

The Impact of Social Platforms on Cultural Transmission: A Study of the "Rednote Refugees" Phenomenon

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Abstract. This paper investigates the sudden influx of "TikTok refugees" to Rednote platform in early 2025 following the ban of TikTok in several countries. It analyzes the user behaviors and cross-cultural dynamics that emerged during this digital migration and subsequent socialization process. The study first examines the contradictory yet symbiotic relationship between refugees' forced displacement and their active efforts to establish roots on a new platform. It then explores how Rednote facilitates this transition through open registration policies and the rapid deployment of translation tools. Furthermore, the paper discusses how both refugee and local user groups achieve social satisfaction through information exchange and emotional resonance, extending the platform's entertainment attributes into the realm of intercultural communication. Finally, it analyzes the commercial opportunities and cultural challenges—such as cultural discount due to linguistic differences—that arise from this user influx. The findings indicate that Rednote refugee phenomenon represents a complex process of cross-cultural re-socialization, demonstrating that user interaction on social platforms can significantly impact cultural transmission. This study concludes by discussing the implications for platform governance and the future of digital cultural exchange.

Keywords: cultural communication, cross cultural, the Rednote, digital transfer

1. Introduction

The term "migration" originally refers to the position transfer or regional flow of people or animals in physical space. With the rise of social media and the change of digital ecology, this concept has emerged as a new social symbol, and the term "network migration" has been used to describe the phenomenon of users transferring from one social network platform to another; Users who migrate through social media are called "digital migrants". Migration here refers to the abstract movement between digital systems [1]. "Refugees" used to refer to people who were forced to leave their places of origin and could not return safely due to war, violence and persecution. In this article, the overseas user group who was forced to switch from TikTok social platform to Rednote due to external restrictions is called "refugees". In the face of regulatory pressure from governments around the world, TikTok has been subject to a series of restrictions and bans, resulting in restrictions on the overseas use of the platform. The United States, India, Canada and other countries and regions have

successively implemented a series of measures such as banning or restricting the use of TikTok on the grounds of "data security", resulting in a large number of international loyal users who have long relied on the social platform being forced to leave [2]. In order to find a new "place to live", they poured into Rednote and claimed to be "TikTok refugees". This phenomenon not only changed the user pattern of international social media, but also provided samples for cross-cultural communication. Combined with cross-cultural communication, this study will systematically analyze the impact of the social platform, Rednote, on cultural communication under the phenomenon of "TikTok refugees" pouring into Rednote. The characteristics of refugee migration phenomenon and the user satisfaction of refugees in Rednote platform from the perspective of cross platform, and the impact of cultural impact on users are called the key issues of communication research.

2. New landscape of social platform: characteristics of migration phenomenon

2.1. The contradictory symbiosis of passive migration and active grounding

Worldwide, due to government intervention, regulatory pressure and other reasons, a large number of TikTok loyal users were forced to leave the social platform they used to use, and had to find a new "place of refuge" as "refugees". Among them, a large number of users come from developed countries such as the United States and enjoy high social privileges. The term "refugee" is used to describe their digital migration. This label also emphasizes their passivity in the migration event, so that users can widely adapt to the social style of the platform and generate the same interests and topics. The content of Rednote is mainly in the form of text and video, which is similar to TikTok in the way of use, making it easier for new users to adapt. This can be seen as users' active grounding in platform selection. As refugees enter an unfamiliar social platform, unfamiliar use methods, social habits and languages will lead to difficulties in adapting to a certain extent. The opposition and interdependence between the two forms a symbiotic relationship of contradictions.

2.2. Social demand driven in Rednote platform

In Rednote refugee phenomenon, social needs play an important role in driving the migration of refugees. TikTok platform mainly provides users with entertainment, recreation and interaction in interpersonal communication, forming a stable social dependence. When the platform is blocked, users' own interpersonal needs cannot be met. The Rednote, with its similar social attributes, has become the primary choice for user migration. After refugees entered Rednote platform, social needs drove refugees to actively adapt to the interaction mode of the new platform. Symbolic interactionism points out that social phenomena are constructed through the meaning of symbols and interactive negotiation. The connection ability of horizontal width value and the creation of resonance effect help people from different cultural backgrounds realize emotional resonance and relationship identity under the stimulation of the same content. For example, after refugees poured into Rednote, there was a wave of "pet tax" [3]. In order to quickly adapt to the social way of the new platform and integrate with local users, refugees jokingly called this behavior "paying taxes" to local users by sharing photos of their pets with local users, and platform users "re encode the meaning" of pet symbols, which is a way for refugees to quickly break the barriers with local users. Close to local users in a joking way, the social interaction between refugees and local users has been upgraded from a simple greeting to an interesting cultural exchange. This integration based on social

needs has made refugees gradually get rid of the identity of "outsiders", and gradually established a sense of belonging and identity on Rednote platform.

2.3. Migration path opening

The opening of migration path originally meant that the blocked and restricted mobile channels were completely opened, so that the groups needing to migrate could reach the new destination legally, smoothly and safely. When TikTok was banned, refugees began to look for "new homes" everywhere, and Rednote is the platform to open the channel and accept them. The Rednote chose to completely open this digital migration path. First of all, at the technical level, the platform accepts global mobile number registration, which is no longer limited to the use of Chinese mobile number registration, and is not mandatory for real names, providing convenience for foreign users; After refugees entered the platform, in order to solve the language barriers between users of different nationalities, the platform launched the language translation function within one week, which promoted the communication between users. In terms of functional experience, Rednote is highly similar to TikTok in the way of using short videos and graphics, so that refugees can continue to create according to their original preferences. The Rednote regards content quality as the key factor of recommendation mechanism. By analyzing users' interests, interaction habits and community atmosphere, the platform screened out high-quality content, won users' trust, helped refugees find a sense of belonging, and opened a window to identity reconstruction for refugees [4]. With this inclusive and open attitude, Rednote has no cumbersome registration procedures and language communication barriers, providing a green channel for the migration of refugees.

3. User satisfaction of " Rednote refugees" from the perspective of cross platform migration

3.1. Extension of entertainment attributes in social platform scenarios

With its core advantages of interactivity and community like TikTok, Rednote provides entertainment for the immigration of refugees, and also promotes Rednote to upgrade from a local social platform to an international social field. Because the platform focuses on community interaction between users, refugees also gain different entertainment experiences. In the social platform scenario, different entertainment methods become the key to breaking cross-cultural barriers. The different entertainment methods of overseas user groups and local user groups are integrated with each other, forming the extension of different entertainment attributes of the two groups. The natural acceptance of refugees by local users makes it easier for refugees to have identity and community ownership in the process of migration, so the emotional resonance between groups makes refugee users enhance their entertainment attributes on the Rednote platform. In addition, Rednote is a lifestyle platform integrating social networking and e-commerce. The immigration of Rednote refugees has further promoted the deep integration of entertainment attributes and these functions. While interacting with local users, refugees can also carry out online shopping and other functions simultaneously, and promote the cooperation between overseas bloggers and Chinese brands. The use of Rednote platform is a combination of text and text, which provides more possibilities for users to consume. In recent years, the platform has gradually played the role of "information platform" in users' daily life, which has an important impact on users' cognition, especially in the field of consumption [5]. This is not simply entertainment consumption, nor is it just interactive social interaction, but an extension of entertainment attributes on the basis of certain social interaction.

3.2. Users' acquisition and satisfaction of information and messages

After refugees entered Rednote platform, they gradually socialized with local users. At the same time, the two social groups began to realize some information differences. The "reconciliation" function initially appeared in the form of personal financial tools, and gradually evolved into an important way for users to share shopping experience, life records and emotional expression. The two user groups have built a depoliticized communication space through exposing the real medical bills, discussing the cost of education, and even using interesting interactions such as "paying cat tax" and "helping each other with homework" [6]. Chinese young people share fashion life and learn from American netizens. These vivid interactions have broken the traditional international communication which focuses on information transmission, mainly disseminating facts and views through news reports, documentaries and other means, while the audience's feedback and interaction channels are limited, which has played a key role in cross-cultural emotional communication. This communication mode with "reconciliation" as the core makes Rednote an important platform for Chinese and foreign users to efficiently obtain information and meet information needs. Every interaction between users is the transmission and satisfaction of information. This form also helps the integration of refugee communities and enriches the platform life to meet the information needs of users. The two sides have achieved integration imperceptibly, gradually breaking the barriers between different cultures and meeting the information gap between each other.

3.3. Emotional value in social interaction from the perspective of refugees

The core problem for refugees at the initial stage of entering Rednote platform is that it is difficult to integrate into the social way of the platform and feel strange in the new environment. The emotional value brought by social interaction with local users can provide a resonance of "we are the same kind" for refugees. The motivation of Rednote users shows a clear tendency of "living" and "pragmatism". It mainly includes cognitive needs, emotional needs, personal integration needs, social integration needs and stress relief needs. Users can quickly obtain solutions or emotional support for the problems they need through less cognitive and action costs [7]. Refugees can have emotional connection with local users through simple interaction, so as to enhance their willingness to continue using the platform. For refugees, the emotional value generated in social interaction is an important support for them to alleviate embarrassment, eliminate loneliness and establish interest. This emotional value runs through every link of their interaction with local users, meets their emotional needs of "being accepted" and helps refugees establish self-identity within the platform.

4. Opportunities and challenges for users under the impact of culture

4.1. Opportunities and integration in the cultural interaction between Chinese and foreign people

The TikTok refugee phenomenon has not only brought significant traffic dividends and business opportunities to Rednote, but also promoted the direct communication between international netizens and promoted the cross-cultural dialogue worldwide as a carrier. The theory of cultural dimension was first put forward by Hofstede, who defined culture as "a collective thinking programming that can distinguish members of one group from another group", which is not an individual attribute, but a psychological model formed in the common social experience [8]. When TikTok refugees enter Rednote platform, users can share their entertainment, life and other attributes

more conveniently; Global users can also consume content anytime and anywhere. Social media can provide attractive and interactive cultural learning by means of text, pictures, videos and other forms. Young people can also strengthen their understanding of their own culture by touching eye-catching content [9]. In addition, Rednote platform has the properties of planting grass and consumption. Overseas users flock to the platform, providing more consumption possibilities for the platform. In order to motivate consumers, *Jenkins* and *Deuze* encourage media institutions to speed up the choice of media content among different communication channels, so that the platform can expand revenue opportunities, expand market share, and increase consumers' loyalty and investment [10]. At the same time, Chinese and foreign netizens can have the opportunity to have in-depth exchanges. Through interesting daily life dialogues, they can realize the rational cognition of each other's social culture, so that the users of the two groups are no longer distant and strange to each other's culture, but can perceive and learn the specific content, so that the Chinese and foreign users can really enter each other's culture and realize the integration of culture. It creates multiple opportunities for cultural interaction between local user groups and TikTok refugee groups.

4.2. Intercultural communication barriers

The Rednote, as a social platform with Chinese as the mainstream language, welcomed a large number of overseas users, resulting in cross-cultural communication collision between Chinese and foreign users. The impact at the language level is the core obstacle to the effective communication between the two sides. Language conflict is not only the cultural communication barriers caused by different languages, but also the communication barriers caused by different cultural backgrounds, that is, cultural discounts. After the influx of TikTok refugees, the online language of the Rednote platform encountered serious cultural discounts. Among them, the semantic dislocation between Chinese and other languages on the Rednote platform is particularly prominent. The machine translation often only shows the surface meaning, and cannot translate the humor, cultural allusions or deep meaning of the original text. This leads to the formation of understanding barriers in the process of social interaction between overseas refugees and local users, and some abbreviations often used by overseas users have low recognition in the Chinese user group, which also makes it difficult for local users to understand. Different levels and directions of language understanding are also prone to communication barriers. In addition, after the influx of a large number of TikTok refugees, although most local users welcomed the refugees with a friendly and open attitude, some users were suspicious and exclusive, and were overly sensitive in the interaction and communication, and even had hostile ideas. In the face of the good intentions of refugee users about China's social situation, they would make comments in offensive language, which would lead to the destruction of the atmosphere of cross-border interaction and induce cross-border language violence on the Internet [11]. At the same time, due to the sudden influx of refugees, the algorithm bias of the platform makes refugees have cultural cognitive bias, which ultimately strengthens the stereotyped influence at home and abroad.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper examines the large-scale migration of overseas TikTok users to Rednote in January 2025 as a critical case to analyze the impact of social platforms on cultural transmission under "Rednote refugee" phenomenon. The findings demonstrate that interaction and communication between distinct user groups on social platforms can effectively facilitate cross-cultural dialogue and cultural dissemination among different countries.

The study further reveals that the openness of social platforms and the resulting international user interactions are of great significance for promoting local cultures to a global audience. In an era of rapidly advancing digital media and information networks, the expansion of social platforms not only brings entertainment value to the public, narrows online distances, and enables more convenient cross-border friendships, but also generates substantial business opportunities through increased user bases, creating new possibilities for innovative profit models and commercial development.

Ultimately, social platforms serve as vital vehicles for cultural exchange and dissemination between nations. Only by prioritizing the thoughtful governance and active utilization of these platforms can we foster intercultural understanding, promote friendly people-to-people exchanges across countries, and contribute to the positive development of a shared future for mankind.

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