



"My Explosive Popularity Feels Like a Dream" - Guo Youcai's Short Video Strategy

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Abstract. In today's fast-paced world, the rapid advancement of information technology and mobile Internet has led to a significant shift in how people acquire information, conduct work, manage their daily lives, engage in social networking, and seek leisure and entertainment. This transformation has propelled the evolution of news communication towards short video content, which has become an inevitable trend in social development. The concise nature and powerful expressive capabilities of short videos have swiftly captured the attention of netizens, leading to their widespread popularity. One prominent platform that embodies this trend is TikTok, currently the most widely used app for short video content. This article delves into a case study of Guo Youcai to dissect the reasons behind TikTok's popularity and its communication characteristics. It also explores personalized expression strategies within the realm of short videos, analyzes the challenges faced by the platform, and encourages contemplation on the role of short video content in news communication. As society continues to embrace mobile-centric lifestyles, understanding the impact and potential of short video content in news dissemination becomes increasingly vital.

Keywords: Short video, Guo Youcai, News communication.

1 CURRENT STATUS OF SHORT VIDEOS

Short video is a method of transmitting Internet content, typically lasting no more than five minutes. As early as April 23, 2005, one of the founders of YouTube, Judd Karim, released the first shared short video in human history, "My Zoo", which lasted only 19 seconds. In China, 2014 is considered the inaugural year of short videos, marked by the launch of numerous short video applications. In September 2014, "Yitiao" was introduced, focusing on lifestyle short videos^[1]. Since 2016, a plethora of mobile short video applications, led by "TikTok," have been launched intensively, and the capital market has heated up as a result. Short video content entrepreneurs have flourished, propelling the short video industry into a period of rapid development. In March 2024, the Research Report on the Development of China's Internet Audiovisual (2024) released at the 11th China Internet Audiovisual Conference revealed that in 2023, the average daily use time of mobile Internet users reached 435 minutes. The average daily usage time of mobile network audiovisual applications

amounted to 187 minutes, exceeding 3 hours. Among these, short video applications exhibited the highest user stickiness, with an average daily usage time of 151 minutes per person, followed by long video applications (112 minutes), entertainment/game live streaming applications (63 minutes), and network audio applications (29 minutes)^[2]. The program design of this work is illustrated in Figure 1.

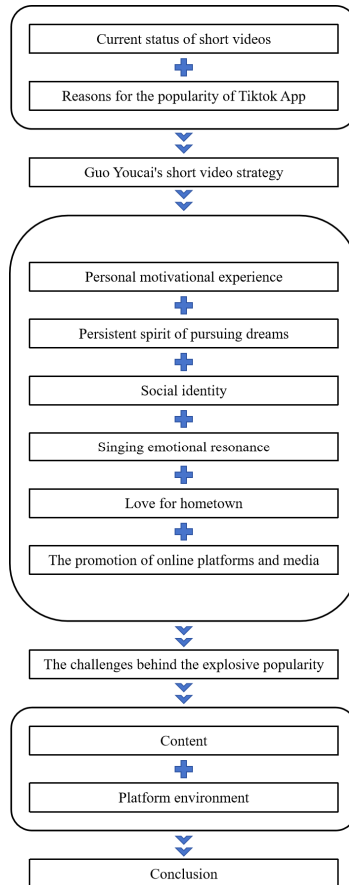


Fig. 1. The program design of this work.

2 REASONS FOR THE POPULARITY OF TIKTOK APP^[1]

TikTok, an app launched by Toutiao, is a music-based short video platform that enables users to select a song of their choice, create short videos with expressive body movements, apply various beautification effects, and share their creations on the TikTok platform. The content of these short videos is diverse, encompassing a wide array of user-generated content such as daily life tips, makeup tutorials, and dance performances. Since its launch in September 2016, the app has rapidly gained popularity,

reshaping the landscape from "Weibo, WeChat, and news clients" to the new era of "Weibo, WeChat, and TikTok".

The fragmentation of communication content is a direct consequence of the rapid development of the Internet era in recent years. The ways in which audiences receive information have become increasingly diverse, no longer confined to single-image or text-based dissemination. Online videos, particularly short videos, have exerted a profound impact on our daily lives^[3]. Short videos prioritize visual impact, disseminating engaging and compelling content, especially those that depict various aspects of everyday life. The swift pace of modern life has made it challenging for audiences to dedicate prolonged periods to receiving information, thus making short videos the prevailing mode of communication. The video duration on TikTok is capped at 5-15 seconds, with TikTok celebrities able to record up to 1 minute of video, representing an efficient and concise method of transmission.

Socialization and entertainment are key features of the TikTok app. With robust sociability, the app's comment function plays an indispensable role. If viewers connect with a video, they can share it with friends by tagging them. Furthermore, as a short video platform that seamlessly integrates music and video, TikTok offers high entertainment value. Its extensive music library and wealth of user-generated content enable audiences to indulge in a wide range of entertainment, from life tips to humorous content, ensuring a constant stream of diverse material. This varied entertainment content brings joy to audiences amidst their bustling work and life, enriching their daily experiences.

The scale and usage trends of Chinese short video users are projected in Table 1 and Figure 2.

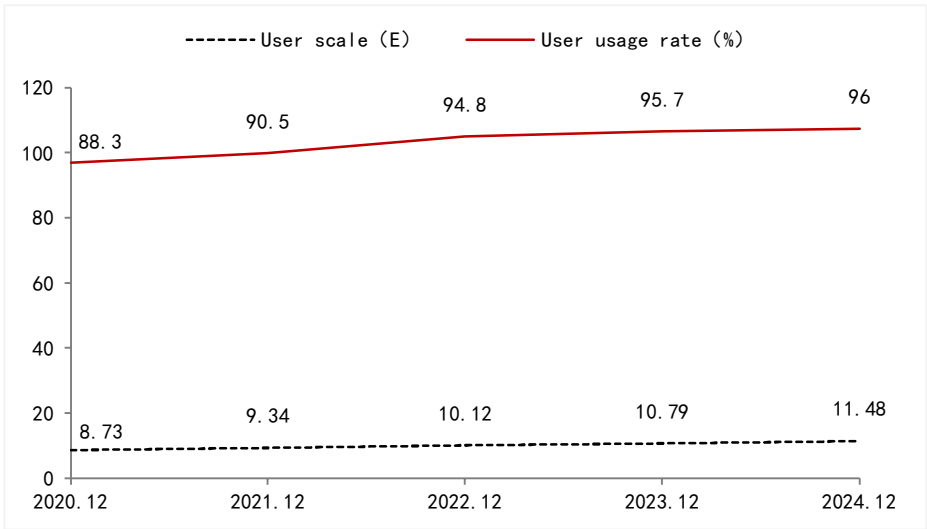


Fig. 2. Prediction figure of the scale and usage trend of short video users in China.

Table 1. Prediction table of the scale and usage trend of short video users in China.

Items	2020.12	2021.12	2022.12	2023.12	2024.12
User scale (E)	8.73	9.34	10.12	10.79	11.48
User usage rate (%)	88.3	90.5	94.8	95.7	96.0

Hence, it can be seen that the impact of short videos on people is significant.

3 GUO YOUCAI'S SHORT VIDEO STRATEGY^[4]

In today's era of self-media, there is an increasing inclination among the public to share their thoughts and experiences with a wider audience. However, effective communication in this digital landscape requires communicators to possess a high degree of empathy, enabling them to understand and appreciate the perspectives of others. The ability to empathize not only allows communicators to connect with their audience on a deeper level but also enhances their capacity to gather valuable insights from external sources. As a result, this heightened empathetic skill set facilitates prompt audience feedback and enriches the meaningfulness of information sharing.

The significance of empathy in communication cannot be overstated. By placing themselves in the shoes of their audience, communicators can gain a profound understanding of the emotions, concerns, and experiences that shape their audience's worldview. This, in turn, enables them to tailor their messages in a way that resonates with their audience's values, aspirations, and challenges. By demonstrating a genuine appreciation for the perspectives of others, communicators can establish a sense of trust and rapport, laying the foundation for more meaningful and impactful communication.

Moreover, a heightened empathetic ability empowers communicators to recognize and address the diverse needs and preferences of their audience. Whether it involves crafting personalized content, acknowledging varying viewpoints, or accommodating different communication styles, the adoption of personalized strategies can significantly enhance the effectiveness of information dissemination. By customizing their approach to align with the unique characteristics of their audience, communicators can ensure that their messages are received with greater receptivity and resonance.

Successful expression in the digital age necessitates thoughtful and strategic approaches that prioritize empathy and understanding. Communicators who actively engage with their audience, seek to comprehend their perspectives, and adapt their communication strategies accordingly are better positioned to foster meaningful connections and facilitate more impactful information sharing. Ultimately, it is through the cultivation and application of empathy in communication that communicators can bridge the gap between diverse viewpoints, inspire engagement, and drive positive change within their communities and beyond.

In summary, the era of self-media underscores the growing importance of empathy as a fundamental skill for effective communication. Communicators who harness the power of empathy are equipped to gather external insights, foster meaningful connections, and enhance the relevance and impact of their information sharing endeavors.

By embracing personalized strategies that are rooted in empathy, communicators can cultivate a more profound and authentic connection with their audience, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive, empathetic, and impactful digital discourse.

3.1 Personal Motivational Experience

Guo Youcai, originally known as Guo Zhuang, hails from Heze, Shandong, and embodies the spirit of rural youth. His life journey has been marked by challenges, yet it is also imbued with inspirational hues. At the tender age of 10, he experienced the loss of his mother, and due to his family's financial struggles, he had to leave school prematurely to seek employment. He ventured into various occupations, including repairing electric cars and undertaking miscellaneous tasks. Additionally, he ventured into entrepreneurship, launching a restaurant that unfortunately did not succeed. Despite these setbacks, he remained unwavering in his passion for music, persistently pursuing his dreams through self-taught singing. His compelling life story has garnered widespread resonance and attention through his musical performances, resonating deeply with audiences.

3.2 Persistent Spirit of Pursuing Dreams

Guo Youcai possesses a deep passion and dream for singing. Despite lacking a professional music background, he diligently hones his singing skills through self-study and unwavering determination. Each morning, he steadfastly engages in live singing, while working at a barbecue stall in the evenings to make ends meet. Through his consistent dedication and perseverance, he showcases his talents on online platforms, ultimately achieving success. It is this resolute pursuit of his dreams that inspires and uplifts many people.

3.3 Social Identity

Guo Youcai's story and singing have evoked a profound resonance among the everyday working class. The struggles of life and the pursuit of dreams depicted through his singing resonate deeply with the underlying emotions of many ordinary individuals. The public is eager to support him and propel his success. His narrative is perceived as a poignant portrayal of ordinary life and a tribute to the relentless pursuit of dreams.

3.4 Singing Emotional Resonance

Guo Youcai's rendition of "Promise" may not showcase exceptional vocal prowess or professional singing techniques. However, his weathered voice and emotionally rich interpretation authentically convey the highs and lows of life experiences, deeply touching the hearts of ordinary people and resonating widely with them.

3.5 Love for Hometown

The live broadcast was set against the backdrop of the South Station of "Heze, Shandong", where Guo Youcai's vintage attire and rendition of nostalgic songs exuded a sense of nostalgia. Not only did he express his profound love for his hometown of Heze, Shandong, but the emotional resonance of his singing stirred the audience, evoking a deep yearning for their own hometowns.

3.6 The Promotion of Online Platforms and Media

Guo Youcai's rise in popularity is not solely attributed to the platform's dissemination requirements and media promotion. While platforms continuously seek new engaging content to captivate audiences, Guo Youcai's inspiring journey, unwavering determination, and musical talent align seamlessly with their promotional strategies. Leveraging short videos and live streaming platforms like Mouyin, Guo Youcai showcased his live singing, gradually amassing a dedicated following. Through strategic platform and media promotion, his popularity surged within a span of just over ten days, propelling him to the forefront of self-media streams.

Short video dissemination influence is related to the following factors: the number of releases, views, comments, bullet screen interactions, likes, coins, reposts, and saves. It can be calculated using the following formula^[5]:

$$\begin{aligned}
 VDI &= 0.30I_p + 0.35I_i + 0.35I_u \\
 &= 0.30 \frac{1}{N} \ln \left(\sum p + 1 \right) \\
 &\quad + 0.35 \frac{1}{N} \ln \left(0.38 \sum i_1 \right. \\
 &\quad \left. + 0.22 \sum i_2 + 0.15 \sum i_3 + 0.25 \sum i_4 + 1 \right) \\
 &\quad + 0.35 \frac{1}{N} \ln \left(0.60 \sum u_1 + 0.40 \sum u_2 + 1 \right)
 \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

In this equation, I_p represents the video playback index, while I_i and I_u respectively denote the indices for user information interaction and information utilization.

As seen, Guo Youcai has comprehensively enhanced the dissemination influence of the short video by addressing the aforementioned factors.

4 THE CHALLENGES BEHIND THE EXPLOSIVE POPULARITY^[6]

4.1 Difficulty in Innovating Short Video Content

The innovation of short video content is constrained by limitations in time and resources. In contrast to traditional communication methods, short videos demand

quicker response times and more adaptable creative approaches. Crafting outstanding short video news necessitates substantial investments in time, manpower, and resources, encompassing planning, filming, post-production, and various other facets, posing a notable challenge for conventional teams. Furthermore, compared to traditional communication media, short videos place greater emphasis on innovation and diversity, with users placing heightened focus on visual impact and emotional resonance^[7].

4.2 Short video news is Influenced by the Platform Environment, Resulting in Entertainment Oriented Phenomena

Many users perceive short video platforms as a crucial source for staying informed about current affairs. However, to extend user engagement, these platforms often prioritize recommending entertainment videos over in-depth news reports. Consequently, users are easily drawn to entertainment content, inadvertently overlooking real news reporting. Additionally, the time constraints of short videos can compromise the depth of news content. Limited duration often restricts the depth of news reporting, making it challenging to delve into complex topics. To capture audience attention, a plethora of entertainment elements is frequently incorporated, potentially diluting the seriousness and objectivity of the news content^{[8][9]}. The prevalence of entertainment in short video news, influenced by the platform environment, presents a practical challenge. In short video production, the crux lies in capturing essential points and ensuring concise, lucid information. Simultaneously, upholding principles of objectivity, impartiality, and truthfulness is essential for accurate and credible reporting, mitigating subjective influence and personal bias. Involving professionals with strong ethical standards in the production process further elevates the professionalism and credibility of the news^[10].

Establish a strict review mechanism to ensure the authenticity and reliability of news content on the platform, timely delete and pursue false news, and improve the audience's trust in the platform. Increase reports on unpopular regions, balance regional bias, and let more people know about local customs and news events in different regions.

5 CONCLUSION

The rapid rise of short videos has empowered audiences to access information more effectively during their fragmented leisure time. TikTok App, a prominent short video platform, is renowned for its "de-professionalization" and "anti-hosting" approach, endearing it to users and ushering in a new era alongside "Weibo" and "WeChat." As content disseminators, employing personalized expression strategies such as character development, unique propositions, and self-deprecating humor, while adhering to the "content-first" concept, is vital for achieving efficient dissemination on short video platforms. Moreover, as a news platform, while visual effects hold importance, content quality reigns supreme. Prioritizing the depth and breadth of reporting, ensuring

information accuracy and completeness, and adhering to professional journalism ethics and standards are imperative.

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