Cross-Cultural Communication In The Digital Age: An Analysis Of Media Channels And Cultural Influence On Thai Artists On Chinese Audiences

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Abstract

This study explores the dynamics of cross-cultural communication in the digital age, focusing on the influence of Thai artists on Chinese audiences through various media channels. As globalization and digital platforms reshape cultural exchanges, Thai entertainment content, particularly dramas and BL series, has gained significant popularity in China. The research examines how digital media—such as social media platforms, streaming services, and interactive fan mechanisms—facilitate this cultural exchange. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 400 Chinese participants aged 18–40 through an online questionnaire. The research concludes that digital media channels play a critical role in enhancing Thai artists' influence on Chinese audiences and promoting cross-cultural exchange. Platforms facilitate content distribution and audience engagement, with a significant positive correlation between digital media usage and cultural appeal. Thai entertainment's cultural appeal, including its themes, blending of modern and traditional elements, and portrayal of Thai lifestyles, resonates with Chinese audiences, contributing to its popularity. Thai artists employ strategies such as language adaptation and collaborations with Chinese influencers to bridge cultural differences, with language adaptation proving most effective. Regression analysis supports the significant impact of digital media on cross-cultural communication, explaining 71.5% of the variance in audience engagement. Hypothesis testing confirms that both digital media usage (H1) and cultural factors (H2) are crucial in fostering cultural exchange, with the latter's role in appealing to Chinese audiences validated by the survey results.

Keywords: *Cross-cultural communication, digital media, Thai artists, Chinese audiences, cultural influence, globalization*

1. Introduction

In the context of rapid globalization, cultures are increasingly interconnected and influencing one another in unprecedented ways, particularly with the rise of digital media. This transformation has notably impacted cross-cultural communication, especially in Asia, where audiences are more receptive to entertainment from neighboring countries. Celebrities are leveraging social media, streaming platforms, and interactive fan engagement to expand their reach beyond borders, thus shaping cultural perceptions and fostering deeper international connections. The structure of new media, marked by diversity, openness, and shared spaces, promotes the free exchange of cultural ideas, aligning with the collaborative and inclusive nature of the internet. As Kuang and Zhang (2014) observe, this open environment supports cross-cultural exchange, accommodating various perspectives and values. Thai dramas, for instance, have successfully transitioned from traditional television to digital platforms, appealing to Chinese audiences with themes and values rooted in shared Asian heritage (Wang, 2019).

Han (2019) argue that videos possess a unique ability to connect with audiences across cultures through immediacy and emotional resonance. For Thai artists, this capacity allows them to present their culture authentically to Chinese audiences. Platforms like Bilibili, known for its interactive community and user-generated content, enable fans of Thai artists to engage deeply, whether through subtitling Thai shows or creating fan videos. Such interactions further spread Thai culture within China, making it both accessible and enjoyable. This fan-driven engagement underscores the role of digital platforms in supporting cultural exchanges that traditional media channels could not previously achieve.

The digital age has revolutionized media consumption, with social media and streaming services now serving as primary entertainment sources, providing easy access to global content. In China, platforms such as Weibo and TikTok have become popular outlets for Thai entertainment, which has found an enthusiastic audience. With 1.76 billion mobile connections reported in 2024, the widespread access to

mobile internet in China has enabled Thai artists to reach millions of viewers without significant barriers (Simon, 2024). The popularity of Thai dramas and films in China can be attributed to their unique storytelling, often infused with cultural elements that resonate with Chinese audiences. Streaming services like iQIYI and WeTV have furthered the reach of Thai productions, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps. Through direct engagement with audiences, Thai celebrities can build genuine connections, fostering familiarity and appreciation that traditional media may struggle to achieve.

However, challenges in cross-cultural communication remain. Cultural differences shape how audiences interpret and engage with foreign content. Seong and Park (2013) note that these differences can impact communication styles and social media engagement. For Thai artists, understanding these cultural distinctions is vital to avoiding misunderstandings and maintaining a positive image. By adapting their content and presentation to better resonate with Chinese viewers, Thai artists demonstrate flexibility, a key factor in successful cross-cultural communication. This thesis explores these strategies and offers insights into how Thai artists can further their influence in China while respecting cultural nuances.

As globalization continues, the significance of cross-cultural communication will only increase. The success of Thai artists in China reflects a broader trend of cultural exchange, fostering shared values and mutual understanding between nations. Digital platforms have empowered Thai celebrities to build meaningful relationships with Chinese audiences, creating a cultural dialogue that enriches both societies. This research highlights the vital role of digital media in bridging cultural gaps and enhancing mutual understanding. By analyzing the influence of Thai artists on Chinese audiences, this study offers valuable insights into the dynamics of cross-cultural communication in the digital age, proposing a model for future cultural exchanges that showcases how media and entertainment can be powerful tools for fostering international connections and promoting appreciation for diverse cultures.

2. Objectives
1) To analyze how various digital media channels enable Thai artists to influence Chinese audiences and promote cross-cultural exchange.
2) To identify the cultural factors that make Thai entertainment content appealing to Chinese audiences in the digital media.
3) To examine how Thai artists navigate cultural differences and adapt their content to connect with Chinese audiences effectively.

3. Materials and Methods
In the context of this study on "Cross-Cultural Communication in the Digital Age: An Analysis of Media Channels and Cultural influence on Thai Artists on Chinese Audiences," the conceptual framework, which presents the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable can be understood as Figure 1 Conceptual framework. For hypothesis statements were presented as follows.

H1: The use of various digital media channels by Thai artists significantly enhances their influence on Chinese audiences and promotes cross-cultural exchange.

H2: Cultural factors such as shared values, aesthetic appeal, and entertainment preferences play a significant role in making Thai entertainment content appealing to Chinese audiences in the digital media.
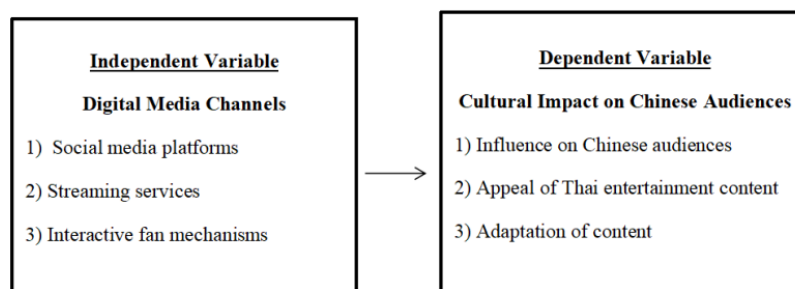

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

This study adopted a quantitative approach to examine how Thai artists influence Chinese audiences through digital media platforms in the context of cross-cultural communication. Grounded in Intercultural Communication Theory, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, and the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, the research was designed to explore how cultural values and media strategies shape audience perceptions. Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed via Chinese digital platforms such as Weibo. A total of 400 valid responses were obtained from participants aged 18–40, a group representing digitally active consumers of foreign entertainment. The questionnaire included both demographic and perception-based items, measured using a five-point Likert scale. Key dimensions covered digital media engagement, cultural adaptation strategies, and perceived cultural impact.

The data analysis for this study was conducted using SPSS to ensure a thorough and systematic examination of the data collected from the questionnaire. Initially, data preparation involved inputting responses into SPSS, coding them numerically for ease of interpretation, and cleaning the dataset to ensure accuracy. Descriptive statistics were then computed to summarize the demographic characteristics of respondents, including frequencies and percentages for categorical variables (such as gender, age, and education level), as well as means and standard deviations for Likert-scale responses, providing an overview of the sample distribution and participant response trends. To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each section to measure internal consistency, with a threshold of 0.7 or higher indicating acceptable reliability. Sections focused on digital media influence, cultural appeal, navigating cultural differences, and cross-cultural communication were analyzed separately, with values exceeding 0.9 indicating excellent consistency. Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate the strength and direction of associations between variables such as media influence, cultural appeal, and cross-cultural communication. Subsequently, linear regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive power of independent variables on the dependent variable, cross-cultural communication, offering insights into how factors like media influence and cultural appeal contribute to the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication. This structured analytical approach ensured a comprehensive and reliable examination of the relationships between variables, providing robust evidence to address the study's research objectives.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Number and percentage of sample group by gender it was found that 178 people were male, or 44.5% and 222 people were female, or 55.5%. Categorized by age, it was found that the 18-25 age group is the most represented, with 151 individuals ,or 37.75%.The majority of the participants, 221 individuals representing 55.25%, hold a Bachelor's degree. Categorized by occupation, it was found that the most examples were office workers constitute the largest group, with 131 individuals representing 32.75 percent. All 400 participants, representing 100 percent of the sample, responded affirmatively to having followed such content.

Table 1 Perceptions Regarding Thai Artists

Perceptions Regarding Thai Artists	Mean	S.D	Meaning
Influence on Digital Media Channels	3.64	1.219	Medium
Cultural Appeal of Thai Entertainment Content	3.61	1.215	Medium
Navigating Cultural Differences	3.60	1.204	Medium
Cross-Cultural Communication and Exchange	3.69	1.204	Medium
Total	3.64	1.211	Medium

The table presents Chinese audiences' perceptions regarding Thai artists across four key dimensions, with all mean scores falling within the medium range (3.60-3.69). Cross-Cultural Communication and Exchange received the highest rating at 3.69, indicating relatively successful digital interactions between Thai artists and Chinese audiences. Navigating Cultural Differences scored slightly lower at 3.60, suggesting room for improvement in cultural adaptation strategies. The dimensions of Influence on Digital Media Channels and Cultural Appeal of Thai Entertainment Content both demonstrated moderate performance with means of 3.64 and 3.61 respectively. Standard deviations consistently around 1.2 across all dimensions reveal a moderate dispersion of responses, showing reasonable consensus among participants.

The findings indicate that digital media channels significantly enhance Thai artists' influence on Chinese audiences. Platforms serve as crucial tools for content distribution, audience engagement, and cultural exchange. The findings indicate that digital media channels act as essential bridges in cross-cultural communication. Platforms allow Thai artists to share content widely, interact with audiences, and create a sense of engagement. The study reveals that digital media enhances audience participation through interactive features such as live streaming, social media interactions, and content-sharing mechanisms.

The findings confirm that the cultural appeal of Thai entertainment content plays a crucial role in attracting Chinese audiences. The overall average rating for cultural appeal factors is 3.61, categorized as a medium level of agreement, indicating that most respondents perceive Thai entertainment content as culturally engaging but with variations in specific elements.

The study findings confirm that Thai artists actively adopt various strategies to bridge cultural differences and engage with Chinese audiences. The overall average rating for cultural adaptation strategies is 3.60, categorized as a medium level of agreement, indicating that while Thai artists are perceived to make significant efforts, there is still room for improvement in further aligning their content with Chinese cultural expectations.

Table 2 Hypothesis Testing on Cultural Appeal of Thai Entertainment Content

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardization coefficient	t	p	VIF
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Constant	0.752	0.085	-	8.839	0.000	-
Digital Media Channels	0.755	0.023	0.856	33.027	0.000	1.000
R^2			0.733			
Adjusted R^2			0.732			
F			F=1090.801,p=0.000			
D-W			1.939			

Dependent Variable: Cultural Appeal of Thai Entertainment Content

H1: The use of various digital media channels by Thai artists significantly enhances their influence on Chinese audiences and promotes cross-cultural exchange.

Hypothesis 1 was supported, as the results of the hypothesis testing confirm that the use of various digital media channels by Thai artists significantly enhances their influence on Chinese audiences and promotes cross-cultural exchange. The multiple regression analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between digital media usage and cultural appeal, with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.755 and a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.856, both of which were significant at the 0.01 level (p = 0.000). The model's R-squared value of 0.733 indicates that 73.3% of the variance in cultural appeal can be attributed to the use of digital media channels, highlighting their critical role in shaping audience perceptions. Additionally, the correlation analysis demonstrated a strong positive correlation between digital media and cross-cultural communication (0.590, p < 0.01), further reinforcing the notion that digital platforms facilitate deeper engagement between Thai artists and Chinese audiences.

Table 3 Hypothesis Testing on Cross-Cultural Communication and Exchange

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardization coefficient	t	p	VIF
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Constant	0.612	0.100	-	6.131	0.000	-
Digital Media Channels	0.846	0.027	0.846	31.590	0.000	1.000
R2			0.715			
Adjusted R2			0.714			
F			F=997.897,p=0.000			
D-W			1.893			

Dependent Variable: Cross-Cultural Communication and Exchange

H2: Cultural factors such as shared values, aesthetic appeal, and entertainment preferences play a significant role in making Thai entertainment content appealing to Chinese audiences in the digital media.

Hypothesis 2 was supported, as the results of hypothesis testing indicate that cultural factors, including shared values, aesthetic appeal, and entertainment preferences, significantly contribute to the appeal of Thai entertainment content to Chinese audiences in digital media. The multiple regression analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between cultural factors and cross-cultural communication, with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.846 and a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.846, both of which were statistically significant at the 0.01 level (p = 0.000). The R-squared value of 0.715 suggests that 71.5% of the variance in cross-cultural communication and exchange can be attributed to cultural factors, underscoring their vital role in audience engagement. Furthermore, the correlation analysis demonstrated a strong positive correlation between cultural appeal and cross-cultural communication (0.634, p < 0.01), further supporting the notion that Thai entertainment content resonates with Chinese viewers due to its cultural elements.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study align with several established theories in intercultural communication and media studies. It confirms that Thai artists successfully navigate cultural differences and engage Chinese audiences by adapting their content to Chinese cultural values, which is consistent with the principles of Traditional Intercultural Communication Theory, which emphasizes face-to-face interactions for cultural adaptation. However, this study extends the theory by highlighting the role of digital media platforms, such as social media and streaming services, which facilitate real-time and interactive communication, allowing for more dynamic and fluid intercultural engagement (Ming, 2020). Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory (Hofstede, 1998) further explains the resonance of Thai entertainment content with Chinese audiences, as shared collectivist values, high power distance, and family-centric storytelling align with both cultures, contributing to the widespread appeal of Thai media. Additionally, the study illustrates how younger Chinese audiences embrace gender-fluid narratives in Thai dramas, challenging traditional masculinity norms in Chinese media.
This supports Hofstede's theory by demonstrating how cultural alignment and selective adaptation drive cross-cultural media consumption (Hofstede, 2001). The study also confirms the DMIS model, showing that digital platforms accelerate the process of cultural adaptation among Chinese audiences, reducing cultural distance and facilitating greater acceptance of Thai entertainment(Zhu, 2011). Furthermore, Jenkins' Participatory Culture Theory is validated, as Chinese fans actively localize and promote Thai content through translations, social media campaigns, and fan-led initiatives. The study underscores the growing role of fan communities in shaping the cultural narrative and amplifying the influence of Thai artists in China(Li. and Wu, 2016). According to Yan and Hou (2021), fan culture in China is a response to changes in the idol industry and its integration with online platforms. This cultural form reflects contemporary social values, with fan groups coalescing around shared interests. In the case of Thai artists, this has resulted in highly organized fan groups that engage in activities like online voting, billboard campaigns, and data collection, all of which increase the visibility and influence on Thai artists in China (Cheng, 2023; Ma,2023; Yan & Hou, 2021; Zhao, 2012).

Finally, the application of Soft Power Theory is demonstrated, as Thai entertainment serves as a tool of cultural diplomacy, with digital platforms amplifying Thailand's soft power and fostering organic cultural exchange through audience-driven participation(Wang, 2022). This study builds on previous research, such as Wang (2019), Li and Shao (2021), and Yang (2022), by emphasizing the role of fan engagement and digital media in promoting cross-cultural exchanges and expanding the visibility of Thai entertainment. The findings further support the conceptual framework of the study, which posits that digital media channels are essential for enhancing the cultural impact of Thai artists on Chinese audiences, offering deeper insights into how these platforms serve as bridges for cross-cultural communication. Future research could build on this framework by exploring the influence of emerging technologies, such as AI-driven content recommendations and virtual fan interactions, on shaping global media consumption.

5. Suggestions

1) Suggestions from This Study

To strengthen their engagement with Chinese audiences, Thai artists should continue to leverage popular Chinese social media platforms such as Weibo, Douyin (TikTok), and Bilibili, which offer interactive features like live streaming, content sharing, and real-time communication that foster stronger fan connections. Content that encourages audience participation, such as fan-driven campaigns, hashtags, and interactive Q&A sessions, should be prioritized for greater reach and engagement. Additionally, incorporating more Chinese cultural elements, such as Mandarin subtitles or dubbing, references to traditional festivals, and cultural themes that resonate with Chinese audiences, will enhance the cultural appeal of Thai entertainment. Collaborations with Chinese influencers, actors, or creators can further bridge cultural gaps and make Thai content more relatable to Chinese viewers. Thai entertainment should focus on universal themes like family, friendship, and personal growth, which align with Chinese cultural values, while blending modern and traditional elements in storytelling to provide a unique perspective that distinguishes Thai media. Overcoming language barriers is crucial for successful cross-cultural communication, and artists should invest in high-quality Mandarin subtitles, dubbing, or even basic Mandarin skills to better connect with Chinese fans. Digital platforms should be used to promote cultural exchange by sharing behind-the-scenes content, cultural insights, and personal stories about Thai traditions, festivals, and lifestyles, while encouraging Chinese fans to explore Thai culture through food, fashion, and tourism. Furthermore, Thai artists must be mindful of cultural differences and avoid misunderstandings or stereotypes in their content. Understanding Chinese cultural preferences and sensitivities is essential for maintaining a positive image and building trust with Chinese audiences. Engaging with fans through social media and responding to their feedback can offer valuable insights into their expectations and preferences. Collaborations with Chinese media companies, influencers, and content creators can also boost visibility and credibility in the Chinese market. Co-produced TV shows or music collaborations can enhance cross-cultural engagement and appeal to a wider audience. Lastly, Thai entertainment companies should utilize data analytics to gain insights into Chinese audience preferences and behaviors. Understanding which types of content perform well on platforms like iQIYI and WeTV can help tailor future productions to better meet audience expectations, optimizing content distribution and marketing strategies.

2) Suggestions for Further Study

Future research could explore several key areas to further understand the dynamics of cross-cultural communication between Thai artists and Chinese audiences. Comparative studies could be conducted to analyze how Thai artists' strategies for engaging Chinese audiences differ from those of artists from other countries, such as South Korea or Japan, which would help identify best practices and unique strategies that contribute to successful cross-cultural communication. Additionally, as digital technologies continue to advance, future research should investigate the impact of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) on cross-cultural engagement, as these technologies may provide new opportunities for Thai artists to connect with Chinese audiences and enhance cultural exchange. Further exploration into the role of fan communities could offer valuable insights into how fan-driven content, such as translations, edits, and social media campaigns, facilitates the dissemination of Thai entertainment in China, highlighting the participatory nature of modern media consumption. Another avenue for research could focus on the economic impact of Thai entertainment in China, examining its influence on areas such as tourism, merchandise sales, and language learning, thereby providing a broader understanding of Thai soft power in the region. Finally, future studies could explore cross-generational differences in how

various age groups in China engage with Thai entertainment, which would enable marketers and content producers to tailor their strategies and productions to better meet the preferences of diverse audience segments.

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