

# *Research on the Marketing Strategy of Tik Tok*

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**Abstract:** The rise of TikTok has been followed by people all over the world, which has not only changed the traditional way of entertainment and consumption but also brought challenges to people to a certain extent. Research on TikTok has been increasing in recent years, with past studies mainly focusing on how it manages to market itself in the Chinese market to attract users. As well as how it associates the software with live streaming to sell goods. This paper studied the double-sided impact of TikTok's marketing approach in China and internationally by reading academic articles from China and other countries. It can be concluded that people not only in China but also in the United States face the problem of spending too much time on TikTok. At the same time, TikTok content is also resisted by some people due to gaps in the vetting mechanism and differences in national religious beliefs. It has a detrimental effect on the marketing of TikTok companies.

**Keywords:** TikTok, Marketing strategy, Artificial intelligence, Censor mechanism

## 1. Introduction

TikTok, an App that combines artificial intelligence with the development of the mobile internet, has dramatically changed the way people receive information. By 2019, the short video app TikTok had over 1 billion downloads, making it one of the top social networking platforms in the world along with Facebook and Instagram [1]. TikTok is now widely used around the world. Its mass appeal among young audiences has led to people of all ages using the software, which has become a global phenomenon. However, social media may influence and persuade society mentally and emotionally in both positive and negative ways to impact individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours [2]. Therefore, a critical understanding of TikTok's business strategy is crucial to further understanding its success and potential harm. To our knowledge, a few studies have focused on the gaps in TikTok's marketing strategy. This paper will analyze the success of TikTok in terms of its efficacy, pricing, and international development strategies and what it needs to improve. Although TikTok's intelligent video recommendation mechanism has attracted many users, the quality of its videos has led to resistance to it. This paper improves the analysis of TikTok's marketing strategy, which helps promote the development of the software in the international market.

## **2. Analysis of the Marketing Strategy**

### **2.1. Accurate Content Delivery**

TikTok adopts artificial intelligence algorithms to make it popular with people of various age groups. It relies on artificial intelligence to optimize the user experience in terms of video recommendations and video production. Firstly, in terms of video recommendations, TikTok projects users' preferences by the time they spend in each type of video, and as each video clip is very short, the algorithm of TikTok can quickly build an objective database to accurately capture the type of videos that users like [3]. In this way, users can directly open the 'for you' page to cycle through the videos they are interested in by swiping the screen. In the meantime, people can also click on the 'not interested' option below the video to minimize the pushing of such videos. Artificial intelligence technology customizes video content for each person, which increases the stickiness of the software for different age groups and makes people of all ages willing to spend time using TikTok. In terms of video production, artificial intelligence assists users with limited editing skills to create attractive videos. TikTok offers hundreds of background music and video effects, as well as simplified video editing, voiceover, and video clip transitions. It enables people of all ages to rapidly learn to post videos. Furthermore, these features make it easy to motivate people to participate in video production and meet the entertainment and social needs of daily life [4]. Therefore, AI technology has led to a high level of usage of TikTok.

### **2.2. Affordable Cost**

In terms of pricing strategy, price positioning and volume of traffic are important factors for the success of TikTok. Not only does TikTok have a price that applies to the public, but users can also make money from video streams. In terms of price, TikTok is a free software application, therefore, users only have to complete the authentication process in order to use it without having to pay for the application. In the meantime, the popular background music included in TikTok is free for customers to use. Thus, the free features of TikTok provide users with a pleasant entertainment experience and attract many active customers to use the app. As for video flow, the large number of users of TikTok has prompted many brands to invest in this app to run advertisements. At the same time, the brands will also pay influencers to intersperse their videos with advertisements to boost the impact of their brands. Such initiatives allow both TikTok officials and influencers to profit from advertising. Moreover, it also incentivizes influential web celebrities to continue to create high-quality work to maintain video traffic, creating a good viewing experience for TikTok users and increasing user viscosity. Low cost makes more people involved in using TikTok.

### **2.3. Expanding International Market**

TikTok promotes product popularity by exploring international markets. It operates with a dual version strategy, one for the Chinese Internet market and the other for the rest of the world, aiming to achieve this new model of a digital content company with global reach [1]. Since its product design meets the preferences of young people, TikTok enjoys a remarkable rate of expansion in international markets. At the same time, in July 2018, it had over 500 million monthly active users worldwide and became the most popular software in the app store. By December 2020, TikTok will have accumulated 6 billion lifetime downloads [5]. TikTok widens its customer market and gains international reach with a dual release strategy.

### **3. Analysis of the Challenges**

#### **3.1. Censor Mechanism Vulnerabilities**

Although TikTok has enriched users' entertainment, there are still concerns that low-quality videos could be harmful to the mental health of young people. TikTok still suffers from vetting lapses, and teenagers' long-term addiction to unhealthy videos could hinder future development. In her research, Wang Yan stated that the majority of short videos produced by TikTok creators are filled with pornography and gory violence to attract the attention of users [4]. Despite TikTok's adoption of a combination of intelligent technology and manual auditing, there are still obvious auditing errors that allow some undesirable videos to reach users. In turn, exposure to pornography at a young age may lead to poor mental health, gender discrimination and sexual violence as well as other negative outcomes [6]. The video censorship flaws in TikTok are not conducive to positive gender attitudes among youth.

#### **3.2. User Addiction**

In the meantime, as AI technology can deliver to users exactly the videos they are interested in, it can lead to users becoming obsessed with the software. However, research indicates that the increasing use of social media by students is a straightforward result of poor mental health and academic performance [7]. Nowadays, the overuse of social media among students is growing constantly. Investigators gathered questionnaires from more than 200 college students and analysed them through structural equation modelling, and eventually found that addiction to TikTok distracts students' attention, causes anxiety and depression which leads to lower academic performance [8]. In general, TikTok's vulnerabilities and product strategy are, to some extent, a threat to the future development of young people.

#### **3.3. International Market Risk**

The international development of TikTok also faces risks. The promotion of a product needs to be in line with local religious beliefs and political factors. Pakistan has repeatedly blocked TikTok, with the government arguing that this app is detrimental to the youth of Pakistan, while also claiming that the videos uploaded on TikTok are contrary to the established norms and values of the country [9]. As the 'indecent' videos on TikTok are against local religious beliefs, it is difficult to gain development in those regions. In the meantime, concerned about national security related to Chinese ownership of TikTok, President Trump signed an executive order in 2020 indicating that the software would be banned from the U.S. a few months later. [10]. Moreover, the Federal Trade Commission fined TikTok nearly \$6 million for failing to obtain parental consent before collecting the names, email addresses and personal information of children under the age of 13 [11]. In conclusion, the lack of research on local policies, religion and the political environment when developing internationalization has resulted in a risky situation of TikTok.

### **4. Analysis of the Countermeasures**

In order to promote the development of TikTok, there are different measures that can assist in fixing its shortcomings. To address the vulnerability of the audit mechanism, TikTok can encourage users to report low-quality videos and give them rewards. Moreover, it is also recommended that academic institutions use TikTok to throw a mix of academic and non-academic content to the audience. Introducing young people to useful content such as science and sports in a fun way allows them to grow in knowledge while having fun [12]. As for the problem of users becoming addicted to short

videos, TikTok should strengthen and improve its anti-addiction system. It means that when the user stays in the software for too long a day, the app should remind users to take a break by locking the screen, etc. At the same time, TikTok can encourage parents to set browsing time limits for their children, which means that the screen will automatically lock when a teenager uses TikTok for more than the maximum number of hours. Finally, for the international market risks faced by TikTok, they should organize corresponding departments to assess the beliefs and political environment of their target countries to prevent disputes caused by ideological conflicts.

## 5. Conclusion

This study argued that although TikTok applies artificial intelligence technology, low-cost usage strategies and a dual-version approach to appeal to users and improve the product's perception, the software should focus more on improving the quality of video reviews and preventing addictive behavior in viewing short videos to promote the physical and mental health of users. At the same time, when developing international markets, it is important to understand local religious customs to reduce resistance. In this case, this article suggests that TikTok improve its anti-addiction system, recommend more academic videos to users, and organize personnel to gain an in-depth understanding of the international market. Finally, the paper contains a limited number of strategies, and future research should synthesize more market strategies to come up with more efficient solutions.

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