Review Article

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A Historical Review and Theoretical Mapping on Short Video Studies 2005–2021

Abstract: The popularity of TikTok has sparked short video studies in global academia. Whereas in China, the market for short video platforms is already matured, which has seen numerous research publications. However, an overall review of short video research is still absent. Using the methods of science mapping and thematic analysis, we summarized the research and review articles from Web of Science Core Collection and CNKI (CSSCI and CSCD) from the past two decades. The main findings are: 1) There are four main stages in the development of short video studies and each of them is tightly related to the market growth; 2) Four main perspectives (media, economic, cultural and discursive) of short video studies with 12 clusters of core issues have emerged, and the visibility that short videos bring to ordinary people is the fundamental viewpoint of many studies; 3) Currently, the short video studies are going broader and deeper, attracting scholars from different academic backgrounds, and multiple methods are applied in the studies; 4) The papers from WoS and CNKI share some similarities but show more differences in the research issues, subjects and methods. We pointed out the limitations of present studies and possibilities of future research.

1 Introduction

The global production of information has seen an irreversible trend of mobilization, socialization, visualization, and smartization. The rise of short video

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platforms is a milestone in this process. In China, The number of short video users has been roaring for several years. According to China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), as of December 2021, Chinese short video users have reached 934 million, accounting for 90.5% of the overall Internet users (CNNIC 2022). In many countries, TikTok, the short video app, has become increasingly popular, winning more than two billion global downloads and over one billion monthly active users (MAU)(Bursztynsky 2021; Yang and Goh 2020). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, short videos have become even more prevalent (Kale 2020; Kennedy 2020), which attracted growing scholarly interests.

Although the term "short video" has long existed and has been used as "short video clip" in previous studies (e.g., Boulton and Flemington 1996), the phrase's meaning has changed a lot. In this paper, the term "short video" is a form of audiovisual media that emerged from video-sharing sites like YouTube in the U.S. (Burgess and Green 2009) and Tudou in China in 2005 (Wang 2013b). From those sites, users' participation has fundamentally reshaped the connotation of this term (e.g., Uricchio 2009), remarking a new era when every individual can communicate through videos. Since then, different forms and types of user-generated short videos have flourished and attracted greater academic attention. And after 2016, with the popularity of short video apps like Douyin and TikTok, "short video" became a hot academic topic.

However, an overall review of short video research is still absent. Since short videos have become the "dominant medium" (Pan 2020) and are becoming more influential, it is necessary to look back on the history of short video research, and identify the core research topics from various perspectives to offer an intellectual framework and academic roadmap to subsequent research.

2 Methods

2.1 Data Collection

Five main terms were used as searching keywords in this literature review: "short video" and "video sharing", the key concepts in this field; "TikTok", the most globally influential short video app; "Douyin" (sister app of TikTok) and "Kuaishou", the two most popular short video apps in China, both surpassed 500 million in MAU numbers, which is worth noting even in the world market (Fan 2022; Forbes China 2022).

The period between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2021, is set as the time frame, within which we gathered articles and reviews from the Web of Science Core Collection, Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI) and China Science

Citation Database (CSCD) in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database.[1] The year 2005 was chosen because it was the start of YouTube and Tudou, which initiated online video sharing and a new research field. The closing date of 2021 was set because new papers emerging in 2022 cannot be fully counted. Since short video is still a novel research area, documents from the databases above may not cover the whole picture. Nonetheless, they can give us a general overview of the current research status in mainstream research outlets.

A total number of 348 papers from the Web of Science Core Collection and 1470 counterparts from CSSCI and CSCD were retrieved. After removing papers whose main topics are irrelevant to "short video", 207 and 1059 papers remained respectively. To set up a dataset, we collected all the recorded information of author, title, source, abstract, keywords, and cited references from those selected papers.

2.2 Data Analysis

A mixed-method of science mapping and thematic analysis was used in this study. Science mapping is a generic process of domain analysis and visualization, which can perform surveys of the literature more effectively (Chen 2017). We applied the dataset in CiteSpace 6.1.R1, a java application for bibliometric analysis. Since science mapping is widely considered less detailed, we combined thematic analysis, a method that can summarize key features and offer a 'thick description' of a large body of data (Braun and Clarke 2006). In addition, some often-cited studies and reports containing related expressions such as "internet video" and "online video", and some novel studies with insightful viewpoints from less-known journals are also included in the thematic analysis to help analyze the whole picture of short video studies.

3 Findings

3.1 Development of Short Video Studies

Figure 1 shows that the number of short-video-related publications increased over time, and four main phases can be identified in this research field (2005–2011,

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1 CNKI is the most commonly used academic database in China, but it does not have a "core collection", so we selected the papers from CSSCI and CSCD in CNKI to cover more research categories.
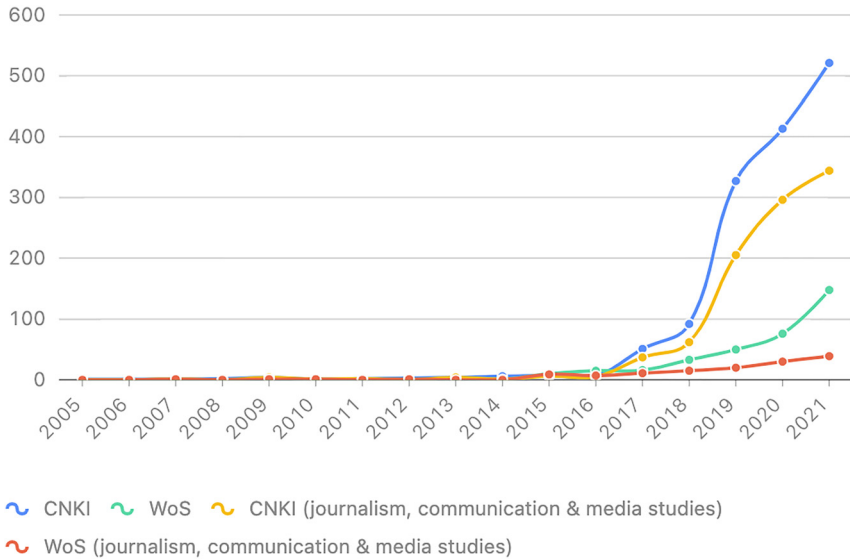
Figure 1: Short video studies publication distribution by year (2005–2021).

2011–2016, 2016–2018, and 2018–present). As researchers working on journalism, communication, and media studies, we also paid special attention to publication distribution specifically referred to articles in those categories. To better explain the development course, the market growth of video sharing sites and short video apps was added in the following detailed descriptions.

3.1.1 2005–2011

In the early 2000s, webcasting, the delivery of audio and video content via the Web, became popular with the penetration of the internet. The presence of participatory content in most of the Webcast services constitutes a distinct feature of the Webcast medium, making it superior to the traditional broadcast medium (Ha and Ganahl 2007). In 2005, the emergence of video sharing sites like YouTube, Vimeo, and Tudou became a landmark of this process and gradually reshaped the production of videos. At this stage, videos on those sites were relatively short. That's why some research introduced the term "short video" initially. Cheng et al. (2007) used YouTube as a case, and found the short videos on the platform have noticeably different characteristics from those of traditional streaming videos, ranging from length and access pattern, to their active life span, ratings, and comments. Meanwhile, many scholars also focused on the changes and impacts

that YouTube has brought to mass communication, and they promoted a broader term "online video".

In China, a national-famous user-generated video, *The Bloody Crime for A Bun* (2006), was taken as a classic example in the early research. This short video was re-edited from the clips of a cinema movie made by an established director. Therefore, it was later sued for piracy. But it still attracted huge audiences. As Yang (2011) reviewed, this short video revealed the desire of the ordinary to express and the clash of values between grassroots and elites. These topics were also noticed by other scholars. The characteristics of this kind of video and its impact on mass media (e.g., Wang 2007; Zeng 2009), and the piracy issues (e.g., Li 2011) were discussed at that time. However, the total number of literature on short video studies in this period was still limited, and terms like "online video", "shared video" and "YouTube" were more popular.

3.1.2 2011–2016

With the popularity of smartphones and mobile networks, the first video-sharing and editing app on record, Viddy, appeared in the United States in 2011. It quickly had its moment because it enabled users to shoot 15-s videos, and add filters and voiceovers before sharing. Later, Twitter also launched a competitor product Vine, while Snapchat updated a new feature for short videos and photo collections named "stories". In China, similar apps like Weesee, Miaopai, and Meipai emerged after 2013 but remained relatively niche. Meanwhile, another app Kuaishou gained a large number of users, especially those from the countryside. Videos edited and beautified by these tools gave people a sense of gratification and visibility.

In 2012, CNNIC mentioned the term "short video" for the first time in a report of internet development in China (CNNIC 2012). After that, a slight increase was seen in short video studies in China, with the number of papers from CNKI exceeding that of WoS in 2014. In the following two years, although the number of studies climbed slowly, some scholars began to study short videos from other perspectives like the changes in the creators, contents and interactions based on different communication technologies and platform mediators. For example, Wang (2013a) pointed out that online videos (including short videos) have dismantled the hegemony of TV, and offered a chance for ordinary people to produce and share videos themselves, thus turning the videos from being a tool to represent "everyday" life to an everyday discourse in which people communicate directly. Another study conducted by Duguay (2016) compared the selfies on Instagram and the short video app Vine in light of its implications for the visibility of LGBTQ people, and found that Vine's broader use expectations enable a variety of discourses to be communicated across publics with an emphasis on creativity and

first-person sharing. Meanwhile, the impact of short videos on journalism, especially gatekeeping, has also been discussed (e.g., Schwalbe et al. 2015).

3.1.3 2016–2018

As is shown in the graph, the study of short videos grew more rapidly since 2016, which reflected the rising market of short video apps. In 2016, along with policy support, capital investment, and user influx, China's short video market showed an "explosive" development. Short video applications like Douyin, Pear Video, Xigua Video, and Huoshan Video appeared and gained popularity. From 2016 to 2018, Chinese short video users grew from 153 million (iiMedia Research 2017) to 648 million, accounting for more than 78% of all Chinese Internet users (CNNIC 2019). During this time, Chinese tech giants were also stepping into the global market. In 2017, ByteDance launched TikTok, an international version of Douyin. In the same year, it acquired Musical.ly, an app created by a mixed team from Shanghai and San Francisco, and had gained huge numbers of teenage users in the United States. In 2017, Kuaishou also launched its international version Kwai which was in high demand in countries like Brazil. Another Chinese company Joyy supported Likee in Singapore, while Alibaba, the digital giant, helped create VMate in India (Table 1).

The blooming of the short video app market drew massive attention from the media and scholars. From 2016 onward, in the Chinese academia, researchers from disciplines such as journalism, communication, economics, sociology, psychology, management, etc., conducted various studies about short videos, showing the potential of diversity in this area. Compared to that, papers from WoS are less in quantity but kept the growth trend likewise. During this period, researchers remained interested in video content, interaction and communication patterns (e.g., Ji and Du 2017), cultures on those platforms (e.g., Chang and Tian 2018; Xu et al. 2016), and the impacts that short videos bring to journalism (e.g., Chang and Wang 2017; Zhang and Liang 2017).

3.1.4 2018–Present

From 2018 to 2019, the number of CNKI papers spiked to a new height of over 300 articles, which might be a response to the market boom in China. The growth was kept in the following years. After 2019, influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese short video users' scale increased rapidly, hitting a new record of 934 million, which is 90.5% of the total internet users in 2021 (CNNIC 2022). While the media organizations were suffering from a shortage of content supply caused by the lockdown, short video users, as participants, produced a large amount of

Table 1: Timetable of major video-sharing sites and short video apps worldwide.

Launch Time	Originated nation	Name of product
2005	U.S.	YouTube
2005	China	Tudou
2006	France	Dailymotion
2009	China	Mikufans (former version of Bilibili)
2011	U.S.	Viddy
2012	China	GIF Kuaishou (former version of Kuaishou)
2013	China	VivaVideo
2013	China	Wesee
2013	China	Miaopai
2013	U.S.	Snapchat launched "Stories"
2013	U.S.	Twitter launched Vine
2014	China	Meipai
2014	Germany and U.S.	Dubsmash
2014	U.S. and China	Musical.ly
2015	India	Sharechat
2015	China	Xiaokaxiu
2015	U.S.	Thriller
2016	China	Douyin (sister app of TikTok)
2016	U.S.	Instagram launched "Stories"
2017	China	Tudou (short video app version)
2017	China	TikTok (acquired Musical.ly)
2017	China	Kwai (international version of Kuaishou)
2017	China and Singapore	Likee
2017	China and India	VMate
2018	U.S.	Facebook launched Lasso
…		

content (Wu and Liang 2020), which was completely different from the time when everyone watched TV for information during the outbreak of SARS. During this period, the short video maintained to be a popular academic topic in China, and its social impacts during the pandemic were especially focused. Starting from 2020, the popularity of live streaming (especially for e-commerce) became another academic hotspot. The increasing speed of short video studies was lowered in journalism, communication and media studies, but lifted in other categories (Figure 2). Discussions about short videos went further. Some Chinese researchers realized that short videos had deeply connected to human practices (Wang and Xu 2020), and even changed human life based on video logic (Peng 2020).

On the other hand, although the total number of short video research from WoS is not as much as that in CNKI, it has maintained a steady increasing trend due
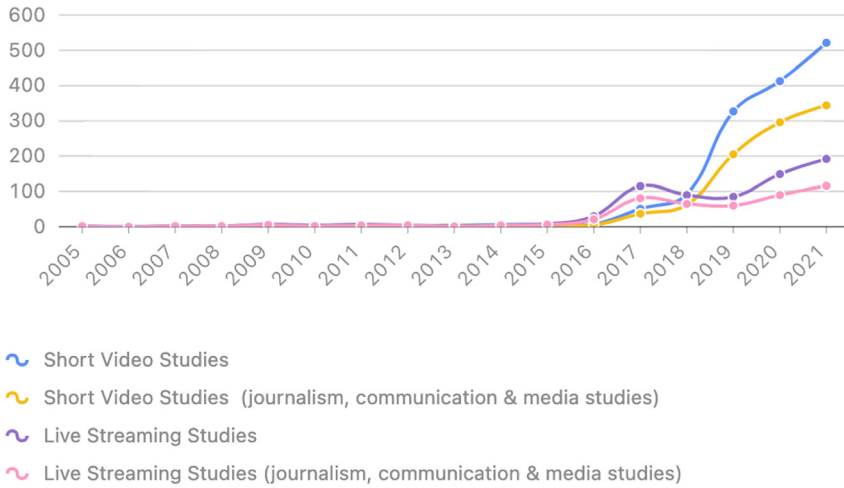
Short Video Studies

Short Video Studies (journalism, communication & media studies)

Live Streaming Studies

Live Streaming Studies (journalism, communication & media studies)

Figure 2: Short video and live streaming studies publication distribution by year (2005–2021).

to the popularity of TikTok worldwide. In 2020, the outbreak of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns contributed to the growth of TikTok's user base and attracted widespread academic interest due to the platform's potential to disseminate health information (Zeng et al. 2021). Researchers from communication studies also focused on the digital culture on TikTok (e.g., Kennedy 2020; Schellewald 2021; Zeng and Abidin 2021; Zulli and Zulli 2020), and its implications on political campaigns and activism among youngsters (e.g., Hautea et al. 2021; Subramanian 2021; Vijay and Gekker 2021). Based on that, other short video apps like Douyin (TikTok) and Kuaishou (Kwai) were introduced to the world. The trend of collaboration among scholars, especially with Asian Pacific scholars, can be seen as well (e.g., Du et al. 2020; Lin and Kloet 2019).

In general, short video studies has been thriving, attracting continuous interests from the academia. As shown in Figure 3, researchers from the U.S. and China significantly contributed to this field. These two countries' names are at the center of the publication distribution network, and the size of the circles reflect the number of publications. Accordingly, video sharing sites and short video applications from those two countries are also leading the global market.

3.2 Main Perspectives and Core Issues of Short Video Studies

The rapid growth of the global short video market greatly influenced this research field, which was reflected in the number of papers, as well as the diversity of

Figure 3: Top 10 countries in WoS publications of short video studies.

research issues. Figures 4 and 5 show the central clusters of keywords associated with the papers in our dataset. The statistics are auto-generated by CiteSpace under the g-index algorithm ($k = 30$).

The graphs suggest that the current short video scholarship from WoS is dominated by discussion about studies of short video apps or platforms (clusters 0,
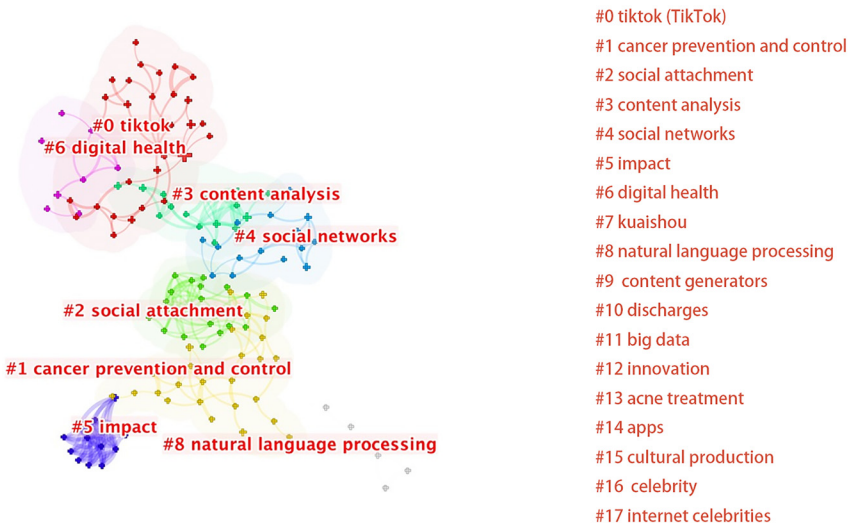

#0 tiktok (TikTok)
#1 cancer prevention and control
#2 social attachment
#3 content analysis
#4 social networks
#5 impact
#6 digital health
#7 kuaishou
#8 natural language processing
#9 content generators
#10 discharges
#11 big data
#12 innovation
#13 acne treatment
#14 apps
#15 cultural production
#16 celebrity
#17 internet celebrities

Figure 4: Major clusters of keywords of short video studies from WoS.

#0 短视频 (short videos)
#1 short video
#2 媒介融合 (media convergence)
#3 抖音 (Douyin)
#4 快手 (Kuaishou)
#5 传播 (communication)
#6 社交媒体 (social media)
#7 李子柒 (Li Ziqi)
#8 著作权 (copyright)
#9 tik tok (TikTok)
#10 媒体融合 (media integration)
#11 新媒体 (new media)
#12 影响因素 (influencing factors)
#13 spoc (single point of contact)
#14 乡村 (countryside)
#15 discourse reconstruction
#16 foreign online celebrities
#17 smartization
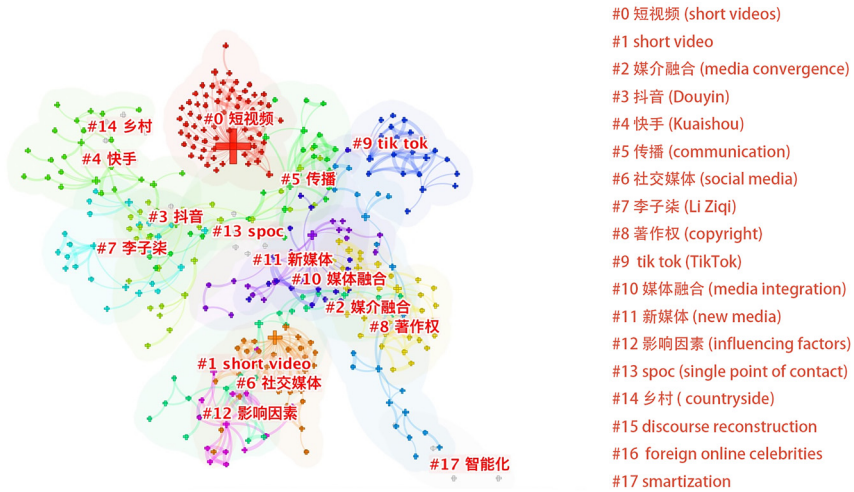
Figure 5: Major clusters of keywords of short video studies from CNKI (with translation). It should be noted that papers in CNKI are sometimes accompanied by both Chinese and English abstracts, so some of the clusters are in English. We just translated those in Chinese into English.

7 and 14), health information (clusters 1, 6 and 13), user behavior and content generation (clusters 9, 15, 16 and 17), social impacts (clusters 2, 4, 5 and 12), and technologies (clusters 8 and 11) of the platforms.

Some mentioned features are similar in CNKI papers, like the interests on platforms (clusters 3, 4 and 9), content generators (clusters 7 and 16), and social influence (clusters 12 and 14). In contrast, Chinese scholars paid more attention on the media attributes (clusters 5, 6, 11 and 13) and variations (clusters 2, 10, 15 and 17) of short videos. Issues of copyright (cluster 8) were also discussed. The science mappings offer a quick look at the foci but are not comprehensive enough.

Based on this initial bibliometric mapping and a thematic analysis, we merged all the clusters of research topic issues into four main research perspectives: the media perspective, the economic perspective, the cultural perspective, and the discursive perspective (Table 2). It should be pointed out that these research directions are not mutually exclusive and are inter-related; and some papers covered more than one issue. We added a few articles published in 2022 to illustrate the latest development.

Table 2: Merging of main research perspectives and core issues.

Perspectives	Clusters of core research issues
Media perspective	Characteristics of short video and its platforms
	Media convergence and information dissemination
	Media usage, overusage and misusage
Economic perspective	Digital marketing and internet celebrities
	Platformization and labor issues
	Copyright and attribution issues
Cultural perspective	Memes and youth culture
	Audiovisualization of social culture
	Cultural exchanges and convergence
Discursive perspective	Everyday discourse and aesthetic issues
	Identity discourse and self-presentation
	Political discourse and digital empowerment

3.2.1 Media Perspective

The short video was recognized as a new media in many publications, especially by researchers from communication and media studies and some medical or psychology research. In the papers from our dataset, three main issues can be seen from this perspective: characteristics of short video and its platforms, media convergence and information dissemination, and lastly, media usage, overusage and misusage.

3.2.1.1 Characteristics of Short Video and Its Platforms

In the early stage of short video studies, researchers were eager to find out what short video is and its features by comparing with other kinds of media. There are two main contrast routes: with former audiovisual media and with other social media.

In comparisons to former audiovisual media like films or television, some researchers pointed out the difference in formats like shorter video length (Xie 2014; Zhang et al. 2015) and vertical layout (Su 2018; Zhou and Jin 2018) of short videos. The inner traits were also emphasized. Experimental research demonstrated significant effects of TikTok or Douyin videos' humor and first-person camera view on the viewer perceptions of immersion, social presence and entertainment (Wang 2020c). Apart from that, by adopting the concept of "Textualization of Images" (Stiegler 2009) proposed by Bernard Stiegler, Wang (2013b) argued that short video is textualized, which is different from the structure of TV flow and allows people to capture and arrange images and videos freely as means

of expressions. Meanwhile, some researchers noted that, short videos had simplified the production of videos, which aroused the instinct of communication in ordinary people, showing their all walks of life, and being visible as "the un-famous" (Lu and Lai 2020; Pan 2020). In that sense, the short video is revolutionary, because it truly achieved the democratization of expression (Yu 2019).

Researchers also compared the short video platforms with other social media. Some believed that the short video apps are decentralized (Chang and Du 2017), which forms an open, flat and equal structure of communication network (Dong and Tian 2018), and enables information to be disseminated in a timely, fast and efficient way (Min et al. 2018; Zhao and Wu 2017). They believed that these traits are the same as other internet-based media. Some other scholars whereas emphasized the characteristics of particular short video apps. For example, Shao (2018) took Douyin as a case, and discussed the "grassroots-ness" in the video content and the embeddedness of AI technologies in the platform. Some later research also found different traits between short video apps, for instance, the unlikeness in the way that Douyin and Kuaishou make use of feed flow based on algorithms (Qi and Li 2021), and the similarities and distinctions in developing strategies and plat-formization of Douyin and TikTok (Kaye et al. 2021a). Numerous research also took the method of comparison and revealed different cultural or social implications on distinctive platforms, which will be discussed in other parts.

3.2.1.2 Media Convergence and Information Dissemination

From the media perspective, many scholarly conversations from communication and media studies focused on the challenges or opportunities that short videos and their platforms had or would bring to journalism. Some research pointed out that user-generated videos were impacting the press, improving the timeliness of news delivery (Qu and Li 2018), and providing additional information or even dominating the news (Fernández-Martínez 2019). The short video platforms are also changing the news production. By analyzing 19 news media and programs on TikTok, Vázquez-Herrero et al. (2020) found that the news media are adapting to the logic of this platform, in a context marked by the incidental consumption of news, virality and the intermediation of technology in access to information, to grab younger generations.

Under these circumstances, media convergence (or media integration) became a heated issue in short video studies, especially in CNKI papers. A large amount of research used case-by-case analysis to figure out how traditional media organizations could make use of short videos and the platforms in the news coverage (e.g., Chang and Wang 2017; Huang and Yin 2017; Ren and Xiao 2020). Some noted a paradigm shift from traditional audiovisual media to short videos (Zhang 2017). A content analysis conducted by Zhang and Liang (2017) suggests that most of the

editing techniques established by the film pioneers and still worked in the TV news era do not positively affect the viewing of short videos. However, the new features in the editing of short videos are not theorized like the montage theories of film-editing, which needs further discussion.

At the same time, several studies also discussed the side effects of emotional arousing and fragmentation of news narration by short videos (Yan and Zhang 2019; Zhang and Peng 2019), and the challenges from technologies like the recommendation and hashtag system in these platforms (Yang 2019a). As Schwalbe et al. (2015) pointed out, social media like Instagram, Vine, Snapchat, etc., has formed a stream of visuals, which has changed the gatekeeping process. And the visuality, replicability and imitability of the short videos also made it more challenging to eliminate rumors (Luo and Lin 2021). The issues around misinformation and disinformation on short video apps are widely discussed in recent studies, especially regarding the health information of COVID-19 (e.g., Basch et al. 2021; Baumel et al. 2021; Sederholm et al. 2021) and other diseases or medical treatments (e.g., Chen et al. 2021a; Porter et al. 2021; Xu et al. 2021), as well as the political information during elections (e.g., Rogers 2021). These studies may indicate that the risks of misinformation or disinformation on the short video apps were severe, but some other research also saw the potential of debunking hoaxes on these platforms (e.g., Alonso López et al. 2021; Southwick et al. 2021). Drawing on a digital ethnography project, Southerton (2021) found that healthcare workers were using playfulness, memes, and other platform elements like lip-syncing, alongside familiar techniques of highlighting their expertise and relatability for information-sharing on TikTok, which may shed light on the current infodemic problem.

3.2.1.3 Media Usage, Overusage and Misusage

Many studies, particularly those from psychology, paid attention to people's motivations and behaviors in using short video apps. By applying phenomenology and conducting semi-structured interviews, Du et al. (2020) found that consuming and creating touristic fantasies, hashtagging a #wonderfuljourney through sharing, and storing one's meaningful life in a 'public' diary are three primary reasons for users' engagement in TikTok travel videos. Some studies based on surveys also suggested similar results: users' motivations for archiving, self-expression, social interaction, and entertainment are significant contributors to TikTok usage behaviors (Bossen and Kottasz 2020; Omar and Dequan 2020; Shao and Lee 2020). Another research further explored four distinct gratifications for TikTok use: socially rewarding self-presentation, trendiness, escapist addiction, and found: Novelty was the most relevant motive for using TikTok across all users; Age was positively correlated with trendiness and negatively correlated with

escapist addiction; TikTok videos were driven by socially rewarding self-presentations (Scherr and Wang 2021).

Meanwhile, the current studies also highlighted the overuse and addiction issues in the realm of short videos. According to a survey conducted in 2019, social interaction anxiety and social isolation were positively related to interpersonal attachment and that personalization and entertainment were positively related to site attachment. Interpersonal and site attachments had significant positive influences on addiction to short video apps (Zhang et al. 2019). The tendencies were also noticed by some descriptive discussions (e.g., Shao 2018) and qualitative research (e.g., Yang et al. 2021), but still need more empirical evidence. As Montag et al. (2021) had put up, there are many unexplored research questions related to TikTok use, it is high time to strengthen research efforts to better understand TikTok use and whether certain aspects of its use result in detrimental behavioral effects. At the same time, the users' engagement motives and behaviors on other short video apps should be noted as well.

Misuses of short videos were also discussed, especially in the CNKI scholarship. According to some papers, due to the lowered criteria of video-making and lack of regulations in the early stage (Gu and Wu 2018; Ji an Du 2017), short video platforms have caused many problems in China, such as the production or dissemination of inappropriate videos (including violent, vulgar and illegal contents, etc.), invasion or disclosure of others' privacy, consumption of vulnerable groups, imitation of high-risk behaviors, and lack of protection of the teenagers (Jiao and Tang 2018; Jing 2018; Tu 2019; Zhang 2019b). To solve these problems, researchers mainly advised from two aspects. Firstly, they emphasized the regulatory role of government and called on the establishment of a collaborative regulation model with multiple actors involving the users, platforms and governers (Feng and Xu 2020; Li 2017; Lv and Wang, 2018; Zheng and Wu 2021). Secondly, technologies like artificial intelligence and blockchain were also suggested for platform regulation and content management (Yang and Yu 2022; Yu and Gu 2021).

3.2.2 Economic Perspective

The short video market in China has been growing for years. In 2016, with Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent, ByteDance and other Chinese tech giants taking part in the short video market competition, various apps and mobile tools had sprung up, attracting talents from all over the country. This marked 2016 as the "kickstart year of short video" in China (iiMedia Research 2017). The quick growth of short video apps in the Chinese market has triggered various discussions about their economic values. Some researchers even proposed that short video is a new kind of "productivity", which is based on the logic of visualization (Peng 2019) or the internet flow

(Ji 2019). In parallel, with the global popularity of TikTok in 2019, similar discussions emerged in the English-language scholarly community. We concluded the research topics into three major groups: digital marketing and Internet celebrities, platformization and labor issues, and also copyright and attribution issues.

3.2.2.1 Digital Marketing and Internet Celebrities

Digital marketing in short video apps like TikTok and Douyin is often discussed in the papers of business marketing and management in our dataset. Wang and Lv (2019) summarized the new features like the liveness of content and stronger interactions in short video advertisement, and argued that a new model of branding narrative is rising on these platforms. Similarly, some other researchers also noticed that the popularity of TikTok was leading to a shift in the consumer culture where authentic brand narratives are valued and self-brand connections are more important than ever (Kunkel et al. 2019). In a large-scale field study, Mulier et al. (2021) demonstrated that mobile vertical video ads increase consumer interest and engagement compared to horizontal video ads. Then, in two experimental studies, they further found that mobile users process vertical video ads more fluently than horizontal video ads, and younger mobile users (Generation Z) process mobile vertical video ads more fluently than older Generations X and Y. Furthermore, some researchers expanded the topics to discuss about how different industries (such as publishing, tourism, etc.) can use short videos for marketing (Deng and Zhao 2019; Liu and Yang 2018; Wang and Xu 2021), and encourage consumers' engagement and sharing (Si and Zhao 2019).

Besides, short video celebrities were another important issue under this perspective. Case study and content analysis are the most commonly used methods in these papers, for example, case studies of Papi Jiang (Xie 2017) and Liziqi (e.g., Sang and Tao 2020), and a content study on videos posted on Douyin, which revealed the interactions between the strategies that e-commerce influencers use (product focus, engagement) and responses that audiences make (positive identification, negative identification) in the context of digital promotions (Hung et al. 2021). In China, the research about online influencers are often tied with development issues. By interpreting the case of "Seven Sisters" in Guizhou, a group of Kuaishou influencers from an underdeveloped province, Luan and Zhang (2020) pointed out that short videos are economically valuable, not only to the online influencers themselves but also to the development of where they live. Similar views can be found in other studies about influencers on either Douyin (e.g., COVRC 2019), Kuaishou (e.g., Liu and Zhou 2019; Wang and Li 2020) or other platforms (e.g., Li and Yu 2020). And some recent studies of live-streaming for e-commerce (particularly phenomenal during the pandemic of COVID-19 in

China), also emphasized the visibility and economic promotion in rural areas by the online influencers and the platforms (e.g., Li and Zhao 2020; Tong et al. 2021).

Moreover, several studies also noticed the trend of PUGC (Professional User Generated Content) and MCNs (multi-channel networks) alongside the rise of on-line celebrities in the short video market. According to a report from CNNIC (2019), the short video platforms in China are in close cooperation with MCNs, which improved the quality of UGC videos by the influence of PUGC ones. Another report by Thomala (2022) further found that, in 2021, the size of the MCN market in China reached around 33.5 billion yuan, roughly doubling that of 2019. As Xu (2020) pointed out, MCNs, based on the mixture of UGC and PUGC, are competitive players in the advertising market and media industry chains. Considering that MCNs on TikTok are also growing fast, research probing those questions might be demanded in the future.

3.2.2.2 Platformization and Labor Issues

The issues about labor and platformization are emerging in short video studies both in WoS and CNKI publications. Theories of creative workers were used in some of the papers. For example, Lin and Kloet (2019) investigated the platform-ization of Kuaishou and its socio-economic context, and found it enables the diverse, often marginalized, Chinese living outside the urban centers of the country to become unlikely creative workers, who have become self-employed creative, digital entrepreneurs. In another study, which is based on a large-scale questionnaire survey of more than 12,000 creative workers on Douyin, He et al. (2020) found that, being creative workers, their sense of happiness and gaining has been enhanced, and that generally transformed themselves into creative entre-preneurs, and promoted the development of creative industry and innovative society.

Other theories of digital labor were also applied in many studies. Some scholars proposed that the short video users are transformed into prosumers whose viewing behaviors have been transformed into digital labor, and they have become "digital laborers" of the capital (Deng and Ma 2021; Lv and He 2019) and platforms are becoming "factories of social networking" (Li and Bao 2020). Using the cases of internet celebrities on Kuaishou, Tan et al. (2020) also asserted that they ultimately provide free and easily exploitable labor to the platform under a facade of innocuous play. However, another study, also focused on the playbor issue on Kuaishou, argued a third path other than "exploitation" or "empower-ment", to address the complexity of digital labor production characterized by a collaborative and symbiotic relationship between social media platforms and users (Zhou and Liu 2021).

Besides, a few research studies further conceptualized some of the niche topics in digital labor issues, like the "digital child labor" presented by kid influencers and child short video users (e.g., Huang 2021; Zhang 2020). And by applying in-depth interviews with creative workers on Chinese short video apps (Douyin and Kuaishou) and drawing on the concept of "gig economics", Liu et al. (2021) argued that, being deeply controlled by the algorithm-driven platforms, creative workers are going through a transition of "digital gig workers" to "digital ghost workers", a metaphor of their precarious labor and unstable life experience.

In conclusion, many scholarly discussions in this cluster focused on the co-structuring of labor, capital and technology in the platformization of short video apps, but some offered comprehensions from other perspectives. Drawing on the comparison of Douyin and TikTok by app walkthrough method, Kaye et al. (2021a) argued that the co-evolution of the two apps is a new paradigm of global platform expansion that differs from strategies of regionalization adopted by previous major social media platforms. Apart from that, some scholars were concerned about platform governance. For instance, Ji (2019) proposed that short video production is moving away from institutionalized or structured political and economic relations, so a management model engaged with multi-regulatory forces such as the government, enterprises and users is needed.

3.2.2.3 Copyright and Attribution Issues

In the papers from CNKI, the copyright issues about short videos were highlighted by legal scholarship. As mentioned above, the short video apps not only simplified the production of videos and enabled more people to share their thoughts and moments, but also raised the problems of copyright. No matter in the early case of *The Bloody Crime for A Bun* (2006) or some later ones, how to differentiate the "derivative work" from the original work and what criteria should be considered were discussed among scholars (Dong and Shao 2018). In 2021, boycotts and lawsuits from film & TV production companies and stream media against short video platforms were seen on the rise in China (CNNIC 2021), which made these issues more urgent.

Researchers have proposed three kinds of solution to the copyright violation problem. Firstly, the copyright law in China should be improved in the legal identification of the originality and fair use in short videos (Chen 2019b). In that sense, the classification of short videos is necessary, and those with low originality should be excluded from copyright protection (Sun 2019; Zhang 2019a). Secondly, the legal responsibility of the platforms was considered as well. For instance, Tian and Guo (2019) argued that, short video platforms should take more responsibility besides performing the notification and takedown process to balance the relationship between creative incentive and piracy prevention. Lastly, some studies

emphasized the power of technologies in copyright protection, such as a content filtering system based on the MD5 database (Lu 2018) or a digital fingerprinting system like YouTube's Content ID system (Tian and Guo 2019).

Similar discussions in WoS papers were also emerging and primarily focusing on the case of TikTok. Some research and review articles voiced concerns about the unauthorized use of music and videos on TikTok, and suggested that legal remedies should be strengthened (e.g., Shutsko 2020; Bayley 2021; Salsabilax et al. 2021). An empirical study conducted by Kaye et al. (2021b) confirmed that the messy sociotechnical practices – creators reusing, mixing, mashing, and sampling content on TikTok, are further complicated by platform architectures, and make it more difficult to give proper attribution, so studies on attribution is more instrumental in complex and messy platform economies than dominant copyright scholarship suggests. And as TikTok and other short video platforms become more established on copyright as creative industries, studies concerning those questions will be increasingly important.

3.2.3 Cultural Perspective

The cultural impact of short videos and their platforms is also significant in the current scholarly conversations. From this perspective, three significant research clusters emerged: memes and youth culture, audio-visualization of social culture, and cultural exchanges and convergence. It is worth noting that the first cluster was made up of both WoS and CNKI papers in our dataset, but papers from CNKI discussed topics from the other clusters with higher frequency.

3.2.3.1 Memes and Youth Culture

A number of papers have considered memes as an important clue in understanding short videos and their cultural impact. In an early study focused on Douyin, Chang and Tian (2018) proposed that memes – the consequence of individuals' imitation behaviors- are an important prerequisite for producing and disseminating short videos. Tech-giant capital and its marketing intentions fostered the growth of short video memes. Another study also indicated that the principles of mimesis— imitation and replication—are encouraged by the platform's logic and design (the user signup process and default page, icons and video-editing features, and user and video creation norms), and contribute to what they theorize as "imitation publics" on TikTok (Zulli and Zulli 2020). Although a few papers illustrated these memetic features by the theory of "interactive ritual chains", the interactions and imitations on short video apps are also emphasized as basic principles (e.g., Guo and Meng 2018; Li 2019).

Memes were also considered as a critical element in understanding the youth culture in the cultural context of short videos. By analyzing the case of #OkBoomer memes on TikTok, Zeng and Abidin (2021) found that the platform was encouraging memetic remixes – meme videos, mostly featuring lip-syncs, dance routines, and skits, have become one of the defining features of TikTok, and young TikTokers were utilizing the short videos to advocate for various causes, even including political advocacy. In another word, memetic remix is an essential characteristic of youth culture on TikTok. Some other researchers also noticed other features of TikTok teenage culture. For example, by focusing on Charli D'Amelio, a teenage influencer on TikTok, Kennedy (2020) indicated a transformation of girls' "bedroom culture" from a space previously conceptualized as private and safe from judgement, to one of public visibility, surveillance and evaluation.

Meanwhile, scholars proposed another term "tuwei" (e.g., Zhou and Liu 2021) to describe the memetic culture and youth culture of Kuaishou. In Chinese, "tuwei" contains a mixed flavor of non-fashionable, non-pretty, less-developed or even a little barbaric. Yang (2019b) argued that "tuwei" memes are special texts in the consumer society for satisfying people's curiosity and appreciation of ugliness with strong post-modern characteristics. The "tuwei" culture was regarded as a subculture in some papers. By creating "tuwei" memes, young Kuaishouers had a chance to transform their cultural production into actual income, and even merge it into the mainstream culture (Zhou 2019). In short, research has confirmed that memes are very important for comprehending short videos and their impact on youth culture.

3.2.3.2 Audio-Visualization of Social Culture

In China, short video users are no longer limited to young people but from all age groups. Therefore, some scholars have noticed that the audiovisual nature of short videos has already influenced the mainstream social culture. Chinese scholar Sun (2020) argued that the short video is "a powerful visual force in constructing social reality". By borrowing the famous phrase "Je pense, donc Je suisof (Cogito, ergo sum)" from René Descartes, she proposed that short videos are cultivating an audio-visualization trend in social culture and rebuilding the relationship between humans and the environments – "I film, therefore I am; We film, therefore cities exist". Another research by Lin (2019) had similar opinion, she pointed out that the short video is visually centric and is "the external visual representation of image narration, immersive scene experience and new social construction of people in image era".

However, this cultural shift of audiovisual has aroused scholarly concerns. Some researchers worried about the issue of reality in this audio-visualized

culture. For instance, Wang (2020b) conducted qualitative research through a semi-structured interview with 18 short video creators in Bilibili, another video sharing site in China, and found the trend of "online performance" in their personalized videos. In another research, Gu (2020) further pointed out that short videos had quietly reshaped the structure and landscape of social culture, and driven individuals to form an "availability bias" – the images presented in short videos replaced the reality, bringing uncertainty to the social culture. The grand impacts of short videos on the social culture may need more explications and interpretations in the future.

3.2.3.3 Cultural Exchanges and Convergence

The phenomena of cultural exchanges in short video apps and video sharing tools in general were also discussed in scholarship. For instance, by drawing on different short video cases, Dong and Tian (2018) argued that short videos can enhance the "commonness of decoding" among audiences from different cultural backgrounds, and contribute to the forming of consensus. Similar views can be found in many later research articles in CSSCI with the case of Li Ziqi, a Chinese short video creator who records her traditional Chinese way of living and has over 16 million followers on YouTube. For example, Xin and Ye (2020), used a crawler to collect all the comments from Li Ziqi's ten most viewed videos and found that short videos had offered a more understandable approach by audio-visualized symbols and a more interactive space for cross-cultural communication. Moreover, Zeng and Shi (2020) argued that Li Ziqi visually and artistically reconstructs the "pastoral life" with short videos, "massaging" global viewers suffering from modernity anxiety in terms of visual perception, spiritual pleasure and aesthetic enjoyment. As Ji (2020) added, social media platforms, including video-sharing sites and apps, were not objectively neutral but produced specific content, emotions, texts, and relationships. Therefore, the phenomenon of Li Ziqi highlighted the platform-based features of cross-cultural communication in this era. Besides, the cases of foreign online celebrities making short videos about different cultures from different countries were analyzed by other papers, and the process of decoding visual symbols was considered an advantage of short videos (e.g., Xiao and Zhang 2020).

At the same time, some short video studies also paid attention to the cultural exchanges between urban culture and rural culture (e.g., Chen 2019a; Zhou 2019). By observing the Kuaishou usage by a group of young villagers in Qinghai, China, Ji (2018) found that Kuaishou has merged the cultures of cities and villages and dismantled the long-existed dichotomy between urban and rural areas. On the other hand, criticism and doubts came along. For instance, Yang (2019a) argued that the mainstreaming of rural culture and youth culture in short video

communities is only an "illusionary consciousness" under the manipulation of the capital. By drawing on the term "poor image" proposed by Hito Steyerl, a German artist, he interpreted that UGC short videos are imitations of professionally produced videos based on the audio-visual techniques on the platforms like filters, voice-overs, lip-sync, etc., and the superficial cultural convergence cannot fill out the reality gaps between mainstream culture and subculture, urban culture and rural culture.

3.2.4 Discursive Perspective

Apart from the perspectives of media, economic, and culture, some researchers reflected on the social embeddedness of short videos from the perspective of discourse and media philosophy, arguing that the short videos are becoming a new discursive practice, and has a profound impact on the whole society. The current literature covers several specific research topics, which can be grouped into three main aspects: everyday discourse and aesthetic issues, identity discourse and self-presentation, and political discourse and digital empowerment.

3.2.4.1 Everyday Discourse and Aesthetic Issues

A number of CNKI papers from humanities & arts studies noted the everyday discourse and aesthetic issues on short video apps. Applying the "everyday life" theories of Henri Lefebvre, Agnes Heller, Michel de Certeau, etc., Liu (2022) argued that the large-scale usage of short videos is a "massive collective human video recording campaign", which makes the short video images approaching all the possibility of everyday life. The boundaries between video space-time and real space-time are no longer clear-cut. In other words, the distinction between short video practice and everyday life is disappearing, and short video has become a new discursive practice of everyday life (Zeng and Yu 2022).

Drawing on the term "aestheticization" proposed by Wolfgang Welsch (1996), Some researchers further pointed out short videos' aesthetic significance: "the real scene is de-realized by the intervention of images, and the Spatio-temporal scene of everyday life is aestheticized" (Jiang and Fan 2020). Liu and Liang (2019) argued that short videos allow us to pay attention to the little moments of life, thus making the "life" an aesthetic object, and connotng a process of disenchanting and then re-enchanting our daily life. Following this "aestheticization" path, the reality of life becomes an "everyday vista" that can be viewed. Therefore, as Wang and Xu (2020) proposed, the short video had broken the boundaries between art and life, providing ordinary people with the opportunity to show the aesthetics in their lives, and allowing the aesthetic spirit and artistic creation hidden in everyday life to transcend the ordinary.

On the other hand, the arts are getting more like everyday life. This was particularly evident during the COVID-19 lockdowns. For example, in the live streaming of *One World: Together at Home (2020)*, the ordinary life moments of the celebrities and artists were revealed to the public – it was totally different from the staged shows, and arts were returning to the everyday discourse (Wang and Xu 2020). Feng (2020) also noticed the tendency of the massive spontaneous and participatory creative outpouring of individual and collaborative artworks on the short video apps like Kuaishou, Douyin, TikTok, and WeChat public accounts during the pandemic, and claimed that it had opened up a temporary space of expression that both offset the lack of information and enabled alternative ways of understanding and expression about the crisis. In a word, the remixed discourse of art and everyday life deserves the attention of future research.

3.2.4.2 Identity Discourse and Self-Presentation

The second cluster in the discursive perspective is about identity discourse, which is mainly reflected in the users' self-presentation behaviors. For example, Izotova et al. (2021) used methods of discursive, hermeneutic and linguistic analysis, etc., to analyze the problems and features of the discursive practice of TikTokers, Instagramers, and YouTubers. Their study had convinced that utilizing hashtags, social integration activities such as challenges, and specific vocabularies is essential for them to express and form their users' identities. Some papers had also confirmed that phenomenon by applying memes theories, and we have already reviewed them in the paragraphs of culture perspective because they further analyzed the cultural consequences.

Some other studies further analyzed the issue of short video users' self-presentation and gender identity, predominantly the female and LGBTQ+ groups. For the female identity discursive practice, some researchers argue that gender stereotypes about women still exist in short videos and that women's bodies are still being gazed at, objectified, and commodified. Women's only way to gain attention in short videos is to present the roles that meet their social expectations (Chen 2022). Another study that analyzed the female artists on TikTok also indicated that even with the hashtag #feministartists to identify themselves, a focus on feminist artists is restrictive for consolidating artists' efforts to pursue specific professional, social, political, and economic agendas through art (Gerlieb 2021). However, some scholars argued that women were not entirely disadvantaged in the gender identity constructed by short videos. They were able to use the short video platforms as a discursive space to show their agency and self-existences (Wang 2020a). For example, with a content analysis of the videos uploaded by Chinese mothers under the hashtag #workfromhomewithchildcare on Douyin, Han and Kuipers (2021) found that by mocking at the motherly identities of

themselves, an online joking culture and spaces for liberating females were created. And by analyzing videos created by and/or featuring African women and girls, Akinbola (2022) further argued that these content creators had practiced a discourse of "digital disbelonging", while explicitly rejecting the forms of gendered surveillance, discipline and shame that shape their day to day lives.

As for the LGBTQ+ people, the existing research has analyzed various video-sharing and short video platforms, and has confirmed that short videos are powerful discursive space for this community. In a comparative study conducted by Duguay (2016) shows Vine, a short video app, encourage a variety of discourses to be communicated across the public with an emphasis on creative, first-person sharing for the LGBTQ+ people, whereas Instagram cannot. Recently, empirical research has also found an overarching theme of TikTok as a supportive community for the gender and sexual minority youth (Hiebert and Kortes-Miller 2021). Using the method of CTDA (critical technocultural discourse analysis), Avdeeff (2021) examined and compared the technocultural discourse in response (over 20,000 tweets and 100 TikTok videos) to Taylor Swift's LGBTQ+ allyship in *You Need to Calm Down (2020)* on TikTok and Twitter, and indicated TikTok's de-politicized mimetic creativity compared to Twitter's hegemonic interpretations. The research articles above revealed that short videos and their apps have the ability to spark future research on identity and gender issues.

3.2.4.3 Political Discourse and Digital Empowerment

Lastly, the political discourse and digital empowerment were also seen in the papers from our dataset. Some researchers pointed out the unique role of short videos in building an entertaining political discourse. For example, by using the app walkthrough method and a content analysis of over 800 videos collected from the "Positive Energy" (in Chinese "zheng neng liang") section of Douyin, Chen et al. (2021b), argued that Douyin promoted the Chinese state's political agenda by promoting a new form of playful patriotism online. In another three studies of Spain, India, and France, respectively, the "politainment" phenomenon on TikTok was also observed. And the playfulness of TikTok was considered the basics of its political discourse and participation (Cervi and Marín-Lladó 2021; Vijay and Gek-ker 2021), and "considering that present trends in usage rates suggest that the short-video is the future of social media, we might expect an increase in poli-tainment content" (Cervi et al. 2021).

Besides, a new kind of short video of "political services and affairs" (PAS) has emerged in China. Government agencies, including the Ministry of Transport of the People's Republic of China and the News Centre of State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) have set up short video accounts and uploaded such PAS short videos (*Internet Communication Magazine* 2019). A large

number of researchers have studied this form of short videos, especially during the pandemic, and argued that it is a new way of political discursive practice with emotional appeal and affinity (e.g., Ning and Yang 2021; Tang et al. 2020; Zhang and Yin 2019). It is worth noting that a new form of e-commerce live streaming anchored by government officials was also popular at the same time and attracted similar scholarly conversations (e.g., Deng 2020; Qi and Lei 2021).

The rise of short videos has created a new opportunity for the empowerment of people on online platforms (Vizcaíno and Aguaded 2022). In the China context, some researchers focused on how short video empowers people in the countryside and contribute to rural revitalization. For example, Liu and Zhou (2019) noted that short video creation provided people rural area with actual income, and in return, provided materials for short video production. In this process, rural residents and the areas both benefited from the short videos. This digital empowerment crossed the boundaries between the virtual and the real, and was ultimately reflected in the development of the regional economy and local community (Liu 2018; Wang and Li 2020). Meanwhile, some other research focused on the activism on short video platforms, for example, the climate activism (e.g., Hautea et al. 2021), anti-caste activism (e.g., Subramanian 2021) and consumer activism (e.g., Yu 2021), proving the potential of digital empowerment of short videos.

However, present research has pointed out that the discursive expression of the short video is fragmented (Chen and Chen 2022; Lv and He 2019), irrational (Wang and Liu 2019), and emotional driven (Zhang et al. 2019), which make it risky of being magnified or even manipulated. An interdisciplinary study of online public events on Douyin showed that negative emotions were easily evoked, diffused, and amplified in short videos. It reflected that people's true demands, realistic expectations, and emotional expressions are driven by their judgments of moral principles, resistance to identity oppositions, and the contagion of social emotions (Tian and Zhang 2021). Since the popularization of online video sites such as YouTube, many studies have followed the 'social media-emotional-political' approach to demonstrate that online video platforms hugely impact people's thoughts, feelings, and even political attitudes (e.g., Buchanan and Murray 2012; Cavazos-Rehg et al. 2016). It is believed that in the future, the short videos will be an essential academic growth area within this research field (Zhao and Li 2022).

In all, researchers have noticed the significance of the discursive practice of short videos. It is now becoming a new "social language" (Yu et al. 2020) or a "language of society" (Wang 2013a), shaping a new way of constructing social reality based on sensation (audio–visual) and emotion, as well as the technologies embedded on the platforms, and exerting a constant influence on the way how people are thinking as well as how ideology is evolving.

4 Conclusion and Discussion

By reviewing the literature on short video studies in the past two decades, we found that with the growing influence of short videos as a global medium and continuously penetrating human life, the discussions on short videos have become broader and deeper. First, it is reflected in the number of publications, which has increased from zero to hundreds and thousands in the Web of Science Core Collection and CNKI (CSSCI and CSCD) databases. Then the researchers' academic backgrounds are getting more diversified, ranging from social science (communication studies, sociology, management studies, economics, laws, psychology, etc.) to arts & humanities (anthropology, cultural studies, films, etc.) and science & engineering (medical science, computer engineering, etc.), which brings more topics and perspectives into short video studies. Lastly, the way people consider short videos is changing. At the individual level, people's usage of short videos was not only understood from the perspective of consumption, but also interpreted as a complicated process of human's interaction with the technology of the platforms. At the grand societal level, scholars have gradually realized that short videos are more than a new way of communicating but a critical factor in the structural change of video discursive power that brings visibility to ordinary people. This structural discursive change has greatly influenced politics, economics, culture, and social structure, and it will apparently continue the impact in the future.

Differences between Chinese and English literature can be seen as well. First, considering the huge market and common use of short videos in China, Chinese scholars had more chances to publish related papers, and the publication number in turn has obviously surpassed those in English. Second, about the research topics, a large number of Chinese researchers concentrated on the media function of short videos and focused on what changes it had brought to the media environment and how traditional media could make use of them, as well as the copyright issues and cross-cultural communication. In contrast, English scholarship paid more attention to online activism, health communication, gender issues, subculture, etc. Third, the research subjects, Douyin and Kuaishou, were the main research subjects among Chinese scholars, but TikTok was targeted more frequently by scholars from other countries, which is understandable because TikTok is more internationally influential and accessible outside China. Finally, in terms of research methods, case study and content analysis were most commonly used both in the Chinese and English literature, but papers from WoS showed more diversity in applying quantitative methods and online ethnographic research.

In general, the present short video studies have contributed significantly to academia. In the realm of journalism, communication, and media studies, they

have accelerated the self-renewal of online media and visual media research, merging the two fields in theories, cases, and methods. In that sense, the issue of visibility in previous online media studies has been broadened—online videos and short videos have literally made people visible and sensible. Meanwhile, the new visualization of digital empowerment framework replaced the traditional symbolic and textual analysis paradigm of visual studies. The short video studies have also impacted media practice and enriched news production and journalism studies. And by attracting scholars from different research categories, the short video studies started to adopt new methods like big data crawling, AI-based emotion analysis, online ethnography, etc., and promoted interdisciplinary knowledge flow and cross-disciplinary research. How will short video studies develop in the future? We suggest the following agenda:

Firstly, current research on short videos mainly follows the paradigms of online communication and media studies. A small number of researchers used image theories that were developed from film and television studies. However, as a digital audiovisual medium, short videos have unique technical characteristics and multimodal traits, and "many characteristics of digital video have not been fully revealed" (Sun 2022). In the context of the increasingly complex new technological environment, we may need to consider how the audiovisual narrative of short videos will be affected by cutting-edge technologies like AR, VR, 5G, etc., and how it will affect people's emotions and perceptions. What are the deeper mechanisms behind short videos' non-logical and emotional representations? Apart from the memes, what else can we draw on for explanations? These issues call for theories on the ontological features of short videos in future research.

Secondly, short videos have brought democratization for ordinary people via videos. But when everyone can make and disseminate short videos, the complexity and polysemy of the multimodal language in short videos—assembly, configuration, and replication of audiovisual elements will also increase the volume of misinformation, disinformation and the risk of uncertainty in human society. The "visibility" of short videos is imperiled. For example, in 2022, during the Russian-Ukraine war, numerous short videos with misinformation and disinformation about both Russia and Ukraine are circulating on the Internet. These videos are mainly based on sensational narratives and political rhetoric, appealing to emotion but not objective facts, which is another case of the post-truth era. We believe that in the future, similar situations will become increasingly frequent, and that such issues will require new methods of large-scale data collection and video analysis to further analyze their presence and social impact.

Thirdly, the current literature has revealed a shifting trend of research topics from the symbolic meaning of video texts to the information and technology environment (including the infrastructure, hardware, software, and systems,

algorithm, artificial intelligence, etc.), which means cross-disciplinary research cooperation, especially with researchers who study science and technology, is urgently needed. Previous research has been conducted mainly by researchers with social sciences or arts & humanities backgrounds, including communication, journalism, sociology, cultural studies, film & TV studies, etc. Some research has brought together theories from these different fields. However, studies with science and technology backgrounds such as computer science, cognitive science, and physiology are still limited. Compared with the limited paradigms of social science and arts & humanities research, cross-disciplinary research containing knowledge and experience from science and technology, show more potential in explaining human–machine interactions and relationships in short video studies.

At the same time, as the influence of short video platforms, such as TikTok, continues to grow around the world, many interesting phenomena and valuable research issues have arisen in their interaction and clash with regional traditional culture and social context, which brings about numerous emergent research fields, like the anti-caste activism in India (e.g., Subramanian 2021) and feminist practice in Africa (e.g., Akinbola 2022). We suggest that global scholars pay more attention to the flourishing of short videos, conduct localized and diversified research, bring about glocalized theories, and promote cross-regional academic cooperation, to broaden our understanding towards the global and local social impact of short videos and their platforms.

Throughout the history of communication development, humans have pursued better communication technologies on two levels: The first level is to reawaken the sensory richness of the body as it should be among instant face-to-face interactions. Today, technologies like hologram technology, virtual reality, augmented reality, etc., are examples of that trend. The second level is the continuous pursuit of deepening human interaction in time and space, from real space to virtual and mobile space, connecting vision, sensation, and perception (Wang 2018). Videos already have and will continue to be an important way of practice in that process. As a subject of empirical analysis in video studies, short videos may allow us to find a possible answer to the big question: "what will happen to human's minds, thoughts, and communication?".

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