

Research on the Impact of Content Fragmentation Propagation in Short Videos ——A Case Study of Douyin

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ABSTRACT

In the era of 5G and the rapid development of the Internet, the pace of people's life is getting faster and faster. Now it is the era of "attention economy", and it is necessary to disseminate fragmented information. This way can catch the audience's attention in the shortest time and let people receive a lot of short, fast and shallow information. Among them, Douyin is a typical product of fragmentation propagation. Since its launch, Douyin has quickly topped the app's download charts. From teenagers to middle-aged and old people, Douyin is regarded as daily spiritual food for entertainment. It not only makes profits for itself, but also provides a social and interactive platform for many content creators. But at the same time, this mode of communication also makes people's aesthetic, emotion, thinking and so on have been greatly affected. This paper studies the influence of people in the era of information fragmentation (with Douyin as the background) from the aspects of introduction, impact analysis and practices through focus group.

Keywords: Fragmentation, Short videos, Douyin.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Internet age of fragmented information dissemination, the whole society presents the characteristics of short, flat and fast times, so people have long been used to living in a fast pace. As The Times change, the way of receiving information has changed from newspapers and books to new communication tools such as Instagram and Douyin. Marshall McLuhan put forward the theory of "media is Message" in *Understanding Media: the extensions of man* [1]. For the media, he points out, it is not the content that matters, but the media itself. In this context, the functions of social media are diversified, and short video social media emerge [2]. Iimedia's report "2018-2019 Special Investigation and Analysis Report on China's Short Video Industry" shows that the activity of short video apps has risen rapidly in recent years, and the number of users using short video apps in China has reached 501 million in 2018 [3]. "Douyin" has become the industry leader [4].

Douyin, launched in 2016 and incubated by Bytedance, is a social platform for music creative short videos for all ages. It adopts the communication form of "short, fine and fast" to bring people a stage for self-presentation. Bytedance, its parent company, aims to build a "global platform for creation and communication".

Douyin developed in China and TikTok developed in other countries.

Unlike Douyin, TikTok's user mainly from overseas, and it's kind of the international version of Douyin. In general, the functions and interfaces are similar to those of Douyin in China. However, due to different cultures and laws, the rules are somewhat different. At the same time, there are also differences in the way of registration, login and short video content style. TikTok's short videos have become a new example of China's self-developed products achieving success overseas, as the usage rate of TikTok's overseas users has increased year by year.

According to statistics, as of March 2021, the number of daily active users of Douyin reached 610 million to 620 million. Thus, Douyin has successfully become a national app. Meanwhile, according to the data in Douyin Government Account Analysis Report, young users under the age of 24 account for about 77% of Douyin short videos [5]. In this App, which includes video, music, social networking and pictures, users are no longer bystanders and viewers, but can also participate in "low threshold". Meanwhile, Douyin acts as a time killer. Dopamine unconsciously causes people to lose a lot of precious time when stimulated by various videos. At the same time, more serious problems followed: because Douyin is easy to "high income" characteristics, people's desire for money is more intense. As a result, short videos gradually show the development trend of pan-entertainment, live broadcast selling fake goods, insufficient output of quality content and endless imitation and plagiarism. In response to these problems, In 2018, China and Douyin launched a net cleaning campaign to remove a large number of illegal videos and permanently ban users who violate the relevant provisions of the Douyin Community Self-discipline Convention. On September 1, 2021, In response to the national call, Douyin issued a notice on further strengthening special rectification of some problems in the cultural and entertainment field, which mainly includes: excessively high payment of entertainers, tax evasion, excessive focus on viewership, and undesirable fan culture. This can better standardize the short video environment of Douyin.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

With the popularization of short video and the increasing fragmentation of media, many scholars have defined and studied the influence of fragmented information transmission. First of all, the word "fragmentation" was put forward back to the "post-modernism" related research literature in the 1980s. Its original meaning meant that the whole thing was broken into many pieces, which was later applied to politics, culture and other fields. So-called melts the era of media fragmentation of information transmission, is refers to a complete information through the Internet and other new media editors and spread, through the secondary editor, make communication appears as "trivializes situated" "fragmented", so as to make the information, audience and media appear the phenomenon of differentiation, and new media platforms will be fragmented spread of this phenomenon is more common [6]. Huang Shengmin, professor of Communication University of China, understood the fragmentation of information transmission as the social stratification, at the same time, the phenomenon of consumer segmentation and media niche is further generated [7]. Today, with the rapid development of 5G technology, the fragmentation of new media is an inevitable

requirement of the industry development. In the symposium on Promoting In-depth Media Integration held in 2017, it was mentioned that "the all-media era is a major trend, and the development of media integration is a major article." Taking Douyin as an example, mainstream media (a media such as CCTV) have also made new attempts, such as the program "News Anchor Commenting", to create a short, concise, fresh and fast form of video news. In text news, small sections are formed for reading, so that people can use spare time to read and quickly obtain information [8].

Douyin desires to fully satisfy the modern young people show creativity, to choose a good video with you like the background music, in the tool software in video editing effects, make a short 15 seconds video more creative, attractive, finally will belong to his own work through the Internet to upload and openly in the platform, for everybody to browse, thumb up and comments. In addition, the likes and comments of Douyin short videos are also a special social interaction behavior, and users can get a strong sense of participation and achievement in this special social interaction. Douyin short videos achieve national interaction through video works of only ten seconds. Moreover, due to its simple creation, extremely low cost and no threshold setting, contemporary young people are attracted to show their talents and realize their self-value in Douyin short videos to obtain psychological and emotional satisfaction [4]. The feature that the platform sets the video within 15 seconds is exactly in line with the current requirements for fragmented information, enabling users to obtain fresh and fast information anytime and anywhere, so that people can make full use of the fragmented time to enrich themselves [9]. However, fragmentation of information transmission also has negative effects, and Douyin short videos are inevitable. Some scholars have also put forward their own views: the depth of information is constantly reduced, people in pursuit of short-term visual pleasure and give up deep thinking. This makes the audience's aesthetic separation, superficial thinking, and ability to distinguish between right and wrong to decline, and the audience is gradually becoming vulgar and afraid of facing real life [10], especially adversely affecting the rational thinking and physical and mental health of the public [11]. This happens to be in line with the performance of fragmented information dissemination: the fragmentation of factual information dissemination and the fragmentation of opinion information dissemination [12]. The efficiency with which we take in information can be quantified as "Mind Density" says Wan wei. Density of thought is the total time it takes to create the book/the time it takes to read the book [13]. The denser something is, the more valuable it is to read, and the less time we should spend reading. Therefore, living in an environment of fragmented dissemination of information, only when we

recognize it, are not subject to it, and think rationally about it, judge it and make use of it, can we better play its role.

Nowadays, scholars in fragmentation, fragmented information dissemination and trill short video effects and interaction with all kinds of groups such as field are analysed in two interaction, but not the fragmentation, fragmentation of information dissemination and trill short video content combination with related research, to fill the spread of information fragmentation specific impact study, this article will with the examples of trill app Group interview is used to study and talk about the influence of fragmented information transmission on short video content.

3. METHODOLOGY

We adopted the form of focus group to study the topic, and we selected 12 members to participate in the discussion. The central subject of our discussion was the influence of content fragmentation communication in the short video environment -- A Douyin as a case. When looking for team members, we divided them into two age groups, namely 17-23 years old. Most of the members in this age group are in universities (but the selected objects are different schools and majors). And people over the age of 28. Most members of this age group are office workers and some of them have married and are raising children. We will divide them into teenagers and parents for summary. Due to the influence of epidemic prevention and control, we chose the form of group voice call on WeChat app. The whole group interview lasted for one hour, during which there was no unexpected situation, and members were very cooperative and smooth.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Time fragmentation

According to the status of the interview collection, there is also a significant difference in the daily time spent swiping Douyin for interviewees of different ages and social identities. The question we set at the beginning of the interview: Will you turn on TikTok to spend your fragment time? How much time do you spend on TikTok every day? When will you turn on TikTok and take a look? Most interviewees choose to do it in leisure time, which is regarded as boring pastime, and the duration is obviously different, ranging from 15min to 120min. So why do people read and watch TikTok as a pastime? Why do people from different backgrounds differ in how much time they spend on TikTok? In view of the above questions about time, the team members also discussed and reached a relatively consistent conclusion.

Douyin have become popular entertainment projects. People spend a lot of time on various short video apps every day. However, some young people, due to their poor self-control ability, spend several hours or even more than ten hours on various short video entertainment apps every day.

In view of the above situation, first of all, people have entered the era of big data. Big data will filter and classify all your preferences according to search behaviours, attention behaviours and even purchase behaviours, so as to push relevant content to people according to their preferences.

This time our problems come, when our interests and hobbies is data capture, then big data will be according to our hobbies for video class, let's push, this time will be continuously enlarging our human side, like a sugar-coated cannonball, its good push, and this kind of environment, let oneself more and more numbness, which like trap swamp, More and more obsessed with their own preferences. So, the above behaviours is one of the reasons why more and more young people spend a lot of time on short videos. Big data, of course, also have good side, because of what we call the above, we are a big data era, so that when we need to learn a thing, will have more of this kind of video to push you, you can be in continuous video, every bit of studying is not the same as cognitive to or anything you don't know. The short video fire caused by big data cannot directly waste most people's time. The network is a double-edged sword, which depends on how everyone uses it.

4.2 Content socialization

In focus group, the host asked the members: What video will Douyin push to you? What video will be scrolled down quickly? What video would you stop and watch over and over again, and even want to "shoot the same one"? At the same time, there are now experts from all walks of life creating videos on Douyin. So can these educational videos make Douyin a learning placarding to the progress of the group discussion, the group members mentioned that the creator of the video, "Charming Teacher Guo", was banned because it was not conducive to the spread of good social atmosphere. The host wants to know what the group members think about this type of video? And what do the members think about creators like "Charming Teacher Guo" who use ugliness to attract audiences and gain a large number of followers and imitators?

Based on the above questions, the members of the focus group launched a heated discussion. According to the content of the discussion, it can be summarized:

The content pushed by Douyin is all related to the audience's identity, occupation, field of concern, and personal personality. At the same time, the length of

time spent on a video also determines the content that Douyin will push to the audience next time.

According to the group discussion, most of the members will directly scroll down the vulgar and in-depth videos, they prefer meaningful news or stories, or videos that can bring happiness to people and some introduction videos of interesting objects. One of the members mentioned that every time before turning on Douyin, he thought that he only wanted to watch short and relaxing videos, so videos that were more than one minute long would be scrolled down immediately.

There are two very different answers to whether you will use Douyin as a learning app: Some members said that they will not learn on Douyin because the region segmentation of the video content type of Douyin is not obvious enough to quickly find what they want. On the contrary, Douyin makes many professional information appear pan-entertainment, which is distracting. Another part of the members believes that it is precisely because of the pan-entertainment of information that makes Douyin a very pleasant way for people to study.

Douyin is committed to creating a platform where everyone can express themselves, express their emotions, and interact with the whole people. American socialist Erving Goffmann put forward the "dramatic theory", which roughly means that people's roles in society are also divided into "before the stage" and "behind the stage" [14]. Just like people who show a strong desire for self-presentation in Douyin, they will express themselves in various ways on Douyin. They use rich symbols (including avatars, nicknames, personal profiles, personal homepages, background information, and music selections etc.) carry out "self-packaging", hoping to attract fans' attention, and obtain financial returns. Among them, there will be some creators who, in order to gain the attention of fans, package themselves into "characters" that are completely different from themselves. The creators who deliberately "play the fool" in Douyin are the best example:

Nowadays, "face-judger", the smartest thing about creators who "play the fool" on Douyin is that they will "to act in a diametrically opposite way", which has aroused people's curiosity and gained a lot of attention. According to some group members who like to watch those videos, they generally watch it with curiosity, because in reality it is very difficult to meet such antic people, so they would represent novelty when they watch this kind of video. On the surface, this kind of video shows it to people in a humorous way and makes everyone happy. But in fact, too many those videos can easily spread incorrect value guidance to people, especially teenagers, a group without stable values: Teenagers think that as long as I'm crazy enough to "play the fool" and "seek attention" on the Internet,

then they will be able to gain a lot of fans and easily make a lot of money.

At the end of the group discussion, the members mentioned that the content disseminated in Douyin is gradually being socialized, that is, the "content socialization" mentioned by China's senior media person Liao Shijian, that is to make a video based on the four aspects of "high opening rate, high completion rate, high memory point, and high transmission rate". Therefore, how to catch the audience's attention at all times in a video has become the primary consideration of video creators, which can also explain why so many attention seekers appear [15].

4.3 The impact of content fragmentation

At the end of the discussion in the focus group, the host asked the members whether they were affected in the process of accepting fragmented forms of content like Douyin.

Members believe that this fragmented form of Douyin does have a lot of impact, with both advantages and disadvantages. First of all, it affects the way people get information. Nowadays, people are used to getting the information they want on Douyin. For example, a cooking tutorial, once a one-minute tutorial, only a short 15 seconds in Douyin, people can get the information they want very quickly and conveniently. Secondly, in Douyin, a very short video repeatedly stimulates our brains. It can bring people a happy mood in a very short period of time at zero cost. At the same time, now is an era of "attention economy", and the fragmented dissemination of content also prove this point. Douyin's dissemination method is a very effective way to gain the attention of the audience. Not only that, the fragmented dissemination of Douyin allows people to receive a large amount of information in a short time. This large amount is not only a quantity, but also means that there are a large number of angles for a thing, people can receive many attitudes that are the same or opposite to themselves, which is more conducive to the growth of people's critical ability. And there are a lot of "trivia" like history trivia, which we can't easily obtain in the daily life, but that information can be actively pushed to people in Douyin.

But at the same time, the content fragmentation of Douyin also brings many negative effects. People have become accustomed to open Douyin in the fragmented time. This short and fast way of transmission will make people become addicted to Douyin [16]. Such hobbies and habits are formed by stimulating the central nervous system to cause excitement or pleasure. Similar addictive behaviours include alcoholism, gambling, and Internet addiction. The typical performance is that Douyin has become the new "Time killer" in people's minds. When the brain is constantly stimulated, people

lose control over time and use Douyin uncontrollably for several hours. And the excitement brought by Douyin is short-lived. You have to keep scrolling the video so that the pleasure will not disappear. Once it stops, people will have a huge sense of emptiness and failure.

Douyin also has a great influence on people's thinking habits. It makes people gradually lose the ability to think people are obsessed with visual stimuli. This information does not require people to think deeply. Gradually, people will lose patience for thinking about deeper things. Not only that, people will gradually lose their enthusiasm for the integrity of information, and people will easily take out of context, which will affect the authenticity of information dissemination. A more specific manifestation is that people are beginning to not accept long videos. The emergence of the variable speed function in long videos is the best proof.

On January 9, 2019, the China Online Audio-visual Program Service Association officially released the "Online Short Video Content Review Standards Rules" and the "Online Short Video Platform Management Regulations", Douyin has also begun to establish an auditing mechanism. Although Douyin is trying its best to ensure high-quality content output, video violations are still emerging in an endless stream. Video creators always have many ways to evade the rules. For example: In order to avoid malicious consumption, the platform does not allow some words to appear in the video, and creators will use synonyms instead. Therefore, the platform cannot completely prevent these negative contents, and it also depends on every video creator and audience.

In fact, people can take the initiative to choose the content they want to receive. People only need to scroll down the content that has a negative impact. Over time, this content will no longer be popular. Therefore, people should look at Douyin sensibly. In the discussion of the focus group, many parents think that Douyin is poisoning young people. Most teenagers lack self-control and distinguishing ability. They think that Douyin is quietly affecting children's behaviours. However, these parents need to realize that many problems are not entirely caused by the fragmented dissemination of short videos. People used to think that violent movie plots would affect teenagers, and began to strengthen the supervision of movies; People used to think that computer games would affect teenagers, so minors were restricted to play time; Nowadays, people think that Douyin will make teenagers addicted, so there has been an anti-addiction system, also known as the teenager model. But in fact, the main solution still depends on the parents. They need to give the teenagers more guidance instead of blindly denying Douyin. All

in all, Douyin is just a tool, and how you use it, what kind of impact it will have.

5. CONCLUSION

In the context of people's increasingly fast pace of life, the fragmented dissemination of content like Douyin is overwhelming. Some apps such as Douyin, Kuaishou and Micro-blog are rapidly increasing our need for novelty and sharpening our sensitivity. Thus, the demand and patience for text will be reduced, and the audience will form a kind of inertia: People don't have the patience to read a long article or book, let alone the time to think, because they are always waiting for the next eye-catching novelty, waiting for it to be presented directly in the video. Once you get used to the easy satisfaction of this so-called "new development model," you don't want to do high-investment things such as completing tasks and thinking through problems in a state of high self-discipline. In this world full of entertainment, when there is no strong self-control, people will indulge in all kinds of temptations and "get nothing done". Media convergence is a new development trend in the current era, which is gradually changing the mode of media production and ecological structure. In the transformation of short video, many national media have deeply grasped the characteristics of short video, innovated with news content, and created a batch of products with strong communication power and influence by using new technologies and new means such as short video and live broadcast. However, innovation is not enough in the process of integration of some local media, and it is urgent to improve the problems in order to promote the development of the media industry. In the era of fragmented information dissemination, in order to provide a better surfing environment for the audience, not only the government and platforms need to strengthen regulation, for example: Control or delete vulgar and bad videos; To supervise communicators, delete accounts and limit traffic if necessary; Pay attention to protect the intellectual property rights of disseminators, encourage the output of high-quality content and so on. People also need to make good use of this mode of communication, keep a rational mind, dialectically treat the fragmented content, and form the ability to identify the truth and falseness of information. People need to maximize its advantages and reduce the adverse effects of fragmented transmission.

However, it is undeniable that the rapid development of information fragmentation has also brought intuitive life changes to people and expanded the world that was hard to imagine. It's still up to us to use and control these fragments of information.

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