

Global Promotion Strategy of Social Media Platforms: Take Tik Tok and RedNote as Examples

Qiyue Miao

Cultural & Media Policy University of Warwick, Coventry, U.K.

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the globalization strategy of social media, and uses the globalization attempts of TikTok and RedNote as the main cases to explore the foundation of social media globalization. This paper deeply studies the advantages and disadvantages of social media globalization. By comparing Chinese and foreign social media, it analyzes how social media can expand the global market in addition to basic preparations, combined with past cases and the current context, and what kind of global business and marketing strategies can be tried. This paper aims to propose that the globalization of social media is a measure that can be taken in the current era. Social media always needs to adopt corresponding strategies with the environment, maintain attention to cultural values and cross-cultural relations, and further expand foreign markets on the premise of ensuring that ideas and content are in line with the mainstream of global background ideas.

1 INTRODUCTION

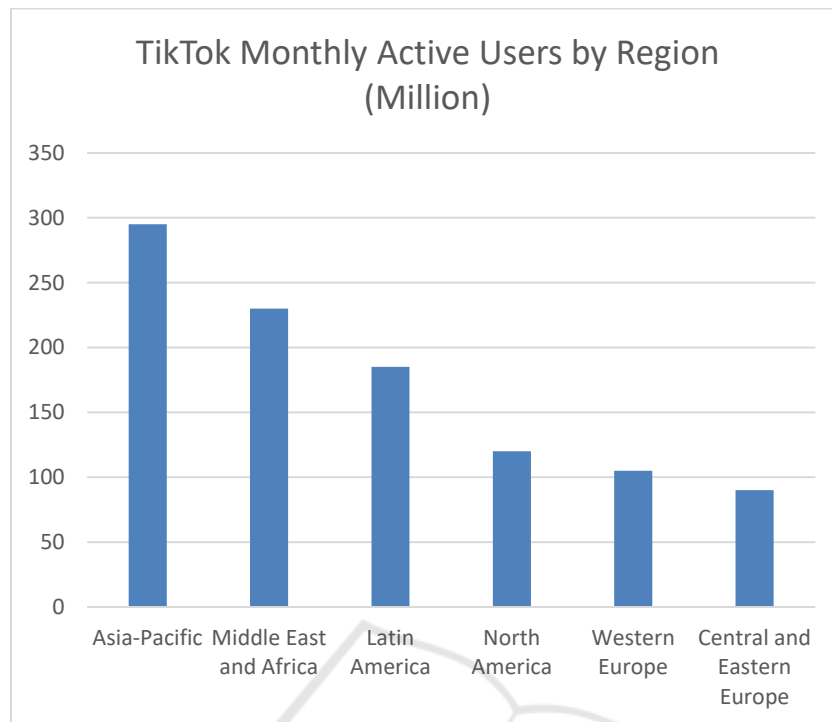
Technology has brought rapid development to globalization. People have more convenient and actionable ways to communicate with each other all over the world, which led to globalization both physically and culturally. In order to pursue the trend brought by the development of technology, many digital media platforms start to try to reach broader groups of audience without country restrictions, whom from different cultures. Focused on Chinese social media platforms, TikTok was firstly launched in 2016 in China, called Douyin (Tone, 2018). In 2017, TikTok started to enter the international market by launched in Indonesia. It quickly became popular all around the world in the next few years. In January 2025, as TikTok was banned in the US due to political laws, a large group of audience entered RedNote, a Chinese social media platform mainly welcomed in mainland China and used it as the substitute of TikTok (Pandith & Dixon, 2025). This has brought an opportunity for RedNote to enter the international market. This paper will mainly focus on the analysis of these two media platforms' globalization decisions and strategies and evaluate what are the most appropriate time and effective ways to enter the global market. In comparison with overseas social media platforms, Twitter and Instagram, this paper aims to give advice to social media which would like

to target a larger range of audience around the world and reach successful globalization.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Reasons for TikTok's Popularity

Up until 2025, TikTok gained large groups of users all around the world. In Figure.1, TikTok has been popular in Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Africa and Latin America. Its monthly active users have reached over 1,000 million all over the world. TikTok is welcomed as it matches different users' needs and provides diversified content.



Data Source: Team, B. (2025, March 8).

Alt Text for the figure: The bar chart reflects the monthly active users of Tik Tok in 2025 in six regions.

Figure.1: TikTok Monthly Active Users by Region in Millions, 2025.

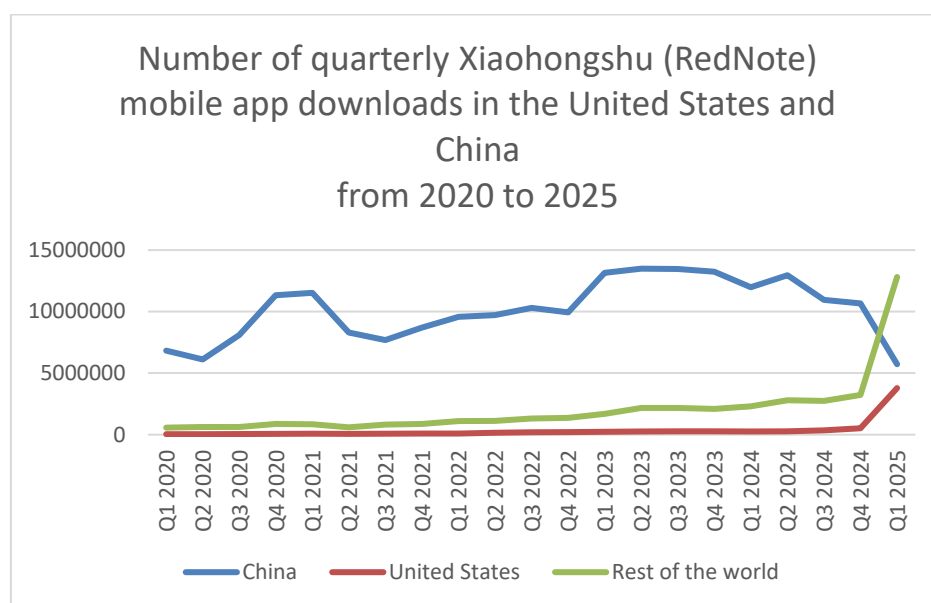
In Li's study on TikTok's global rise strategies, a survey of 150 TikTok users (100 females and 50 males) aged 18-30 in Beijing, China showed Chinese users' reflections to TikTok (Li, 2022). It was found that TikTok's rapid growth was attributed to its effective marketing strategies, strong artificial intelligence technology, and ability to meet users' needs. Besides, compared to other short video apps like Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube, TikTok showed its uniqueness in features and contents. It was very clear about its target audience, which would be the young users, and it managed to meet the audience's needs with easy video creation and personal recommendations. This has set it apart from other competitors.

Some scholars examined why TikTok also achieved success in the US (Boffone, 2022). The key features included personalization, community, virality, and types of content. It allowed anyone with a TikTok account to spin out of themselves and give shape to information, story, music, performance, art-all cultural phenomena. Along with its explosion, TikTok started to shape its own new culture. In this platform, planetary peoples and cultures reverberative intersected, exchanged, and then created something new. However, a very realistic and direct fact was also pointed out. TikTok relied on its

shaping algorithm technology, which was conservative and in flux, always transcending and morphing into something new. Aldama (2022) claimed that as a commercial company, TikTok's algorithms and exploitative structures have in some ways led to more radical institutional communication. While it must be admitted that this just shows that TikTok's algorithms and technology have made its culture extremely influential even abroad.

2.2 The Reasons for RedNote's Popularity

Compared with TikTok, RedNote has just started its globalization journey. Its success can be said to be more dependent on the context. According to Figure.2, the number of RedNote mobile app downloads kept rising in China and the rest of the world. From quarter 4, 2024, there was a rapid increase in the number of the United States and the rest of the world, and the number of downloads in the US even exceeded that in China, in quarter 1, 2025. This change was the result of policy towards TikTok in the US, which forced people to start to find another substitute for social media like TikTok.



Data Source: Statista.

Alt Text for the figure: The abscissa represents each quarter from 2020 to 2025, the ordinate represents the download volume of RedNote, and the three broken lines in the figure represent China, the United States and other countries in the world.

Figure.2: Number of quarterly Xiaohongshu (RedNote) mobile app downloads in the United States and China from 2020 to 2025.

Similar to Tik Tok, RedNote also has its algorithm system and clear target audience. In some studies, through literature review and analysis of information and statistics from various sources, the results showed that RedNote's content had social features and the ability to discover and share information about luxury, fashion, and beauty products (RMMD,2019). RedNote used user-generated content and influencer marketing strategies to target users at a specific demographic of young, urban, and affluent female consumers in China and has achieved success.

The difference is that RedNote has a feature that is intended to be liked and frequently used by some study, which involved quantitative analysis of posts in RedNote and qualitative interviews with 24 users of RedNote from different backgrounds, found that on RedNote, users could regain control of content distribution and build their own communities on similar recommendation-driven platforms by redistributing hashtag dominance (Wan et al. 2025). Hashtag in RedNote has given users the sense of belonging and controlling, which becomes another reason for its popularity in China.

In 2025, 'TikTok Refugees' entered RedNote and started to interact with Chinese users in the platform. Some scholars used qualitative research methods to analyze public data on RedNote, including posts and related comments (Liu et al.,2025). The study focused on the opportunity that this accident brought to

RedNote, which was to transform from a domestic social media platform into a vibrant environment for cross-cultural communication. Users from different places carried out real interactions and role-exchange dynamics through platform mediation, creating a common identity development process guided by the pursuit of the "global village" imagination.

Up till now, it is hard to evaluate if RedNote has reached its success in globalization. In some report, opinions about whether this phenomenon would be temporary or not were collected (Yang,2025). It was pointed out that lack of monetization for creators, issues such as political censorship and lack of data privacy protection would still need to be solved. While in another way, if the problems could be solved, then RedNote would be able to maintain the users. People's natural reactions and the authenticity of the content were the competitive advantages of RedNote.

2.3 Difference Between Chinese Social Media Platforms and Local Media Platforms Overseas

Through previous studies of the reasons for the popularity of TikTok and RedNote, a clear target group, a free content creation environment and precise algorithm technology are the basis for the

popularity of a social media platform. In the process of globalization attempts, how to create a cultural environment that is both distinctive and inclusive through the platform is very important.

Looking at similar social media platforms overseas like Instagram and Facebook, some scholars took a cross-sectional survey was conducted on 396 college students and collected demographic information (Alhabash and Ma, 2017). The results showed that for these platforms, the top 2 motivations across all were entertainment and convenience. This was closely associated with the U&G framework and had continued relevance in understanding user behaviors and motivations in the digital age. The reasons why people overseas choose social media platforms can give some inspiration to domestic media platforms' globalization attempts. By studying the degree of demand for entertainment and convenience among overseas users, domestic media platforms can focus on them and build target group demographics to create a new and more comprehensive social media culture for all users.

3 DISCUSSION

3.1 Possibilities of Globalization

Whether a social media platform can successfully achieve globalization depends not only on the improvement of the platform itself, but also on the identification and analysis of the current context. If the policy reform against TikTok is an unexpected opportunity for RedNote, then for more general social media platforms, it is very significant to analyses whether the current context is the best time for global promotion.

Influenced by society and technology, people's mindsets keep changing over time. Viewing from individual changes, people's ability to accept the technology and cultures allows this era to be appropriate for social media's globalization. In the most current era, more and more people get in touch with digital platforms and start to use technology. Associating with social media has provided people with new ways to explore self-understanding. In the past, people's self-understanding was built on long histories of written, visual and quantitative modes of self-representation. While in the digital era, technology has brought a virtual world with a whole new system of culture for people to participate,

communicate and create. Using technology to reflect and see ourselves is another method, and people are more likely to allow machines to tell us who we are (Rettberg, 2014). As mentioned above, people will continue to crave more entertainment and convenience, which makes the future world closely related to more advanced technology. For social media platforms, improving technology and algorithms will better cater to the preferences of future audiences and build a solid technical foundation for globalization.

Moving to the external context, the structural conditions brought by technology to the world also provide opportunities for the globalization of social media platforms. In today's thoughts and cultures of globalization, the idea of "one world" has become dominant, and the tend towards the whole is shown as a structural change. The new structural conditions of huge, globe-spanning online platforms, fast-advancing algorithmic culture, and the precariousness of online labor are formed (Cunningham & Craig, 2016), which has provided an appropriate environment for social media platforms to explode overseas and find more possibilities.

In this context of globalization, choices are offered to social media platforms. The purpose of explosion should also be considered. Whether to use this chance to achieve globalization for broader financial benefits or to build a well-known brand all over the world, it should be clear about the advantages and disadvantages of globalization and take use of them. Sometimes the success of globalization can not only bring extra economic income but also show the growth in the ability to communicate. Take TikTok as an example, it set the goal of strengthening the nation's prowess in global communication and fostering the development of overseas social media platforms, and its success showed a huge improvement of China's international communication ability (Hu & Liang, 2023).

Thus, the success of social media's globalization can also link to the concept of a nation's culture and ability to show its culture, which is closely associated with soft power. Social media has played a significant role in the spread of populism and nationalist narratives, allowing them to bypass mainstream media and directly engage with their supporters (Flew & Iosifidis, 2019). In this case, the necessary conditions for a social media platform to achieve globalization are emphasized more - unique culture and strong cultural output capabilities. It can be concluded as well that if a social media platform can succeed in globalization, then people must be able to see its unique cultural integration or its creation of a new inclusive culture.

A very practical double-side situation is that a global platform promoted by a nation must contain

the nation's unique cultural output. At the same time, if a social media platform takes "cultural globalization" as its goal, it will be easier to gain national support. However, this may lead to another extreme negative result of cultural imperialism. Issues like the oversimplification of international communication flows, the failure to address "glocalization" strategies by media producers, the problems with cultural protectionism, and the inadequacy of the "hypodermic" model of media effects may occur (Curran, 2007). When the purpose is too ambitious, it may cause external obstacles in the process of globalization. Therefore, it is necessary for platforms to consider the extent of cultural output and how to create a more inclusive and acceptable social media culture.

3.2 Suggestions for Globalized Strategies

In addition to the precise algorithm technology, accurate positioning target group, and rich and appropriate content as the basis for globalization, we can see more that we can learn and improve from past social media globalization cases. TikTok's globalization process showed the basic logic of trying and finding out what do people really want to see. Take an overview of TikTok's growth and development, TikTok kept implementing its specific business model. It focused on short-video content, innovative social networking, and live-streaming commerce, which catered to the needs of modern users. The core of this model is TikTok's ability to innovate, cater to user preferences, and leverage live-streaming commerce (He et al., 2021). Besides this useful business model, TikTok also operated "borderline practices". These practices focused on content transfer (borrowing, remixing, and reposting content) and algorithmic manipulation (using fake accounts and organizing content to trick the recommendation algorithms) (Su & Kaye, 2023). TikTok has always aimed to cater to the market, exploring user preferences while implementing its business model, and guiding and utilizing them with its effective innovation capabilities to gain a wider audience. Its success could be an inspiration to other social media platforms, which is to predict market preferences, obtain user data, and innovate business models.

Except from the successful case of TikTok, we can also discover new possibilities for globalization and paths to explore through the differences and similarities between domestic and international social media platforms. Viewing from the marketing campaign strategy of TikTok and similar foreign social media Instagram, content marketing,

sponsored content, and user-generated content are the basic strategies in operation. However, a lot of differences in social identity can be observed. Different cultural contexts have set up conflicts between individualism and collectivism, and there are huge gaps within the evolution of virtual communities and co-creation (Gao et al., 2012b). This may be the reason why many social media platforms' attempts to globalize are difficult to succeed. Behind similar business models and marketing strategies, users bring their own different backgrounds, which makes the content have insurmountable cultural barriers. This reveals the importance of social media platforms, understanding user preferences and creating inclusive communities.

As a content sharing platform with short videos as the mainstream, TikTok has penetrated the world with its business model, while another type of social media platform that mainly shares pictures and texts seems to be difficult to achieve globalization. The form of microblogging is missing from the currently globalized social media platforms. By analyzing and comparing the user behaviors of the domestic social media platform Sina Weibo and the similar foreign social media platform Twitter, it is found that there are significant differences in the microblogging behavior on Sina Weibo and Twitter. The user's behavior can be analyzed through multilingual and culture-aware user modeling based on microblogging data, thereby obtaining a more accurate user profile, and making accurate content push and community division (Gao et al., 2012a). This has provided new ideas for simulating user preferences in different regions and also brings new ideas to social media platforms: in the process of making up for the lack of globalized microblogging, user behaviors can be guided through language and cultural perception to create a global common community.

While social media platforms are implementing technology upgrades and global promotion strategies, it should also be always paid attention to the current era and mainstream thinking. At present, in the context of an open and inclusive global environment, social media can take global actions. In the process of globalization, social media platforms should take into account the cultural values, new cultural identities, intercultural relationships, intercultural adaptation, and intercultural conflict of current users (Chen, 2012). In operations, the media should understand that users with different cultural values have different motivations for using social media. As mentioned above, on foreign social media platforms, the two main motivations for people to use social media platforms are entertainment and convenience. People in different places may have different rankings. Social media should find the main motivations for different groups of people around the world to use

social media. Based on this, social media can create a new online space by weakening or strengthening people's connections with the community, allowing new cultural identities to emerge. At the same time, it should be aware of the errors that cultural differences may cause in expression and understanding and try to avoid misunderstandings caused by cultural differences that lead to a decline in reputation.

4 CONCLUSION

Taking Tik Tok and RedNote as cases, this paper expounds the globalization promotion strategy of social media. In general, the globalization of social media needs to consider the current situation and formulate corresponding strategies for the environment of the times. The current open and inclusive global context allows social media to carry out the globalization process. Social media that wants to complete globalization should have precise algorithm technology, accurate target groups, rich and inclusive content as a foundation, and at the same time need to have innovative user preference inference capabilities to create a new and inclusive cultural identity on the platform. Social media needs to pay attention to cultural values and the problems that may arise from cultural differences and be prepared to deal with them.

In addition, this paper still has some limitations. The analysis of social media globalization strategies mainly focuses on Chinese social media, with Tik Tok and RedNote as the key analysis platforms, and foreign social media that adopt globalization are not selected and analyzed. At the same time, the context mentioned in the paper mainly uses the Chinese background and the American background as two representative cultural environments in cases, mainly discussing how social media platforms in Chinese context can try to integrate into foreign cultures represented by the United States, to achieve globalization.

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