemination stage	The stage of secondary creation and dissemination
Composition of communication entities	Single creator 100%	Ordinary users: 100%
Proportion of content forms	Original dance content 100%	Adapted content: 100%
Proportion of contribution from view count	Initial video view count 0.02%	Secondary creation works' playback volume: 99.98%
Rate of audience interaction participation	Audience only browsed, interaction rate 0%	Audience interaction rate: 100%

6. Optimization Strategies for Short Video Media in Boosting Popular Culture Dissemination

6.1. Platform Level

As the core hub for delivering popular culture, the operation strategy of the platform determines scientifically and forward-looking the quality and direction of cultural delivery. In content management, it is necessary for the platform to establish a multi-dimensional content review mechanism covering the three aspects of ideology, art and innovation. Use of weighted algorithms should be made so that traffic economy and cultural value keep a balance which controls on the source of vulgar culture outspread [6-7]. Algorithm optimization requires a transparent recommendation algorithm introduction system together with a dynamic user interest receptivity tracking model which can break the information silo system and open the dedicated traffic channel for original content which is high quality. The enhancement of the empowerment of the creator is one of the requisites as well: using AI-assisted editing instruments, tiered training programs and growth incentive plans in order to improve the level of professional content production in the systematized approach. Strengthening the application of copyright protection technology, through systems such as evidence storage systems based on blockchain and comprehensive cross-platform content comparisons, effectively combating plagiarism and infringement. Promoting collaborative cooperation in different fields such as film, music, and literature through cross-disciplinary creator collaboration platforms. Through an ecosystem-based operation model, expanding the dissemination scope and influence of popular culture.

6.2. Creative Level

In the short-video ecosystem, content creators are the key nodes for cultural dissemination. Their creative activities directly influence the outcome of cultural dissemination. Taking the cultural dissemination of Hanfu on Douyin as an example, some creators have conducted in-depth exploration of professional content such as historical costume research and etiquette restoration, successfully avoiding content homogenization. From the perspective of professional ability, the knowledge reserves and communication skills of creators directly affect the quality of the content. The survey data of creators in the traditional culture field shows that creators with a background in history or communication studies score 37% higher in terms of content professionalism than ordinary creators. This shows that systematic knowledge acquisition and skill training enable both the academic depth and the expressiveness of the works to be enriched. With respect to the audience participation, it is essential to grasp in time the audience needs in order to achieve effective dissemination. In the algorithmic recommendation system of the platform any creator must analyze user behavior logics through data mining. In satisfying the entertainment demands, attention must be given to the careful analysis of cultural connotations. The control of orientation of cultural value has a particularly important influence on the sustainable dissemination of content. Analyzing the monitoring data of the platform shows that the application of values in content dissemination can improve the user retention rate by 22%. Although the tight loop content has illness and sun pollution on several short term traffic indicators, in the long run, its influence on stickiness of users is lower. The innovative forms of expressed content can produce a substantial effect on the dissemination. So, taking the example of public dissemination of intangible cultural heritage through Bilibili platform. It can be found that the application of multimodal display means of public dissemination of cultural content like animation decomposition or VR immersive experience can improve the cultural content per season by 41%. Since such innovations of expressed content are based on technology, they bring popular and cultural dissemination new vitality and attraction.

6.3. Regulatory Level

As the main means of public dissemination of popular culture, and thus the establishment of a complete regulatory system is an important means to ensure the quality of cultural dissemination, it is also an important way to guide social values and social positive cultural environment. In the context of the immediacy and fragmentation of short video dissemination, the dissemination of harmful content is easily accelerated, which is likely to have a certain effect on the audience's views and social norms. In order to ensure the smooth and healthy dissemination of popular culture, it is particularly necessary to formulate a regulatory system suitable for the inherent characteristic of short video dissemination [8-9]. Specifically, the regulatory agencies highly unify the normative standards of content review, and establish a more detailed set of supervision provisions. The content itself of short video is analyzed in accordance with the special circumstance of short video dissemination to form normative provisions that are more operable. The technical supervision tools applied at present should be actively expanded, such as using artificial intelligence and other technical means to accelerate the efficiency of examination and review, and actively rectify the non-conformity content of the provisions in time. The multi-party cooperation of industry norms is very important, guiding the platforms, creators, regulatory agencies and other all party parties to cooperate in the governance of the industry and form the actor force of coordinated regulation to deal with the relevant dilemma brought about by the global diffusion of short videos. The establishment of regulations across regions is of great significance and can unify the directly sanctions and standards of regulatory agencies in various regions. What is more important is that regulatory agencies must also find a suitable balance in regulatory work, that is to say, while ensuring the health of cultural dissemination, it is also necessary to preserve the space of the created vitality and cultural innovation at the same time, and to achieve a dynamic balance between the strict of regulation and the full vitality of culture.

7. Conclusion

Short videos play a unique and irreplaceable role in promoting the dissemination of popular culture. This is due to their unique media characteristics. On the one hand, they lower the threshold of the production and dissemination of short videos, which is also in line with the common characteristics of popular culture. On the other hand, they are constantly establishing a shared communication community, which promotes the overall reshaping of the dissemination pattern of popular culture. The dissemination pattern of popular culture exhibits new attitudinal deciphering characteristics and meaning dissemination methods in terms of dissemination process, participant structure, dissemination form, etc., which injects new vitality into the continuous dissemination of popular culture. However, the problem of short video dissemination is also faced with vulgar and homogeneous content, copyright infringement and other professional problems, which threaten the healthy development of popular culture. Therefore, the joint efforts of the three sides of the platform, content producers and regulatory authorities are indispensable. The platform operators should optimize their operational strategies, the producers should control the quality of their content, and the regulators should undertake the regulatory perfection of the overall regulatory system. The joint efforts of the three parties should be relied on to improve the risk control. In the next stage of actual practice, the integration of short videos and the dissemination of popular culture will continue to deepen, and the use of new interactive forms and mechanisms generated by new technologies will also be explored. The integration will provide more comprehensive theoretical support and practical guidance for the continuous, healthy development of popular culture.

References

- [1] Huang Yueqin, Huang Xiancheng. The Diffusion of “Retweeting” Behavior and New Media Empowerment: A Social Network Analysis Based on the Issue of Autism on Weibo [J]. *Shanghai Journalism Review*, 2021(05): 36–47.
- [2] Zhao Hongyan. Centrality and Power Embodiment: A Study on the Path of Online Media Power Generation Based on Social Network Analysis [J]. *Journalism & Communication*, 2013, 20(03): 50–63+127.
- [3] Gao Guiwu, Ge Yi. Collage and Sharing: Knowledge Dissemination on Youth Social Platforms—An Examination of the Presentation Method Based on Short Videos in the Knowledge Zone of Bilibili [J]. *Contemporary Communication*, 2021(06): 72–76.
- [4] Hong Xiaojuan, Jiang Nan, Hong Wei, Huang Weidong. A Study of Media Information Dissemination Networks: Food Safety Microblog Opinion as an Example [J]. *Management Comments*, 2016, 28(08): 115–124.
- [5] Li Miao, Wei Wenxiu. Short Video Knowledge Dissemination in the Context of Knowledge Inclusion [J]. *Youth Journalists*, 2022(14): 89–91.
- [6] Xiang Debao, Le Wenwan. A Study on the Social Network Influence of Global Political Leaders Based on Social Network Analysis [J]. *Shanghai Journalism Review*, 2019(04): 43–51.
- [7] Gu Huimin, Xu Yunqi. Analysis of the Current Situation and Countermeasures of “Popularity” of Short Video Knowledge Communication [J]. *Media*, 2021(23): 60–61.
- [8] Huang Yongwen. Research on Lesson-learned Knowledge Accumulation and Reuse Methodologies in Engineering Design [D]. Shanghai Jiao Tong University, 2015.
- [9] Huang Yongwen. Research on Lesson-learned Knowledge Accumulation and Reuse Methodologies in Engineering Design [D]. Shanghai Jiao Tong University, 2015.