

Exploring the Application Strategies of Background Music in Mainstream Media Short Videos

-- Taking the People's Daily TikTok as an Example

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Abstract: With the popularity of social media and short video platforms, mainstream media organizations have gradually realized the importance of background music in short videos, and have begun to actively use it to enhance the attractiveness of the content and communication effect. Through an in-depth study of the application of background music on People's Daily's TikTok, this paper aims to reveal the strategy of background music in enhancing the quality and influence of media short videos. Analyzing in-depth the video case of People's Daily TikTok, provides new research directions and ideas for subsequent studies, as well as lessons for the use of background music in mainstream media short videos.

Keywords: Short Videos; Background Music; TikTok.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of social media and short video platforms, mainstream media organizations are increasingly focusing on their presence and influence on these platforms. Among them, TikTok, one of the world's leading short video platforms, has attracted hundreds of millions of users and becomes one of the most important channels for mainstream media communication. In this media environment full of fierce competition, the content appeal and communication effect of short videos have become key factors. As an important part of short videos, background music has a unique power of expression and emotion transmission. Correct selection and application of background music can greatly enhance the attractiveness and resonance effect of short videos. However, with the increasing number of short videos, choosing suitable background music becomes more and more important and challenging.

As one of the most influential mainstream media in China, People's Daily has been committed to transformation and media integration to adapt to the development trend of the mobile media era. The People's Daily microblog was launched in July 2012 and currently publishes more than 60,000 microblogs with 45.89 million followers.¹ The content of the microblog includes news on current affairs,

people's livelihoods, and science and technology, as well as information on fitness, health care, and other life services. [1] With the rise of short-video platforms such as TikTok, People's Daily has also actively moved closer to the field of short-video information, realizing the importance of short-video in attracting young audiences and increasing the effectiveness of communication. As of July 8, 2023, People's Daily's TikTok has 160 million followers and has released 5,608 videos, showing that it has a certain appeal on the platform.

2. Use of Background Music in Mainstream Media Short Videos

In this paper, the short videos published by the People's Daily TikTok from January 1 to December 31, 2022, are used as the object of study. On the choice of sampling method, Hurst and Dougall provided a reasonable guideline for obtaining online news content after comparing a variety of sampling methods and sizes. Their findings show that taking constructed weekly sampling method is much better than simple random sampling or continuous sampling. [2] Therefore, in this study, the constructed week sampling method is adopted, and the final sample of the constructed week is shown in Table 1:

Table 1. People's Daily Tectonic Week Sample

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays	Saturdays	Sunday
1.10	4.12	3.16	4.14	8.12	4.29	6.29

Through statistics, 24 samples were obtained as the total sample of the study. After analysis, the People's Daily TikTok mostly uses background music, and its background music is not only an auxiliary means to attract audiences but also a way to show its attitude and evaluate events.

2.1. High-frequency Use of Background Music in Mainstream Media Short Videos

Among the 24 samples selected, 9 samples used pure music

without any vocals, 15 samples used songs, and all of them were 1 piece of music. The result shows that the use of background music has become the "standard" for short videos produced by People's Daily TikTok.

The frequent use of background music in mainstream media short videos reflects the mainstream media's efforts and innovations to adapt to the new media environment and audience needs. First, the use of background music can enhance the audiovisual experience of short videos. Through

the appropriate selection and use of background music, a more vivid, interesting, and attractive viewing experience can be created for viewers in a short period, which enhances the attractiveness and dissemination effect. Secondly, background music in short videos helps to improve the information transmission effect. Echoing the video content, can strengthen the expression and understanding of the information to make it easier for the audience to accept and memorize the content of the short video. Through specific music styles and elements, mainstream media can shape their unique brand image and enhance the recognition and influence of the media, so that viewers can associate with the media organization when they hear specific soundtracks.

2.2. Using Background Music to Convey Intrinsic Ideas

Music is a kind of sound art, which plays an irreplaceable and important role in conveying feelings and is very easy to infect the audience, while language can hardly have such an effect. [3] Mainstream media use background music in short videos as a strategy to convey inner thoughts and enhance the infectiousness and communication effect of the content through the emotional expression and symbolic implication of music.

By choosing music that matches the emotion of the video content, mainstream media can effectively trigger the emotional resonance of the audience. In the process of browsing short videos, before people have time to understand the people or things in the picture, they will be stimulated by the background music which is either exciting or low, and some kind of emotional tone will be the first to produce the effect as the leading information, which constitutes people's cognitive schema, and the subsequent information will be integrated and assimilated into this schema, thus influencing the people's judgment on the whole content.[4]

For example, in the video "General Secretary pays tribute to the People's Police", People's Daily uses the more powerful pure music "victory"; while in the video "General Secretary arrives in Hong Kong on a special plane", it uses the more soothing "I Must Come Back", expressing the President's deep concern for Hong Kong. In the video "Xi Jinping arrives in Hong Kong on a special plane", People's Daily uses the more soothing "I Must Come Back" to express the President's deep concern for Hong Kong. Therefore, the choice of corresponding music can deepen the audience's resonance and feelings towards the content, enabling them to experience and understand the inner thoughts conveyed by the video more deeply.

3. Misunderstandings in the Use of Short Video Background Music

Despite the enormous potential of background music to enhance the quality and appeal of video, there are some common misconceptions about its use in mainstream media. These misconceptions can lead to poor connection with viewers, loss of content uniqueness, and even copyright infringement issues. Therefore, mainstream media must understand and avoid these misconceptions.

3.1. Excessive Use of Background Music

The overuse of background music makes the music a distraction to the viewer's understanding of the content or the message being conveyed. When background music is used

too frequently or at too high a volume, viewers may be distracted from focusing on the theme or message conveyed in the video. Overly dense background music can also mask key sounds and dialog in a video, diminishing the viewer's listening experience. For example, in the video related to "Can Russia End Military Operations", People's Daily used "Danuvius" as the background music, but due to the excessive volume, Putin's voice was almost completely covered, which seriously weakened the sense of the reality of the news. To avoid such a misunderstanding, it is important to recognize the importance of timing to effectively apply background music. [5] Mainstream media should use background music in moderation to ensure that it enhances the emotional expression of the content without overshadowing or interfering with the video content.

3.2. Lack of Innovation and Personalization

People's Daily may rely too heavily on a few common or popular soundtracks, resulting in a lack of innovation and personalization. This misconception may cause the video content to lose its uniqueness and distinctiveness among viewers. Some popular pop songs are repeatedly featured in short videos on various topics. Originally, the melody is melodious and the lyrics are infectious, but because they are used too often, the aesthetic sense is slowly lost, and "auditory violence" is gradually formed, which makes the audience uncomfortable and fails to effectively convey more information. [6] In the sample, two videos used the same clip of "Danuvius" and two videos used the same background music "Start Over". To avoid this, mainstream media should actively look for new background music and explore music with unique styles and taste to emphasize their unique brand image and content characteristics.

3.3. Neglecting the Emotional Shift of Music

The background music in the short video is an abstract expression of emotion, which mainly uses the organization of timbre and the rhythmic movement of notes to construct an expressive psychological space outside the screen and trigger the audience's resonance, generating the "unconscious consciousness" in cognitive psychology, and creating an atmosphere and emotion for the other elements in the short video. This creates an atmosphere and mood for the content expression jointly constructed by other elements in the short video, which in turn contributes to the communication of the content and emotional catharsis. [7] A common misconception among the 24 short video samples in People's Daily is that they tend to use only a single type of background music, ignoring the need for emotional shifts. This practice may result in viewers feeling monotonous or bored during the viewing process, making it difficult to maintain sustained interest.

To avoid this situation, mainstream media should choose suitable background music to realize the change of mood and the creation of a climax in the video according to the needs of plot development and emotional expression. Plot development usually involves different moods and atmospheres, ranging from light and cheerful to tense and suspenseful, and even to solemn and solemn. By using suitable background music at key moments, mainstream media can better guide the audience's emotions and enhance the effect and appeal of the video.

4. Suggestions for the Application of Short Video Background Music

With the rise of short videos and the mainstream media's entry into major platforms, background music, as an important element in short video production, is gradually gaining more attention and importance. The dissemination of short video background music is crucial to the development of the overall quality of the short video industry, and a full analysis of the dissemination of short video background music can not only help the short video industry correctly recognize the advantages of the current background music dissemination but also help it to face up to the problems in the dissemination of short video background music.[8]

4.1. Abandon Traditional TV Thinking and Clarify the Significance of Short Video Background Music

Short video background music is not just a simple background accompaniment, it has multiple functions of emotional transmission, attraction, and communication effect. Different from TV, short videos attract viewers with fast-paced and concise features. Within the limited time and space, background music can trigger the audience's emotional resonance in an instant and strengthen the expressive power of short video content. By carefully selecting and using background music, mainstream media can better utilize this element to enhance the quality and attractiveness of short videos, establish a closer connection with viewers, and further promote the media industry in the direction of development.

4.2. Bold Innovation and Style

One of the keys to attracting viewers on the fiercely competitive short video platform is to be different. While traditional and ordinary background music may not leave a deep impression on viewers, choosing background music with creativity and innovation can inject novel and unique elements into short videos, making them distinctive and eye-catching. Such background music can highlight the individual characteristics of mainstream media, establish brand image and attract more audience attention.

4.3. Improve the Mechanism of Using Short Video Background Music

At present, the use of soundtracks for short videos is relatively free, and the industry has not yet established a set of norms and audit systems for the use of soundtracks. Therefore, mainstream media organizations need to summarize the experience of soundtrack use through long-term practice and pay attention to users' feedback. Mainstream media should define the positioning and style of short video accounts, and use this as a benchmark for choosing suitable soundtracks. The soundtrack should match the theme of the video and accurately convey the emotion and

purpose of the reported event. For example, for solemn political reports, solemn and steady music can be selected, while for lively social news, bright and dynamic music can be selected. Secondly, the legality and copyright of the soundtrack should be emphasized. Mainstream media should ensure that the soundtracks used have legal copyright authorization and maintain a cooperative relationship with the music sources to avoid copyright infringement disputes. At the same time, a set of auditing mechanisms can be set up to scrutinize the soundtracks to ensure that they comply with laws, regulations, and ethical norms.

5. Concluding Remarks

Short video background music plays an important role in the use of mainstream media. By correctly choosing and applying background music, mainstream media can enhance the quality, attractiveness, and dissemination effect of short videos and establish a closer connection with viewers. However, to avoid misunderstandings such as overuse, lack of innovation, and neglect of emotional transformation, it is necessary for mainstream media to actively adopt corresponding strategies and measures. Only in this way can the use of short video background music better drive the mainstream media industry forward and create more influential short video content.

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