

Fragmented Music Marketing Driven by Digital Media: The Case of TikTok

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Abstract: In the context of the digital era, music marketing has undergone a significant shift towards fragmented strategies, with the rise of the TikTok platform playing a key role. TikTok, as a new type of social media in digital media dissemination, has played a crucial role in music promotion with its short video format. The marketing approach of "music + short video" has thus emerged. Its fragmented content not only quickly attracts widespread attention in the era of digital fragmentation but also has a significant impact on music charts. TikTok's data-driven strategy provides precise audience preference information for customized music marketing. The platform's encouragement of user-generated content and the multi-layered, multi-dimensional integration and interaction between artists and audiences are the core elements of its successful fragmented music marketing. This paper focuses on analyzing fragmented music marketing methods in the digital media environment, using TikTok as the main case study and applying the 4R theory (Relevancy, Reaction, Relationship, and Reward) as the research framework. It emphasizes the transformative role of digital platforms like TikTok in promoting fragmented music marketing. The research includes its algorithms, user interaction models, and marketing strategies. It aims to present the dynamics of music promotion and consumption in the emerging digital environment, showing a trend where the future of music marketing will increasingly rely on flexible strategies adapted to digital trends, and will permeate the continuously developing user interaction and digital media environment in a fragmented form.

Keywords: Digital Media, Music Marketing, Fragmentation, TikTok, 4R Marketing Theory

1. Introduction

In the book "The Third Wave", Alvin Toffler and his wife discuss the increasingly intense trend of fragmentation in this era [1]. They observed that information, media, time, and modes of communication are becoming more fragmented. As sectors like the economy, technology, and culture develop towards specialization and rapidity, the whole society will be characterized by fragmentation, and in the era of mobile internet, fragmentation permeates every aspect of people's lives and work [2]. Digital music is especially affected. Not only has content risen, but digital music marketing has also performed exceptionally well in the last two years, undergoing significant changes in the digital media era. This transformation signifies a shift from traditional broadcasting and advertising to more targeted and fragmented methods. The penetration power of fragmented marketing is evident [3].

Simply put, digital music marketing is the use of digital music as a means of marketing. It involves companies using the characteristics of digital music art to enhance communication and interaction with consumers, meet their needs, promote product sales, and achieve corporate goals. For example, with the popularity of short videos, music is continuously being "shattered". Songs are broken down into fragments, commonly used as BGM in short videos. Almost all popular melodies have versions that are sped up, slowed down, or remixed. The full picture of the song might not be the main focus, but rather what emotion it represents and how algorithms determine in which scenarios users will use it. After watching a short video with music for a dozen seconds, what people remember might be the plot other than the music, a small part of the melody, or just a few "brainwashing" lines from the song [4]. However, for music marketing companies facing intense competition, the rise of social media and the vast user base of short videos have brought more attention and exposure to artists, musicians, and even companies.

Numerous enterprises, both small and large, have integrated fragmented music marketing into their product sales. For example, Coca-Cola has seamlessly integrated its brand into user experiences through collaborations with various music genres, artists, major online streaming platforms, and offline music festival events. The classic 1970s advertisement song "I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke" and the use of social media and digital platforms like Spotify and TikTok today, with millions of followers on well-known social media accounts like Instagram and Twitter, have kept Coca-Cola's name constantly on the hot lists of various social media. Its financial reports show a steady upward trend, demonstrating the significant value of fragmented music marketing in product sales [5]. This article will also revolve around specific cases of TikTok, covering research background, content, results, and functions. It will delve into its marketing strategies for creating unique, strong, and lasting corporate brand images based on the 4R marketing theory, thereby analyzing the success of fragmented music marketing driven by digital media.

2. Fragmented Marketing Mechanism Led by TikTok

With intensifying competition, digital music fragmented marketing has increasingly been valued by businesses as a breakthrough tool for visual contact, strengthening brand memory, and easily stirring emotions to achieve temporary popularity [6]. Taking TikTok as an example, it is a short video and music social platform developed by the Chinese internet giant ByteDance. It was first launched in China in 2016, targeting Chinese market users. Its main feature allowed users to record 15-second short videos via the Douyin app, supporting various filters and music effects. As the short video market in China rose, Douyin's popularity grew explosively and then it started to expand into the international market. Over time, TikTok has become increasingly popular globally.

In 2018, ByteDance merged Douyin (the Chinese version of TikTok) and TikTok into a globally unified brand, TikTok, to strengthen international market promotion. The same year, TikTok entered the American market and quickly attracted a large number of users. Since its launch in 2016, TikTok's global user numbers have continued to grow. In June 2018, TikTok announced it had 500 million users worldwide. By early 2021, this number had reached 2 billion. TikTok has long faced challenges, including political propaganda and regulatory issues in the United States and India. Nevertheless, according to its usage data, TikTok's user base is still growing, particularly in the youth market. A survey showed that 64% of TikTok users in the United States and the United Kingdom are under the age of 25, and 30% are under 18, providing a lucrative market environment for the music industry [7].

The content creation and sharing functions on the TikTok platform are very simple and user-friendly. Users can create interesting 60-second short videos using various filters, effects, and music provided by the platform. Unlike video websites with menu-driven programming, it uses a carefully designed algorithm to recommend videos that match users' interests and hobbies, creating a diverse

social experience for TikTok users. People can converge in the comment section due to the same music aesthetics and tastes. Similarly, due to its large user base, some songs gain immense popularity, even overnight fame, due to TikTok's algorithm and push mechanism. However, after logging in, users can also search for and subscribe to audio and video channels of interest based on their preferences, and likewise, they can share their life or creative work and earn revenue [8]. Therefore, TikTok users can easily share their works or experiences, while being inspired by others, serving as a platform for exchanging information and sparking inspiration. This has brought huge business opportunities to TikTok, with many companies setting their sights on it, promoting their music creations or brand products through TikTok. Similarly, many influential people have seized the opportunity to create their business models using the TikTok platform. In summary, the rapid development of TikTok and its disruptive impact on music marketing indicate significant changes in the promotion and consumption of music in the digital era, presenting a new model standard leading the music industry.

3. Approaches and Effects of Fragmented Marketing in Music Based on the 4R Marketing Theory

In the early 21st century, American marketer Don E. Schuhz proposed the 4R marketing combination theory based on the 4C marketing theory, adding Relevancy, Reaction, Relation, and Reward to the mix. The 4R marketing combination theory emphasizes that precision marketing requires delivering the right product to the right consumer at the right time through the right channels, thereby improving the efficiency and quality of product marketing. The 4R rule also changed the traditional purpose of marketing. The advent of the big data era and the emergence of precision marketing concepts allowed the realization of database marketing theory. Database marketing theory refers to companies mining and analyzing internal and external data to understand consumer needs and preferences. It enables effective predictions of consumer spending trends and product sales [9]. Its main feature is the integration of enterprise and market behavior around the consumer, maintaining customer groups precisely and stably. It aims to meet customer needs, improve customer satisfaction, enhance user experience, and establish two-way communication with consumers.

At present, the application of big data technology in digital music precision marketing includes music search, music recognition, music recommendation, and music personalized customization services. Some music platforms have also created services for users with some open data, which is crucial in the fragmented marketing of music and plays a role of in-out.

Drawing on the application of database marketing in other industries, it can be seen that digital music database marketing needs to establish its database to identify, refine and analyze the correlation between consumer behavior and data of music users. Each music company can operate its self-media platform accounts, such as Weibo, Wechat public platform, TikTok, etc., to collect more user data and make the user model more three-dimensional and accurate. The demand and desire of consumers in the market rely on Internet data to obtain effective data support. At the same time, enterprises can get timely and efficient communication and interaction with users through social platforms, further consolidating the establishment of long-term relationships. Enterprises' competition for the market has shifted from the real world to the virtual network, and steadily attracting users' attention means obtaining traffic and revenue.

3.1. Relevancy - Establishing Broad Connections

In the digital music market, music products and services establish stable connections with users through internet-based music platforms, social media platforms, video content platforms, etc. TikTok excels at creating a space highly relevant to its user base, customizing user experience by gathering

information from multiple platforms to display users' personal interests and interactive behaviors. This personalized approach ensures users quickly and precisely access music fields or styles they're interested in, resonating with the platform's content and enhancing user-platform stickiness. According to the China Internet Development Status Report, as of December 2020, the scale of China's online music users reached 657 million, accounting for 66.6% of the total netizens. The scale and usage rate of internet music users continue to increase, and user habits have been fundamentally established. A great example of TikTok is the success of Megan Thee Stallion's "Savage" challenge. This artist's song caused a sensation on TikTok, with an astonishing number of participation metrics. Millions of users participated in the #SavageChallenge dance challenge, which amassed over 6 billion views. This case illustrates the combination of music with popular challenges and trends, greatly enhancing "Relevancy." This challenge showcases the platform's ability to propel a song to peak popularity and highlights the importance of creative initiatives and TikTok's continually evolving community that resonates with users.

3.2. Reaction - Response and Satisfaction of Individual Needs

The 4R theory, centered on relationship marketing, emphasizes identifying consumer needs from their perspective. The market demand in the digital music market is a complex and uncontrollable factor, often volatile. Thus, the ability to accurately grasp and quickly respond to these elements is crucial for maintaining long-term relationships with users. Music apps meet consumers' personalized music consumption needs through functional combinations and upgrades, further enhancing connections with users. TikTok's immediate and effective response is a key factor in its marketing effectiveness. Metrics like video completion rates, likes, shares, and comment counts are tangible indicators, and user feedback is an essential part of analyzing "response." Collecting user feedback regularly helps understand music's overall impact on TikTok users. They are monitoring these data aids in understanding user habits and preferences. Positive feedback demonstrates the success of TikTok's marketing strategies, while constructive criticism offers opportunities for improvement. Songs popular on TikTok trends often make significant leaps on mainstream music charts. Whether through dance challenges, lip-sync videos, creative covers, or interpretative renditions, all contribute to increasing a song's popularity, propelling it to rapid fame. Many cases have shown that songs top various platform charts due to viral spread on TikTok, evidencing its "star-making" ability. Jawsh 685 and Jason Derulo's "Savage Love" gained immense popularity on TikTok before becoming a global chart-topper. This quantifiable impact on music charts highlights TikTok's influence in shaping broader music trends, actively involving users in creating and spreading musical trends. Music, a medium transcending cultural and language barriers, has universal appeal. TikTok effectively transforms songs into cultural phenomena, resonating with users globally and emphasizing its role in meeting users' personalized needs.

3.3. Relation - Close Cooperation between Industry Stakeholders

Establishing lasting relationships on TikTok involves cultivating a sense of community and connecting with audiences at a personal level. Take the prevalent North American Kpop group BTS, for example. BTS's collaboration with TikTok users goes beyond their professional content creation. From producing dance clips to humorous challenge videos, their content is diverse, dedicated to sharing exclusive materials on TikTok, such as behind-the-scenes stories, personal moments, reading fan messages, and participating in various TikTok challenges. Whether it's the members' casual interactions or glimpses into their creative lives, their live interactions with fans showcase their fun and graceful sides not seen on traditional concert stages. This authentic and transparent sharing makes their image more multi-dimensional in the eyes of fans, significantly narrowing the distance between

them and creating an inseparable atmosphere between BTS and their fans (ARMY), greatly strengthening the emotional connection. TikTok content related to BTS often receives millions of views, and #BTS is a perennially popular topic. ARMY's intense reaction to BTS's presence on TikTok has established an exceptionally strong interactive relationship, a mutually beneficial conversational marketing strategy that has created a symbiotic relationship beyond traditional fan-artist dynamics [10]. BTS has successfully formed an exclusive and vibrant community on TikTok, one of the reasons for their continued dominance on the platform.

3.4. Reward – Diversified Monetization Models

Advertising revenue is an important supplement to the income of various music platforms. These platforms use their traffic advantages to set advertising spaces on the entry interface and homepage of the app and charge fees based on the effectiveness and type of ads. Additionally, the model of copyright distribution, where online music platforms resell the copyrighted content they acquire, ensures close cooperation with similar platforms and fosters a healthy market order. The profit models in the digital music's related layers vary significantly depending on the entity, with some music operators offering brand-related products like headphones, speakers, and other smart devices, or special cultural and creative products co-produced with brands. The return on using TikTok for music marketing is multifaceted. For artists and record companies, the platform offers a cost-effective way to reach a large, active audience [11,12]. The data generated by user interactions provide valuable information for shaping future marketing strategies and music creation across various industries. Success on TikTok can translate into considerable streaming numbers, market sales, and broader domain influence. This was greatly exemplified in the case of rapper Saint Jhn's "Roses", which gained attention on TikTok, leading Imanbek to remix the song. The success of the remix prompted a commercial partnership between Saint Jhn and the famous beverage brand Budweiser, leveraging the popularity of "Roses" on TikTok to enhance the brand's visibility. This showcases TikTok's success in monetizing influence and its role in creating tangible opportunities for artists in commercial activities beyond the digital realm.

4. Optimization Strategies for Digital Music Fragmented Marketing

Firstly, in the era of big data, embracing emerging technologies is crucial, as it allows for adapting to the new trends in consumer behavior driven by technological advancement. With the emergence and flourishing of AI and IT learning, music marketing strategies have become more diverse and personalized. Platforms like TikTok can use these technologies to enhance user experience and engagement, not only ensuring precision in search engines but also perfecting predictive push mechanisms for "recommended for you," leading to more intuitive music discovery and experience.

Moreover, expanding the business scope of the digital music industry upstream in the industrial chain, integrating and innovating product content from the source of creation to reduce costs is key. In the dissemination stage, in addition to internet platforms, cover more networked devices, such as car music systems, smart home devices, entertainment facilities, etc. AR and VR technologies can provide new avenues for immersive music experiences, creating worlds beyond three dimensions for audiences to interact with music and opening up novel marketing channels.

In today's data-surrounded environment, emphasizing data analysis can never be overstated. Music marketing should largely rely on data-driven approaches to better capture user preferences and trends. With a substantial user base, UGC (User-Generated Content) on TikTok is a powerful benchmark. When users are inspired by the music content pushed to them, their creations are inevitably closely linked. Thus, integrating data resources and promoting data sharing between platforms is essential to avoid information silos, and enhance sharp data analysis insights. Monitoring the number and impact

of UGC videos can lead to more precise and successful marketing strategies, improving personalized user experiences [13]. Time is money, and real-time data changes enable marketers to quickly capture emerging trends, staying ahead in the fast-paced digital music field and becoming trendsetters.

Given the significant sustainable development trend of digital music marketing, issues surrounding the diversification of digital content scenarios and user privacy have become crucial. Therefore, promoting sustainable digital marketing and optimizing streaming quality is key to enhancing user trust and long-term engagement and ensuring safe consumption. Expanding related businesses and avoiding reliance on a single music payment model can create differentiated and personalized digital music products and services, especially in the face of competition from diverse content forms like films, short videos, games, etc. With quality digital music services as the foundation, expanding related businesses and avoiding reliance on a single music payment model can create differentiated and personalized digital music products and services [14,15].

In summary, the future of music marketing in the digital realm, especially on platforms like TikTok, is maturing with both opportunities and challenges. Through the power of emerging technologies, leveraging data analysis to integrate resources, continually overseeing the digital media ecosystem, and maintaining an open-minded approach, the digital media music industry is poised for vigorous growth. Continuous innovation and improvement, balancing progress and conservation, will not only ensure the ongoing Relevancy of music marketing in the digital media era but will also infuse it with new vitality and significance, strengthening the close connection between the industry and users.

5. Conclusion

In a multifaceted study of fragmented marketing methods in the digital era of music, this article emphasizes the transformative impact brought about by platforms like TikTok. Using the 4R theory as an analytical tool, the study concludes that TikTok's success stems from its highly targeted and fragmented marketing practices. These practices not only accelerate user engagement based on Relevancy and personalized content but also establish strong relationships between artists and audiences, ultimately driving the viral promotion and dissemination of music.

This article aims to elucidate the understanding of new marketing models in the digital era – fragmented marketing strategies. It provides an important framework for dissecting the effectiveness of fragmentation in music marketing, highlighting the shift from traditional holistic marketing activities to keen, diverse fragmented marketing interactions. These insights are significant, offering music industry professionals' practical insights on how to leverage social media dynamics to enhance competitiveness and engagement in a fiercely competitive market.

Regarding future developments, while this study offers referential value for analyzing fragmented marketing, it is based on the existing, near-mature industrial marketing strategies and specific marketing thought patterns of TikTok, which may not encompass all digital media platforms. Therefore, timely insights into algorithm changes affecting content visibility and user engagement can provide a deeper understanding of the long-term feasibility of this marketing method. This article lays a foundational reference for the continued exploration of the evolution of digital music fragmented marketing, also indicating that continual innovation and improvement will be crucial in the ever-changing digital domain.

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