

Strategies Behind Tik Tok's Global Rise

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at explaining the increased use of the mobile application Tiktok. With the significant development of short video industries, the timing of Tiktok was perfect, which enabled it to spread quickly. This study will evaluate the reasons behind the significant development and popular use of TikTok for the past three years. The study will focus on three crucial factors, which are product positioning, content variety, and uniqueness, to bring about the link between the perceived popularity of Tik Tok (8).[...]Through this study, we will be able to explore the wide spreading of Tiktok for the past three years and how it has become a crucial tool in the role of influencers and a channel for creating an entrepreneurial possibility with its growth. This study also recommends more research into the popular use of TikTok and further expansion of other social media apps.

Keywords: *Social Media, Strategy, Interaction, User*

1. INTRODUCTION

With the significant development of short video platforms, so many applications have appeared, which boosted the expansion of short video. In 2013, the emergence of short video apps like micro vision, second beat, and meipai created a market for short video app in China [11]. The 2013 inventions rapidly influenced the development of the Kuia app and volcanic video, which aimed at reaching all mobile users in China. The continuous development could lead to the advent of the use of the Tik Tok app in 2016, which emerged with uniqueness, making it rapidly own a huge number of mobile users. By 2017, TikTok, through its unique promotion on the music fights, had managed to increase its users from 30 to 60 million.

The main aim of this study is to explore the link between factors contributing to the quick development of Tik Tok. It will focus on short music videos represented by Tik Tok based on factors contributing to its popularity. These factors are divided into three parts which are product positioning, content variety, and content uniqueness. The study will target users from Beijing who have managed to be popular influencers through Tik Tok. Since its development, there have been very few studies on Tik Tok; hence, it will be fresh and interesting. Through exploring the factors that have popularized Tik Tok, we will be able to come up with innovations that will improve similar apps.

2. ANALYSIS

Since its development, the App has emerged to be a popular music creative short video software. Users can choose songs and create a 15 seconds music video to form their own works and release through this app. Compared with the previous video apps, Tik Tok has several features that have enabled it to grow at a very fast rate. Firstly, the App focuses on music. Since the emergence of short video apps, Tik Tok is the first to focus on promoting music and maintaining its content vertically. Second, the App has ensured its shooting steps are easier and simple to operate such that any individual owning a smartphone can be able to take part in video creation [5]. Thirdly, the App has applied the big data logarithm to follow the users' browsing content analysis and recommend more content to its users. Despite it achieving a huge world usage, there is still a broad development space for future development.

This study will evaluate methods of research used to obtain information about the three factors: positioning, content variety, and product uniqueness. The research participants will be male and female among Tik Tok users between the ages of 18-30. They have been a significant amount of users of the App since 2018. The research will be restricted to Beijing, China, and it will involve 150 Tik Tok users, of which 100 will be females, and 50 will be males. The participants will be willingly allowed to participate by completing an online

questionnaire. The participants were selected using the convenience sampling method.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to identify the basic information and features of the users based on Tik Tok's degree of popularity and its link between product positioning, content variety, and product uniqueness. The participants received the questionnaire through an online link that requested them to complete the survey within 20 to 40 minutes. A time limit of 20 to 40 minutes was set in place to ensure that all the participants select and answer questions separately and seriously.

The obtained data were then analyzed through the use of descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing. Descriptive analysis was used to critically evaluate information on the features of the participants and their perception of the App's popularity. Hypothesis testing was used to evaluate the link between product positioning, content variety, and product uniqueness.

From the data analysis, the female participants recorded higher participation in answering the questionnaire while the male participants only gave short answers, and some of them did not complete the questionnaire. On the perception of popularity, most of the participants confirmed that the downloads of Tik Tok from the app store were very high compared to other apps. They also agreed that most of the people around them always spend much of their time on Tik Tok, and they have perceived it to be the best App for content creation. On the perception of product positioning, they claimed that Tik Tok had made numerous social media advertisements, and it is more popular among a large number of young populations in the society.

On the perception of content variety, 80% of the participants think watching short videos on Tik Tok can bring happiness. Being a young generation, the participants claimed that Tik Tok content is rich and interesting. On the perception of uniqueness, 70% of the participants think that the App always recommends videos that users are interested in. This is achieved by following participants' browsing history, which they claim that Tik Tok has invested more time and resources to ensure their users receive the content they are interested in.

3. DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the study will involve an analysis of various aspects, including marketing strategy and content creation; from the response, it is clear that Tik Tok is designed for youngsters between 18 to 28 years old[14]. From the analysis, we can see the relationship between the rapid growth of Tik tok and its three strategies of product positioning, content diversity and uniqueness. From the perspective of the three factors, product positioning is a crucial part of the 4Ps marketing strategy. It involves focusing on the features

of the product, the targeted audience, and marketing strategies through effective implementation of features that can make a product enter the market easily.

With the significant development of mobile software, different mobile apps with new types products are likely to focus more on product positioning. This will involve targeting many consumers, designing product features that meet their requirements, and then applying online and offline marketing strategies to expand their markets. For Tik Tok, its product aims at a wide market of young individuals, and it has developed features that will enable it to attract its targeted audience. On the other hand, the company carries out an effective promotion that involves brand cooperation which is carried offline to increase the exposure of their product. The accessibility of their content has been an effective product positioning strategy behind Tik Tok's Perceived popularity.

Beside product positioning, many of the participants gave credit to the company's high-quality original video with different types of content. The company provides a wide range of videos, including funny videos that bring consumers happiness and educative videos that equip users with life skills. The video content is also diversified, meeting the demands of many users within a short period of time they are in the App.

From the analysis, Tik Tok has focused on capturing a wider market through formulating effective strategies as shown in the swot analysis below.

3.1. SWOT Analysis of the Tik Tok App

3.1.1 Strengths

3.1.1.1. Product advantages

The App has invested in ensuring its content is very active, with a lot of activities online and offline targeting at young individuals. Beside ensuring its content is active, the Tik Tok has also created a new music community with new and innovative trends [12]. The music category is grouped into various content categories where the special effects are very cool and follow the trend.

3.1.1.2. Technical advantages

Since its introduction, Tik Tok has maintained its competitive position as the short video software of the new generation. The App is effectively using the human body's crucial detection technology to achieve effective user posture. The App has also based its content matching with AI intelligent algorithm technology [12]. Developing a strong algorithmic technical support is one of the competitive advantages that has enabled Tik Tok to have rapid development and growth across the world.

3.1.2. Weaknesses

Despite the App, achieving a strong growth strategy, there still exist several weaknesses that need to be developed to maintain its competitive advantage. One of the main weaknesses is that it has been perceived as a short video community for young individuals [13]. With the App focusing on short videos only, it is difficult for corporates to invest in them through advertising since it is challenging to charge for a short video of 15 minutes then a short video of five minutes.

3.1.3. Opportunities

With the world shifting into new technology and more inventions prone to come up in the future, Tik Tok has a huge ability to ensure its content is growing bigger and competitive. Some of these opportunities is described.

Firstly, the App can easily shift its production to fit in with the change in user content consumption demand. With the significant development of mobile terminals and large data technology, consumers greatly desire social media content. The daily change in consumption habits from text and picture forms is also a greater opportunity as more internet users are shifting to short video communication. Secondly, the availability of a mature technical environment has allowed most individuals to own social media devices. According to a recent analysis, most of the citizens in the world are using mobile devices and have adopted the habit of communicating through social media platforms [10]. The popularity of Tik Tok's smart terminals enables users with an effective mobile touch-net experience with them being able to use it at any time and anywhere using mobile data networks. The invention of artificial intelligence technology and the development of big data enables the App to easily analyze consumer preferences and recommend favorite videos [13]. This creates consumers' satisfaction and improves their experience, making them adopt the wide usage of its content.

Finally, the existence of user dividends has attracted a huge number of consumers. In 2017, Tik Tok's usage was very high with 243 million active users; this number increased in 2018, with the number of active users increasing by 58.2%. In comparison with other short video apps, it is believed that the user dividend is one of the best competitive strategies which has enabled Tik Tok to gain a huge following.

3.1.4. Threats

With the significant growth of technology and world innovations, the development of the short video market is increasing at a very high rate. Several upcoming internet companies are beginning to see a profitable market opportunity in the short video market. The

competition is prone to be high in the future, and this is a huge threat to the App.

As seen in the SWOT analysis, despite Tik Tok facing some weaknesses and future threats, it's clear that the App has developed numerous competitive strategies that have enhanced its global growth. Achieving to maintain a competitive advantage for a period of four years, it is clear that the App is bringing a new experience that is attractive to consumers.

3.2. The Reason for Tik Tok's Popularity

3.2.1. Diversity of marketing promotion strategies

Since its introduction, Tik Tok has maintained a diverse marketing strategy which has enabled to obtain consumers from all places around the world. Some of these strategies are explained as follows.

Firstly, Tik Tok has applied a significant use of star promotion since its rise on March 13, 2017. After Yue Yumpeng developed a microblog that mimicked and shook the logo, the vibrating App began to gain popularity. The App began to invite celebrities who could use it as a promotion and advertisement platform [13]. On discovery that the use of celebrities can increase its popularity, Tik Tok invited Hu Yanbin to join the company. Prior to the invitation of Hu Yanbin, Tik Tok started attracting more stars attracting several users in China. In 2017 the company also invited twelve big celebrities such as Wei and Di Licba to develop a vibrating sound increasing the number of daily users within a short period. By using celebrities to promote their content, Tik Tok increased their recognition, allowing them to introduce their unique content in the market.

Secondly, a huge investment in the market advertisement enabled it to create awareness of its existence. Tik Tok has maintained its market advertisement by appearing on several shows like China has hip hop, which has increased its exposure. The App has also made significant advertisements in popular shows like Star Detective so as stars can have a chance of recording videos making the star impact and market advertisement a complement [12]. The App uses a lot of finances to increase its intensity of advertising, enabling it to continue increasing its consumer awareness of its brand.

Thirdly, Tik Tok has developed different online and offline activities, increasing its accessibility among users. Tik Tok's marketing strategy is not only limited to online but also focuses on offline promotion, which enables its users to edit and use its content on other social media platforms, increasing its exposure. The company has also cooperated with Today's headlines and Jundi Brothers to enable it to carry out offline activities, one of

them being the 2017 National Youth Talent competition making consumers feel the fun offline [12]. Tik Tok has made use of online and offline activities to increase its influence hence increasing the number of active users.

Finally, Tik Tok has implemented strategies of focusing on both local and global markets, including the developing countries where technological innovations are still at its early stages. The company's marketing strategy analysis has significantly upgraded its branding strategy and adopted a global strategy that is expanding its consumers globally by recruiting partners. Its strategy has enabled it to be received well in all countries, with its users being on the rise on a daily basis.

3.2.2. Strong artificial intelligence technology

Beside having a strong marketing strategy, Tik Tok has a strong artificial intelligence technology that has enabled it to create a unique experience among its consumers. This artificial intelligence includes the following.

Firstly, Tik Tok highly recommends algorithms and technology which has enabled it to be the best product under the headline series. Today, the current social media marketing needs a strong algorithm technology to name consumer-published content as a tag. For Tik Tok, after consumers open the vibrating App, the home page will pop up the video by sliding, making it simple to operate [6]. The App can also effectively analyze the consumer's preference depending on the consumer's liked videos and the time they spend watching a certain video and suggest a short video content of the same type.

Secondly, the first (Dancer Dancer) function, which allows consumers to play the dance machine on their mobile phones, has been one of the main reasons behind Tik Tok's popularity. The Dancer Dancer relies on human key point detection technology mainly based on intelligent algorithm technology [4]. After the launch of the Dance Dance Machine by Tik Tok, the number of consumers increased significantly, with its volume of downloads recording the highest number compared to other apps.

3.2.3. Meeting the Needs of Users

The first objective of Tik Tok is to ensure that its consumers are satisfied and they can come back. To achieve this objective, Tik Tok has come up with various strategies as follows.

Firstly, Tik Tok has been targeting to meet the media requirements of its consumers by treating its members as individuals with different needs sees their usage as on different specific demand motives. This allows consumers to apply the vibrating process to satisfy their fun needs through interaction and self-expression [9]. Secondly, the company has a strong technology

mechanism that enables it to eliminate information uncertainty, ensuring that each content created by users has a message. This allows users to understand things they do not know and remove some information they do not understand.

3.2.4. The rise of ByteDance's products

Tik Tok is one of ByteDance's most well-known property which has achieved to maintain its popularity up to the international stage. The company has worked on a significant and rapid expansion of portfolio products that span the huge sectors of Today's internet economy. Every ByteDance product is developed on the company's edge personalization and recommendations. These recommendation algorithms are the secret behind the company's success since Toutiao.

Just like the algorithms used by Facebook and Instagram, ByteDance algorithms provide an analysis of consumers' viewing behaviors and use the data to further persuade individuals to come up with more content and therefore spend more time on the App. This has developed an addictive consumer experience that keeps them in the App for a long period, with the app recording 52 minutes of usage per day from its active users [1]. The Metric puts the company ahead of YouTube, which records 40 minutes of usage, and Snapchat, with a record of 50 minutes per day. The effectiveness of ByteDance's personalization algorithm for advertising such that the company more.

3.2.5. Short Video Application

With the numerous growths of the media environment, short video application has shifted with people moving from newspapers, radios, and televisions to mobile communications. The immediate development of smartphones did not get the internet satisfied with texts and photos. Instead, they gradually shifted to the use of videos to express their information. Short video application has been the most form of mobile communication since it provides consumers with video photography and editing services more than the general photography tools [6]. Short videos also have the ability to connect to different social networks and immediately share videos created by users. The development of short video apps has managed to win the love of users, with the earliest short videos like Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat receiving higher recognition by their audience.

3.3. Comparison with Other Short Video Apps

3.3.1. Tik Tok and Instagram

During the Covid 19 lockdown, Tik Tok recorded the highest number of downloads compared to Instagram; this shows how its growth has been significant despite Instagram being on the market for a long time. This has

been achieved through unique strategies that was put in place by the company. These strategies are as follows.

Firstly, compared to Instagram, Tik Tok has not had many Ads, and the company is not likely to introduce Ads in its content creation. Despite Tik Tok engaging in the brand advertisement, it has adopted a different business model, ensuring that its consumers are not offended by the Ads' suggestions [2]. In most cases, internet users visit social media platforms for entertainment and learning, suggesting users with several Ads will only be seen as time-consuming, which may tarnish the brand name.

Secondly, Tik Tok's unique content creation has been effective in attracting many consumers worldwide. For short video apps, content plays the major role, and unlike Tik Tok, which started as a short video app, Instagram started as a social photo App. Tik Tok has further shaped its market video-sharing whereby content is created by young individuals who are the main social media platforms users. On the other hand, Instagram is yet to move its stories home, which will allow users to directly see stories when they launch [4]. Finally, algorithms between the two Apps are very different, with Instagram focusing on discovering and Tik Tok focusing on content creation. What is more crucial for these Apps is to maintain and keep users on their platforms as long as possible. Tik Tok allows easy discovery of new users attracting users to spend more time than on Instagram.

3.3.2. *Tik Tok and Snapchat*

According to the 2021 Snapchat report, Tik Tok is becoming a stiff competitor with recording 100 million users just two months after it was launched. Despite Snapchat making a great effort to regain its lost glory, Tik Tok's wide usage is on significant growth. Some competitive advantages that have enabled it to overtake Tik Tok are as follows.

Firstly, Snapchat is more versatile, which only allows users to send photos and videos that disappear after a short period, while Tik Tok enables users to create short videos with filters and music that can be shared globally. While stories shared on Snapchat can be viewed within 24 hours by limited individuals and can only be replayed once, Tik Tok videos can be viewed severally without the limitation of the time a viewer can do so. This requires users to get back to check on the videos and spend more time viewing their favorite videos.

Secondly, Tik Tok is more accessible than Snapchat. While Snapchat users can only be used for personal purposes, Tik Tok allows users to post videos that can be viewed by any user and go viral. This has enabled Tik Tok to create a new experience among its consumers since it allows them to learn from various content creators [2]. Finally, with a change of media environment, Tik Tok has focused more on creating short

videos than Snapchat, which focuses on photos, hence allowing its consumers to learn from different educational topics, informational, dance, and comedy.

3.3.3. *Tik Tok and YouTube*

While both Tik Tok and YouTube are popular video-sharing services that enable consumers to develop and share all kinds of video, there is a great difference between these platforms. YouTube has been on the market for a long period, and it has little competition, but with the shift in the media environment, the main target for the two is to increase their popularity and get more users on their platforms. Tik Tok has managed to grow the number of its users within a short period compared to YouTube.

Unlike YouTube, Tik Tok is simple to create funny videos, dance, beauty, and a lot more videos among its users. For Tik Tok, a user only needs a smartphone camera, while for YouTube, a user needs more refined and tailored content. This has enabled Tik Tok to grow the number of users significantly and achieve the highest number of downloads compared to YouTube. On the other hand, most internet users are more interested in short videos since they find long videos more time-consuming.

3.4. *Discussion*

According to the findings, Tik Tok has implemented many strategies that have enabled it to grow significantly and achieve a great number of users worldwide [10]. Reflecting on the participants, it is clear that young individuals are the main users of Tik Tok, and this has enabled it to gain popularity since the young generation contributes to the huge number of internet users.

Secondly, the analysis has shown that the link between perceived popularity, product positioning, content variety, and uniqueness is all about the App's marketing strategies. This involves starting from effective product positioning where the App targets a young audience and ensures they are able to access contents they are interested in. An aspect of short videos also increased their popularity since, in most cases, they capture more attention from users [3]. Thirdly, most of the participants claimed that Tik Tok had implemented effective promotion, which involves carrying out brand cooperation offline to increase the exposure of the product.

From content variety, with the development of several social media platforms, efficient content delivery is very crucial towards growth. According to 80% of the participants, the production of high-quality content is one of the main attractive features that has led to the rapid growth of Tik Tok. The App mainly engages in the promotion of high-quality original videos with different types of content by ensuring the production of different

types of content they significantly bring new experiences to their users [7]. For example, funny videos will bring happiness, and educative videos will enable users to learn life skills. Tik Tok's video content is rich and diversified, which has enabled it to attract more users for both fun and educative gain.

The findings also presented uniqueness as the crucial aspect that increases the competitiveness of a product and the ability to support the product's development. Tik Tok has adopted easier and simple use in short video creation, making it different from other short video apps [10]. The availability of big data analysis also enables the App to easily recommend content to users according to their preferences. Despite the uniqueness attracting more users, most of the participants did not acknowledge the essence of uniqueness when carrying out a comparison with other apps.

Beside creating fun and educative content, Tik Tok has also allowed brands to create awareness, which has boosted their followers. Several media companies and food restraints such as The Washington Post and NBC have adopted the use of Tik Tok to give previews of their content. To ensure brands are participating in the marketing of Tik Tok, it encourages brands to engage customers as a user, think about TikTok first, build a narrative and create with intention. This enables the company to benefit from creative content created from well-established brands hence attracting many users.

4. CONCLUSIONS

From the research above, Tik Tok's rapid development has been influenced by numerous features, which has made it competitive and the most preferred among all the short video apps worldwide [3]. These popularity success factors are product uniqueness, content variety, and product positioning. However, despite its growth and popularity, there is still a huge space for development, and this can be achieved through focusing on the following aspects.

Firstly, Tik Tok should focus on improving content quality and rigorous content review. In this new technological world, quality content is the main bargaining aspect for short video applications. The increased use of Tik Tok content may finally become similar, which may make its users lose attention [8]. To avoid too much similarity of contents in their application is by engaging in the development and new innovations and ensuring rigorous content review by blocking unqualified content to reduce the bad influence and increase brand reputation.

Secondly, the application should focus on building a brand and starting a diversified business model. During its early stages, Tik Tok did not manage to get more attention, but the use of famous individuals to promote it offline made it famous within a very short period moving

from 30 million users in 2016 to 60 million users in 2017 [11]. Hence for the application to continue enjoying its benefits of popularity, it has to engage in significant brand awareness. As its target audience continues to rise, Tik Tok should take an opportunity to cooperate with advertisers.

Finally, Tik Tok should increase the level of users' interaction and sense of experience. The function of short video applications is shifting from uploading to live broadcast. Some social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook are far much ahead of live broadcasts; hence for Tik Tok to maintain its popularity, there is a need to improve the application's live broadcast mechanism.

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