

# Analysis of Mainstream Media's Dissemination of Viral Short Videos on Douyin: A Case Study of the Douyin Account "Host Ah Zhe"

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**Abstract:** How to effectively capture users' attention in a short period of time and disseminate valuable, attractive, and correctly oriented news is a major challenge for mainstream media. In order to attract the interest of the audience, it must penetrate the platform where the users are most active. This paper focuses on the practice of spreading news through short videos of Douyin, and analyzes the account "host A Zhe" in detail. By analyzing the basic characteristics and potential factors of viral short video news of mainstream media, this paper provides valuable insights for improving the media convergence communication strategy of mainstream media.

**Keywords:** mainstream media, short videos, viral content, Douyin

## 1. Research Object

The Douyin account "Host Ah Zhe," affiliated with Hubei Radio and Television Group, is an official new media platform. Host Ah Zhe, the anchor of this account, is a presenter at Hubei Radio and Television Station. The account commenced operations on November 14, 2017. By December 31, 2023, over 5 million followers were garnered and over 5,300 videos were posted. These videos were liked 260 million times, with an average of 89,000 likes per video and a maximum of 1.199 million likes. The average number of comments per video was approximately 7,000, with a maximum of 160,000 comments. Among the various matrix accounts of Hubei Radio and Television Group, "Host Ah Zhe" stands out due to its rapid growth in followers, active engagement in likes and comments, and positive feedback from netizens, making it one of the top performers in the new media matrix accounts. Using content analysis method, this study selected viral short videos from the "Host Ah Zhe" Douyin account with over 100,000 likes between October 2023 and January 2024 as samples, totaling 100 samples for content analysis.

## 2. Characteristics of Viral Short Videos on the "Host Ah Zhe" Douyin Account

### 2.1 Topic Selection Focuses on Social Hotspots, Anticipating Trends, and Conveying Positive Energy

Topic selection represents the initial stride in news planning and serves as the foundational step in birthing exceptional short video content. The "Host Ah Zhe" Douyin account boasts a broad spectrum of news topics, encompassing varied facets of social existence. This study undertakes a classification of its viral short video samples, examining them from these perspectives: thematic essence, narrative core, emotive resonance, and beyond.

Through the lens of thematic analysis, "Host Ah Zhe's" short video news predominantly gravitates towards social hotspots, grassroots concerns, heartwarming anecdotes, societal phenomena, heroic narratives, cultural inheritance, educational advancements, cultural dialogues, and judicial equity. Notably, videos addressing social hotspots constitute a substantial proportion, comprising as much as 44.2% of the corpus. These videos frequently command swift attention from audiences, manifesting as viral sensations. For instance, productions like "First Encounter with Yunnan's Three Lives Education" and "Harbin Guards Guangxi's 'Sugar Orange'" have garnered in excess of 800,000 likes apiece, epitomizing exceptional dissemination efficacy.

### 2.2 Capturing Emotional Resonance and Harmonizing with Audience Sentiments

Understanding emotional cues is crucial for mainstream media to create viral videos on platforms like Douyin. On January 16, 2024, a CCTV News report depicted two sentries stationed atop the northern frontier in the freezing snow, initially mistaken for mannequins by tourists. When the sentries removed their gloves to salute, revealing their humanity, it stirred profound emotions. On January 17, the "Host Ah Zhe" Douyin account reposted and commented on this news, interspersing footage of the sentries enduring the bitter cold, steadfast in their duty, resiliently saluting without gloves, accompanied by emotionally charged narration. Users resonated deeply with the host, experiencing "a surge of emotions from the chest." The video's brevity, spanning only 58 seconds, eloquently encapsulated the profound impact and emotion stirred within viewers, prompting widespread sharing and discussion. Accumulating over 500,000 likes, 10,000 comments, 13,000 saves, and more than 4,600 shares, it epitomized a viral sensation.

Throughout the creative process of creation and dissemination, this viral short video precisely identifies hot-button topics, refines meaningful narratives, and presents them through innovative angles, thus triggering emotional identification among users and generating a resonant effect. The outbreak of this news video underscores again the importance for mainstream media's insight into emotional triggers in news dissemination:

On one hand, mainstream news outlets must closely follow trending topics and proactively set agendas. Given the diverse and rapidly evolving nature of public opinion hotspots, creating beloved viral short videos necessitates creators staying abreast of the times, focusing on societal trending topics, and distilling valuable topics from them. Moreover, meticulous planning and release of short video products could enhance audience engagement and interactivity, ensuring that the disseminated content resonates deeply and engenders widespread empathy.

On the other hand, mainstream news media must seize explosive points and stimulate users' desire to share. In short video

dissemination, emotions are the primary resonance zone. Thus, selecting topics that touch the hearts of users and presenting them vividly through imagery and techniques that evoke emotional fluctuations foster a desire for sharing and dissemination. This emphasizes the importance of prioritizing emotional transmission and expression in content operations, allowing users to feel emotional resonance and harmonization while viewing short videos.

### 2.3 Fragmented Narrative Style, Clear Viewpoints, and Witty Commentary

Short video news, essentially a narrative form, profoundly shapes audience perceptions of real-life events and personalities by depicting recent, time-sensitive, or causally related occurrences. This format of news excels in transforming grand narratives into micro perspectives, precisely highlighting key points within limited time frames to stimulate audience perceptions and convey information and emotions effectively. Its prime strategy lies in focusing on details, starting small, and delving deep into the intrinsic value of news.

For instance, in reporting the fairytale-like interaction between a "mermaid" and children, the charm of the short video news narrative style was once again showcased. The video primarily focuses on the host recounting the news incident while skillfully avoiding excessive details, instead presenting the touching scene through carefully selected related video footage.

The advantage of this narrative style lies in its ability to precisely convey the core information of the news within limited time while simultaneously evoking emotional resonance among the audience. In this video, the host supplemented the "mermaid" girl's visual constraints in the aquarium pool—unable to clearly discern the outside world, only perceiving light—which further deepened the audience's emotional connection to the news event.

Moreover, the video effectively utilized the characteristics of short video news, such as visual impact and emotional resonance. By showcasing the moment when the "mermaid" girl and children meet and interact in the water, the video provided the audience with an immersive experience, making them feel as if they were part of this fairy tale-like story, sharing a rare moment with the "mermaid" girl and the children.

Viral videos often convey news ideologies with clear viewpoints through the mundane stories of ordinary people's lives, scene-setting audiovisual elements, and emotional narrative expressions, delivering genuine emotional experiences to the audience in under a minute. This not only enhances the content's emotional appeal but also increases its relevance, achieving twice the result with half the effort in dissemination.

### 2.4 Engaging Personality, Playful Use of Internet Slang, and Building User Rapport

In terms of character portrayal, the "Host Ah Zhe" Douyin account has undergone skillfully design. The account's profile picture and cover image both feature a cartoonized figure—a host in a suit, formal yet lively and adorable. The cover depicts a cartoon version of the host broadcasting news in the studio, with vibrant colors and smooth lines, reflecting professionalism while maintaining a warm and approachable image.

Moreover, the news presenter "Ah Zhe" himself is very personable and internet-savvy. During his tenure at Hubei Radio and Television Group, Ah Zhe hosted variety shows such as "Singing Along the Way," "Crazy Discounts," and "Transparent Studio," displaying a unique style that is witty, humorous, and endearing, attracting a large following. In previous news short videos, he promptly delivered authoritative information and provided insightful interpretations, offering audiences a fresh perspective. This friendly, humorous, and positive image enhances the account's attractiveness while delivering information.

During broadcasts, Ah Zhe frequently incorporates Internet slang and memes, making the news reports more lively and interesting. Phrases like "Who understands?" "Laughing all the way to the bank," and "Earth-shattering revelation" are seamlessly integrated into the reports, injecting humor and catching users' attention. Additionally, Ah Zhe timely engages in live singing during broadcasts, enlivening the atmosphere and making the content more relatable and engaging for the audience.

Furthermore, to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of news content, the "Host Ah Zhe" Douyin account has established close cooperation with a variety of authoritative media. For example, it jointly released a Douyin video with Hubei TV and Hubei Tourism, which was promoted by the celebrity Richie Jen's words, "Take a low-carbon journey home to record for the Spring Festival Gala. and "Are you looking forward to his wonderful performance? Don't Just Reply with a Cold 'Hmm' " to preheat the 2024 Hubei TV Spring Festival Gala. This collaboration with government departments, mainstream media, and celebrity not only provides the "Host Ah Zhe" account with official and authoritative endorsements but also enhances its credibility and authority.

## 3. The Cause of the Explosive Short Videos on the "Host Ah Zhe" Douyin Account

The allure of Douyin short videos makes it a medium that easily induces addictive behavior. From the perspective of the "Use and Gratification" theory, Douyin satisfies users' emotional needs in their fast-paced lives through its fragmented and lighthearted content. Additionally, functions of likes, comments, and shares allow users to participate in content creation and dissemination, fulfilling their psychological needs for social involvement. Furthermore, the platform provides a space for marginalized or fringe groups to voice their opinions, seek validation, and express resistance, which is a significant characteristic of popular Douyin short videos.

Analyzing the explosive videos on the "Host Ah Zhe" Douyin account reveals notable highlights in terms of eliciting emotional resonance, satisfying emotional needs, and increasing social engagement. The account predominantly focuses on social hot topics, leveraging the host's fast-paced and emotionally rich delivery and objective yet incisive commentary to stir the audience's emotions, thereby fostering emotional resonance. Moreover, the account pays considerable attention to fostering comments and interactions, with an average comment count exceeding 6,000, allowing users to engage in social issues and interact with other followers, satisfying their needs for social

participation. Additionally, the account boldly speaks out against social injustices, effectively mobilizing the resistance mentality of the marginalized.

The success of the "Host Ah Zhe" Douyin account and its remarkable performance in producing explosive short videos largely stem from its precise understanding of user psychological needs. In terms of topic selection, the account focuses on societal hot topics and employs the host's fast-paced and emotionally charged delivery style, coupled with objective and incisive commentary, to evoke emotional resonance among users. Regarding the narrative style, the account emphasizes eliciting emotional responses from the audience, triggering intense emotional fluctuations during video consumption. These emotional fluctuations not only enhance users' memory and identification with the content but also further stimulate their willingness to share and disseminate.

Furthermore, the account demonstrates exceptional operational capabilities in comments interaction and discussion guiding. With an average comment count exceeding 6,000, the account creates an active and harmonious interaction environment by actively responding to user's comments and feedback. At the same time, through setting topics and encouraging discussions, the account encourages users to participate in discussions on social issues, which further satisfies their psychological needs for social involvement.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The Douyin short video platform provides a wide-reaching, highly interactive, fast-paced, and diverse platform for news dissemination. For media outlets, Douyin short videos to some extent reduce production costs and help media entities gain high traffic returns. For audiences, it offers the opportunity to utilize fragmented time to quickly, conveniently, and efficiently access domestic and international news anytime, anywhere, and stay informed about global affairs. However, it is essential to recognize the flip side of the coin. The brief and fragmented nature of Douyin short videos implies the inability to fully convey timely information. Moreover, excessive catering to audience demands may lead to the news becoming excessively entertainment-oriented and sentimental.

The advent of the short video era has brought unprecedented breadth to the speed and scope of news dissemination, empowering everyone to become discoverers and disseminators of news. Consequently, the professionalism and professional ethics of news practitioners have become increasingly crucial.

For professional journalists, it is imperative to uphold rigorous journalistic values, possess rich experience and skills in news gathering and editing, and bear a strong sense of social responsibility. They must strike a balance between authority and accessibility and grasp the scale between fragmentation and depth, to tell China's stories and excel in news dissemination, utilizing short video platforms.

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