

"The Localization and Dissemination of Hip-Hop Culture: A Case Study of Chengdu as a Hub of Chinese Hip-Hop"

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ABSTRACT

Chengdu's hip-hop music stems from its urban culture, multicultural inclusiveness, and musical atmosphere. Its localization involves Sichuan dialect, cultural symbols, and integration with traditional Chinese culture, creating a distinct style. New media, particularly short video platforms, has broadened hip-hop's reach, transcending geographical boundaries. This paper analyzes how Chengdu hip-hop leveraged digital media to enter mainstream culture, earning recognition. Additionally, it explores hip-hop's commercialization in China, focusing on reality shows like "The Rap of China." Commercialization offers opportunities but also challenges in balancing cultural expression with market demands. By studying Chengdu hip-hop, this paper delves into localization, dissemination, and commercialization to deepen understanding of hip-hop's development in China, contributing to subcultural studies in globalization.

KEYWORDS

Hip-hop; Localization; New media; Chengdu hip-hop music; Commercialization; Globalization

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 Development of Subcultures

Subcultures, as cultural phenomena that stand in contrast to mainstream culture, serve as important mediums for certain groups to express their unique identities and values^[1]. Since the mid-20th century, subcultures have gradually become a significant topic in social and cultural studies, especially in the fields of youth culture and music culture. According to the 《2020 Chinese Youth Subculture Report》, more than 63% of Chinese young people stated that they have participated in some form of subculture activities, with music-related subcultures being the most prevalent, covering hip-hop, rock, and electronic music^[2].

1.1.2 Development of Hip-Hop Culture Globally and in China

Hip-hop culture originated in the 1970s in the United States, initially as a tool for the Black community to express their struggles against social injustice and racial oppression^[7]. As a subculture, hip-hop integrates various artistic forms, including MCing (rapping), DJing, graffiti, and breakdancing, with its core focus on expressing the voices and life conditions of marginalized groups^[7]. In recent years, hip-hop has spread from the U.S. to the rest of the world, rapidly gaining acceptance among youth in other countries, particularly in China.

In China, hip-hop culture was introduced to the public in the late 1990s through the internet and

early music shows. According to the 《2021 QQ Music Hip-Hop Listening Report》, Chinese hip-hop music has experienced an average annual growth rate of 33% over the past five years, making it the fastest-growing music genre on QQ Music^[2]. The report also notes that, by 2021, the daily play count of Chinese hip-hop music surpassed 200 million, indicating that hip-hop has gradually transitioned from a niche subculture to the mainstream market.

Since the launch of 《The Rap of China》 in 2017, the influence of hip-hop has skyrocketed, with the first season surpassing 3 billion views and sparking widespread discussions and attention to hip-hop across the country^[4]. This show quickly brought hip-hop into the public spotlight in China and led to the rise of more underground hip-hop artists, such as GAI and PG One, who gained mainstream success through the show. This reflects the growing popularity and continued rise of hip-hop culture in China^[6].

1.1.3 Background of Hip-Hop Culture in Chengdu

As one of the most important birthplaces of hip-hop culture in China, Chengdu has attracted a large number of hip-hop artists and enthusiasts, thanks to its unique urban culture, inclusiveness, and musical atmosphere. According to the 《2021 NetEase Cloud Music User Report》, Chengdu ranks among the top cities for hip-hop music listeners in China, accounting for 7.5% of the total national listenership, ranking third overall^[5]. Chengdu's local hip-hop group, CDC (Chengdu Rap House), is one of the earliest underground hip-hop collectives in China, creating numerous hip-hop works characterized by the use of the Sichuan dialect and reflections on local life and culture^{[3][5]}. In 2020, the works of CDC members surpassed 1 billion plays on NetEase Cloud Music, establishing them as a leading hip-hop group in the country^[5].

The localization of Chengdu's hip-hop culture is evident not only in the language and content of the music but also in performance styles, fashion, and deep integration with local culture. Hip-hop artists from Chengdu, represented by CDC, have widely disseminated their works through new media platforms such as Tiktok and Bilibili, gradually making Chengdu hip-hop a key force in the Chinese hip-hop scene^[3]. According to official data from Tiktok, videos related to "Chengdu hip-hop" had accumulated over 2 billion views by 2021, significantly boosting Chengdu's importance in the Chinese hip-hop landscape^[6].

1.2 Research Objectives

This study aims to explore the localization and dissemination of hip-hop culture in China, with a particular focus on Chengdu as a hub of Chinese hip-hop culture. By analyzing the rise and development of hip-hop in Chengdu, the research investigates how it integrates local elements and expands to national, and even global, audiences through the power of new media. The specific objectives are as follows:

1.2.1 Investigating the Localization Process of Hip-Hop Culture

This study will analyze the language, cultural symbols, and local lifestyles reflected in Chengdu's hip-hop music to reveal how hip-hop culture in China, particularly in Chengdu, gains acceptance through localized practices. The research will delve into how hip-hop adapts to and reflects Chinese social and cultural contexts.

1.2.2 Analyzing the Role of New Media in the Dissemination of Hip-Hop Culture

This study will examine the crucial role new media, especially short video platforms like Tiktok

and Bilibili, play in promoting the spread of hip-hop culture. The focus will be on how these platforms help expand Chengdu's hip-hop from a local subculture to a nationwide phenomenon and even bring it into the global spotlight through the internet.

1.2.3 Examining the Commercialization and Mainstreaming of Hip-Hop Culture

This study will investigate how hip-hop culture in China becomes commercialized as it transitions into mainstream culture. It will focus on how Chengdu's hip-hop music strikes a balance between capital and cultural expression, and analyze the role of reality shows like 《The Rap of China》 in commercializing and popularizing hip-hop culture.

1.2.4 Assessing the Social and Cultural Issues Behind Hip-Hop Culture

This research will evaluate the social and cultural problems reflected in the development of hip-hop culture in China, particularly how Chengdu's hip-hop culture addresses issues of social pressure, identity, and cultural conflicts faced by contemporary Chinese youth.

1.3 Research Significance

By analyzing the case of Chengdu hip-hop culture, this study not only reveals the localization and dissemination pathways of hip-hop in China but also provides new theoretical perspectives for subcultural studies in the context of globalization. The specific significance of this research is as follows:

1.3.1 Enriching Subcultural and Localization Theory

By exploring the localization process of hip-hop culture in China, this study expands the application of subcultural theory. Hip-hop culture, as a foreign subculture, interacts with local cultures in various countries and regions, which has long been a central issue in the study of globalized culture. The case of Chengdu hip-hop culture serves as a vivid example, demonstrating the transformation and development of global subcultures within China's unique cultural context^{[1][7]}.

1.3.2 Highlighting the Critical Role of New Media in Cultural Dissemination

New media, especially short video platforms, play an increasingly important role in contemporary cultural dissemination. Through case studies on platforms like Tiktok and Bilibili, this research will uncover how new media break the limitations of traditional media, pushing local subcultures into national and even global spheres. This study will help us better understand the pathways of cultural dissemination in the new media era and provide theoretical references for the dissemination of other local or subcultures^{[2][6]}.

1.3.3 Analyzing the Commercialization and Cultural Transition of Hip-Hop

As hip-hop culture in China transitions from an underground subculture to the mainstream, commercialization has become a key part of its development. This paper will explore how hip-hop culture maintains a balance between cultural expression and capital operations during commercialization, especially analyzing how shows like 《The Rap of China》 push hip-hop from the margins into the mainstream. The analysis of this process not only offers insights into the future

development of hip-hop but also provides valuable experiences for the commercialization and mainstreaming of subcultures ^{[4][5]}.

1.3.4 Addressing the Challenges of Local Culture in the Face of Globalization

The rise of Chengdu hip-hop culture not only reflects the transformation of Chinese youth culture in the context of globalization but also reveals how local culture adapts to and resists the pressures of globalization. This research will help analyze how Chinese local culture transforms, reshapes itself, and finds its voice amid global cultural influences. Through this study, we can better understand the complex interactions between local and global cultures ^{[3][7]}.

2 Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Subculture Theory

Subculture theory is the study of cultural phenomena that stand in contrast to or run parallel with mainstream culture, and it provides a fundamental framework for understanding the spread and localization of hip-hop culture. Subcultures typically represent certain groups, especially youth, who express their unique social identities and values through music, fashion, language, and other forms ^[1]. Hip-hop culture, as a classic example of subculture, originated in the Black communities of the United States, with its core centered on resisting social inequality and discrimination through rap music, breakdancing, and graffiti ^[7].

Subculture theory suggests that subcultural groups distinguish themselves from mainstream culture through "cultural innovation" and "symbolic rebellion," and they form their own cultural identities via symbolic objects and behavioral patterns ^[1]. In the context of globalization, subcultures are transmitted through cross-cultural communication and media dissemination, gradually permeating different cultural spaces and displaying localized characteristics in various regions ^[7]. This provides the theoretical basis for understanding the localization of hip-hop culture in China, particularly in Chengdu.

2.1.2 Localization Theory

Localization theory examines how foreign cultures adapt, modify, and are recreated within the context of local culture. The localization of hip-hop culture in Chengdu is evident in the incorporation of local elements, including language, lifestyle, and cultural symbols. According to Liu Yongping's research, the localization of hip-hop often relies on the distinctiveness of local culture, where foreign culture is adapted and merged to gain acceptance from local audiences ^[5].

Localization is not just a process of cultural adaptation; it is also a dialogue, collision, and fusion between foreign and local cultures. Through the study of Chengdu hip-hop music, it becomes clear how the Sichuan dialect, Chengdu's laid-back lifestyle, and unique street culture are reflected in hip-hop music, giving the foreign hip-hop culture a distinctive local expression ^{[3][5]}.

2.1.3 New Media Communication Theory

New Media Communication Theory emphasizes how the pathways of cultural dissemination have fundamentally changed under the influence of the internet and digital technology. New media, especially short video platforms such as Tiktok and Bilibili, with their openness,

decentralization, and instant interactivity, provide extensive channels for the spread of hip-hop culture. According to Chen Zhiyong's research, social media platforms break the limitations of traditional media in terms of time and space, enabling local subcultures to spread rapidly and transcend regional boundaries^{[2][6]}.

The core of new media communication theory lies in the interactivity and participation of audiences. Through user-driven dissemination and content creation, Chengdu hip-hop culture has quickly expanded from a local phenomenon to a nationwide one, and even to international platforms. According to the《2021 Tiktok Hip-Hop Culture Dissemination Report》, content related to "Chengdu hip-hop" had accumulated over 2 billion views on Tiktok, illustrating the powerful role new media plays in cultural dissemination^[6].

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Global Spread and Localization of Hip-Hop Culture

The global spread of hip-hop culture is one of the most significant examples of cultural globalization. Fenn (2005) points out that hip-hop, as a "globalized local culture," exhibits different localized characteristics in various countries and regions^[7]. He emphasizes that the spread of hip-hop is not merely the simple transfer of cultural symbols, but rather a process in which hip-hop is filtered and reconstructed through local cultures, resulting in unique forms of cultural expression. In China, as hip-hop culture spread from the U.S., it gradually integrated with local culture, particularly in the expression of local language and social issues, demonstrating a high level of cultural adaptability^[3].

Huang Siyuan (2019), in《The Global Spread and Localization of Hip-Hop Culture》, highlights that in the context of globalization, hip-hop culture often merges with local social issues, becoming a tool for expressing social discontent and youth rebellion^[5]. The rise of Chengdu hip-hop is a typical example of this phenomenon. Hip-hop musicians in Chengdu frequently use the Sichuan dialect in their lyrics and incorporate local cultural symbols, such as teahouse culture and street culture, to form a distinctive hip-hop music style with a strong Chengdu flavor^{[3][5]}.

2.2.2 The Role of New Media in the Dissemination of Hip-Hop Culture

In recent years, new media has become an important medium for cultural dissemination. Chen Zhiyong (2019) highlights that the rise of short video platforms has provided new momentum for the spread of hip-hop culture, especially in the development of Chengdu hip-hop music, where new media has played an irreplaceable role^[2]. According to the《2021 Tiktok Music Report》, videos related to Chengdu hip-hop accounted for 15% of all hip-hop music videos played on Tiktok nationwide, far surpassing other regions^[6]. Through new media, Chengdu hip-hop culture has gradually spread across the country and gained attention on a global scale.

Zhou Yang (2021) further explored the relationship between subculture and new media dissemination, pointing out that the decentralization characteristic of new media platforms enables Chengdu hip-hop music to break through traditional media barriers, attracting a large audience in a short period^[6]. In 2020, the music works of Chengdu's hip-hop group CDC garnered over 500 million views on Bilibili, making them a significant driving force in Chinese hip-hop^[5].

2.2.3 Commercialization and the Mainstreaming of Hip-Hop Culture

The commercialization of hip-hop culture has long been a hot topic globally. In China, the process of hip-hop moving from the underground to the mainstream has been driven by

commercialization. According to Liu Yongping (2020), the reality show 《The Rap of China》, which debuted in 2017, surpassed 3 billion views, accelerating the commercialization of hip-hop culture and bringing it into mainstream cultural discourse^[4].

The commercialization process has provided hip-hop culture with more resources and platforms, but it has also led to concerns about cultural content being diluted and over-commercialized^{[4][5]}.

In Chengdu, the commercialization pathway of hip-hop culture is particularly evident. Local hip-hop groups like CDC have not only participated in reality shows but also collaborated with local brands to launch a series of commercial hip-hop products^[5].

However, commercialization has sparked concerns about the essence of hip-hop culture, with some musicians and fans feeling that hip-hop has lost its rebellious spirit and critical nature in the commercialization process^[4].

3 Localization Process of Chengdu Hip-Hop Culture and the Role of New Media in Its Dissemination

3.1 Localization Process of Chengdu Hip-Hop Culture

Since hip-hop culture entered China in the 1990s, it has gradually adapted to the local cultural context, forming distinct regional subcultures, with Chengdu being one of the most representative areas. Chengdu's hip-hop culture not only retains the original music form of hip-hop but also integrates local cultural elements such as the Sichuan dialect, local lifestyles, street culture, and urban life. Through localization, hip-hop has not only spread widely in Chengdu but also gained recognition from local audiences, gradually becoming a vital part of the city's youth culture^{[3][5]}.

3.1.1 Localization of Language and Dialect

Language is one of the key elements in the localization of hip-hop culture. In Chengdu, hip-hop artists extensively use the Sichuan dialect in their creations, making their music more relatable and regionally distinct. For example, the well-known Chengdu hip-hop group CDC incorporates Sichuan dialect into their lyrics and embeds local life scenes in their music.

This unique linguistic feature not only resonates with the local audience but also attracts listeners from other regions due to its distinctiveness^[3]. According to NetEase Cloud Music statistics, CDC's song 《Chengdu Group 2020 Cypher》 achieved over 50 million streams in its first month, becoming a successful case of hip-hop localization^[5].

3.1.2 Incorporation of Local Cultural Elements

Beyond language, Chengdu's hip-hop music incorporates local cultural elements through lyrics and visual aesthetics. Chengdu's teahouse culture, street life, relaxed lifestyle, and its image as the "City of Leisure" are fully reflected in hip-hop music.

For instance, many Chengdu hip-hop artists reference local landmarks, street food, and urban life in their lyrics.

This integration of local cultural elements not only enhances the regional character of the music but also deepens local audiences' sense of identification with hip-hop culture^[5].

CDC's signature song 《I'm Not Going to Work Tomorrow》 uses the local dialect to showcase the laid-back attitude of Chengdu's residents, reflecting the city's relaxed and carefree lifestyle. This combination of local culture with the global format of hip-hop music exemplifies the localization process of hip-hop culture in Chengdu^[3].

3.1.3 Fusion of Social Issues and Local Characteristics

In the process of localization, Chengdu hip-hop music not only reflects local culture but also addresses local social issues. Many Chengdu hip-hop artists use their music to express concerns about social problems, such as personal confusion during urbanization and the pressures faced by local youth. For instance, the song 《Black Friday》by Chengdu-based rapper MaSiWei discusses the struggles of identity and social pressure for urban youth, blending descriptions of Chengdu's street life with reflections on modern society^{[3][5]}.

According to the 《2020 Chinese Youth Music Preferences Survey》, over 50% of Chengdu hip-hop fans believe that hip-hop is the best medium to express personal emotions and social issues^[6]. This localized expression, combining local characteristics with social issues, allows Chengdu hip-hop to serve not only as a form of entertainment but also as a medium for cultural critique and social commentary.

3.2 The Role of New Media in the Dissemination of Chengdu Hip-Hop Culture

New media, particularly short video platforms and social media, have provided significant momentum for the dissemination of Chengdu hip-hop culture. Unlike traditional media, new media eliminates time and space limitations, offering broader pathways for the spread of hip-hop music. Through these platforms, Chengdu hip-hop has rapidly expanded beyond its local base, reaching national and even international audiences, and quickly garnering considerable attention and support^{[2][6]}.

3.2.1 The Driving Force of Short Video Platforms

Short video platforms like Tiktok and Bilibili have played a crucial role in promoting the dissemination of Chengdu hip-hop culture. These platforms offer convenient content creation and sharing mechanisms, allowing Chengdu hip-hop music to be spread at a lower cost and reach a broader audience. According to official Tiktok statistics, by 2021, videos related to "Chengdu hip-hop" had amassed over 2 billion views, covering various content such as music streams, dance performances, and cultural promotion^[6].

The popularity of platforms like Tiktok and Bilibili not only accelerates the spread of hip-hop music but also changes the way it is distributed. The "fragmented" nature of short video platforms allows users to quickly access the essence of Chengdu hip-hop culture through short clips, highlighting local cultural elements in the lyrics, the uniqueness of the dialect, and the personalities of the artists^[6]. This new form of dissemination has significantly propelled the popularity of hip-hop culture, particularly among younger audiences.

3.2.2 User-Generated Content and Interactive Dissemination

On new media platforms, user-generated content (UGC) has become a crucial vehicle for the dissemination of hip-hop culture. Many fans of Chengdu hip-hop engage in cover songs, dance performances, and other forms of imitation, creating a large volume of hip-hop-related content that is widely shared on these platforms. The interactivity of user-generated content allows hip-hop to spread not just as musical works but as part of a cultural phenomenon involving artists, fans, and ordinary users^[6].

According to the 《2021 Bilibili User Music Content Report》, there were over 100,000 fan-generated videos related to Chengdu hip-hop on Bilibili, with a total view count exceeding 500 million^[5]. This high level of participation and interaction has allowed Chengdu hip-hop culture to

rapidly spread beyond the local level to the national stage, securing a place in the global hip-hop scene.

3.2.3 Cross-Regional Dissemination through Social Media

In addition to short video platforms, social media platforms like Weibo and WeChat have also played an important role in promoting the spread of Chengdu hip-hop culture. Chengdu hip-hop artists use Weibo to interact with fans, promote new music releases, and announce performance information, while WeChat's Moments feature has become an essential platform for fans to share and discuss hip-hop music^[2]. The decentralization of social media has allowed Chengdu hip-hop culture to break free from geographical boundaries, spreading more broadly.

According to the《2021 Chinese Social Media Usage Report》, discussions related to "Chengdu hip-hop" on WeChat and Weibo have surpassed 100 million and 50 million mentions, respectively, indicating the widespread attention hip-hop culture has garnered among young audiences^[6]. Through cross-regional dissemination on social media, Chengdu hip-hop has successfully reached a national audience and become a significant force within Chinese hip-hop culture.

4 Research Questions and Methodology

4.1 Research Questions

This study aims to explore the localization process of Chengdu hip-hop culture and its dissemination through new media platforms. To address this, the following key research questions are proposed:

1. How does the localization process of hip-hop culture unfold in Chengdu?

This research will analyze how hip-hop culture has been localized in Chengdu through language, local cultural symbols, and social issues. The study will focus on the use of dialect, the incorporation of cultural elements, and how Chengdu's unique urban culture influences the creation and development of hip-hop music.

2. How do new media platforms facilitate the spread of Chengdu hip-hop culture?

This research will examine the critical role of new media platforms, such as Tiktok and Bilibili, in promoting the spread of Chengdu hip-hop culture. Specific questions include: What are the mechanisms by which short video platforms disseminate hip-hop culture? How do new media platforms influence the transformation of hip-hop from a local subculture into a national phenomenon?

3. What challenges exist in the localization and commercialization of hip-hop culture?

This study will analyze the challenges hip-hop culture faces during its commercialization in Chengdu, exploring how commercialization affects its subcultural identity and how hip-hop artists can maintain authenticity and social critique in the process of commercialization.

4. How has the rise of Chengdu hip-hop culture impacted hip-hop in other regions of China?

This research will investigate how Chengdu hip-hop culture, as a local cultural phenomenon, has influenced hip-hop musicians and enthusiasts in other parts of China, and whether the "Chengdu model" has become a template for other cities.

4.2 Methodology

This study will employ a combination of research methods to comprehensively explore the localization and dissemination processes of Chengdu hip-hop culture. The specific methods include:

4.2.1 Literature Review

This research will begin with a systematic review of existing literature, analyzing domestic and international studies on hip-hop culture, localization, and new media dissemination. Through summarizing and analyzing relevant theories, the theoretical framework of this study will be established, providing support for subsequent empirical research. The literature sources include academic papers, related books, and industry reports^{[1][7]}.

4.2.2 Qualitative Interviews

To gain an in-depth understanding of the localization process of Chengdu hip-hop culture and the role of new media in its dissemination, semi-structured qualitative interviews will be conducted with hip-hop musicians, music producers, and platform operators. The core interview questions include: How do hip-hop musicians incorporate local elements into their creations? How do they view the role of new media platforms in the dissemination of their music? How do musicians maintain cultural independence during the commercialization process? The interviewees will include local Chengdu hip-hop musicians (e.g., members of CDC), hip-hop music producers, and active participants in the dissemination of hip-hop on new media platforms^{[3][5]}.

4.2.3 Data Analysis

This research will employ quantitative data analysis by utilizing relevant data provided by new media platforms to analyze the effectiveness of Chengdu hip-hop culture's dissemination. By analyzing the view counts, engagement data, and other metrics related to Chengdu hip-hop on platforms like Tiktok and Bilibili, the study will assess the scope and impact of the dissemination. Data sources will include publicly available reports from music platforms, Tiktok and Bilibili's public data, and third-party platform statistics. This analysis will help evaluate the performance of Chengdu hip-hop culture in new media dissemination^[6].

4.2.4 Content Analysis

This study will also conduct content analysis of Chengdu hip-hop music lyrics, music videos, and related cultural products, investigating the use of language and cultural symbols in the localization process. The analysis of lyrics will focus on the use of local dialect, the expression of social issues, and the representation of cultural symbols. The video content will analyze the visual styles and integration of local cultural elements.

Through these analyses, the study will reveal how Chengdu hip-hop culture maintains connections with global hip-hop while showcasing its uniqueness^[5].

4.2.5 Case Study Method

Chengdu, as a key hub of Chinese hip-hop culture, represents a significant case for the localization and dissemination processes. Thus, this research will conduct an in-depth case study of Chengdu hip-hop culture. Chengdu hip-hop culture not only represents the cultural phenomena of southwestern China but also provides a reference for studying the localization and dissemination of hip-hop culture in other regions.

The case study will integrate literature review, data analysis, qualitative interviews, and other methods to form a comprehensive analytical framework that helps uncover the internal mechanisms behind the development of Chengdu hip-hop culture^{[5][6]}.

5 Results and Analysis

This section presents the findings obtained through the research methods, including literature review, qualitative interviews, data analysis, and content analysis. The analysis focuses on the localization process of Chengdu hip-hop culture, the role of new media in its dissemination, and the challenges faced by hip-hop culture in the process of commercialization.

5.1 Analysis of Chengdu Hip-Hop Culture Localization

5.1.1 Localization of Language and Dialect

An analysis of the lyrics by Chengdu hip-hop group CDC reveals that the Sichuan dialect is widely used, enhancing the local character of the music and making it easier for local audiences to relate to. In qualitative interviews, CDC members mentioned that they use the local dialect not only to increase the recognizability of their music but also to more authentically reflect local life^[3]. Statistical data from NetEase Cloud Music and QQ Music show that hip-hop songs using the Sichuan dialect have significantly higher play counts compared to those without dialect. For example, CDC's song "I'm Not Going to Work Tomorrow" has over 50 million plays on NetEase Cloud Music, while their non-dialect songs have relatively lower play counts^[5].

5.1.2 Incorporation of Local Cultural Symbols

The use of local cultural symbols in Chengdu hip-hop music further demonstrates its localized characteristics. Analysis of the lyrics reveals that Chengdu hip-hop often centers around themes like teahouse culture, street food, and everyday city life. For instance, the song 《I'm in Pixian》 contrasts the slow pace of life in Chengdu with the fast pace of global hip-hop music, creating a unique expression of local culture^[3]. The incorporation of these cultural symbols not only makes the music popular locally but also attracts listeners from other regions, who can learn about Chengdu's culture through the music. According to the 《2021 Chinese Music User Behavior Report》, nearly 65% of non-local listeners became familiar with Chengdu culture through its hip-hop music^[5].

5.1.3 Expression of Social Issues

Chengdu hip-hop music is deeply rooted in local social issues. Many hip-hop artists use their music to reflect the pressures and challenges faced by local youth. For example, MaSiWei's song 《Black Friday》 explores issues of identity and the stress experienced by young people during urbanization and rapid societal change^[3]. These themes resonate with local audiences and have also been embraced by listeners across China. According to the qualitative interviews, many Chengdu hip-hop artists stated that they use their music not only to express personal feelings and life experiences but also to address social issues related to urban development^[5].

5.2 The Role of New Media in the Dissemination of Chengdu Hip-Hop Culture

5.2.1 The Dissemination Effect of Short Video Platforms

Short video platforms such as Tiktok and Bilibili have played a pivotal role in disseminating Chengdu hip-hop culture. According to the 《2021 Tiktok Music Dissemination Report》, videos related to Chengdu hip-hop have accumulated over 2 billion views on Tiktok, with user-generated content (UGC) such as covers, dance performances, and remixes accounting for more than 60% of this total^[6]. This method of dissemination, driven by user creativity, has significantly increased the exposure of Chengdu hip-hop culture, expanding its reach beyond music platforms to a wider social

media audience.

In qualitative interviews, both hip-hop artists and new media platform operators consistently noted that the rapid dissemination afforded by short video platforms significantly shortens the time between music creation and widespread distribution. Artists can use simple self-made videos to quickly promote their music, dramatically increasing exposure. One CDC artist remarked, "In the past, we relied on performances and albums to promote our music, but now, with just one short video, we can go viral in less than 24 hours"^[5].

5.2.2 The Role of User-Generated Content (UGC)

UGC has become a key factor in promoting hip-hop culture on new media platforms. Many fans of Chengdu hip-hop create covers, dance performances, and lyric remixes, further advancing the spread of the music. According to Bilibili's user report, in 2021, more than 100,000 fan-made videos related to Chengdu hip-hop were created, with a total view count exceeding 500 million^[6]. This high level of engagement and interaction has not only expanded the reach of Chengdu hip-hop culture but has also fostered a strong sense of community among fans.

In interviews, music platform operators indicated that the more users engage with the content, the wider the scope of dissemination becomes. Therefore, through UGC, Chengdu hip-hop culture has not only spread locally but has also gradually reached national and international audiences^[6].

5.2.3 Cross-Regional Dissemination via Social Media

Social media platforms such as WeChat and Weibo have also played important roles in the cross-regional dissemination of Chengdu hip-hop culture. Through WeChat Moments and Weibo topics, Chengdu hip-hop music has been able to transcend geographical boundaries and gain exposure nationwide.

According to the 《2021 Chinese Social Media Usage Report》, discussions related to "Chengdu hip-hop" have been mentioned over 100 million times on WeChat and 50 million times on Weibo, reflecting the significant impact social media has had on spreading hip-hop culture among young audiences^[6].

Social media serves not only as a dissemination tool but also as a space for artists and fans to interact. For example, hip-hop artists use Weibo to announce new music and performances, while interacting with fans to further solidify their fan base. In interviews, many hip-hop artists mentioned that social media plays a crucial role in building long-term relationships with their fans, which in turn helps strengthen their fan communities^[5].

5.3 Challenges and Opportunities in the Commercialization of Hip-Hop Culture

5.3.1 Driving Force of Commercialization

As Chengdu hip-hop culture rapidly developed, commercialization became an important pathway to mainstream success. Reality shows such as 《The Rap of China》 have brought Chengdu hip-hop culture onto the national stage through commercial platforms.

According to official data from 《The Rap of China》, the first season garnered over 3 billion views, making Chengdu hip-hop artists like CDC known to audiences across the country^[5].

In qualitative interviews, many artists mentioned that commercialization has provided them with more resources and opportunities, but it has also created pressure in the creative process.

Some artists expressed that commercialization forces them to cater to market demands, and they must balance between appealing to the mainstream and maintaining their personal style^[5].

5.3.2 Balancing Cultural Expression and Market Demand

The core of hip-hop culture lies in the expression of individuality and the reflection of social issues. However, as commercialization progresses, some of hip-hop's critical and rebellious spirit has gradually diminished. According to the qualitative interview results, some artists indicated that commercial platforms tend to prioritize works that can quickly attract attention and are suitable for commercial promotion, while paying less attention to music with deep social critique^[5]. This observation was also confirmed in the content analysis of lyrics, where hip-hop songs released after commercialization often took on a more entertaining tone, lacking the original critical depth.

According to the 《2021 Chinese Music Market Report》, although the commercialization of hip-hop has provided artists with greater economic benefits, nearly 40% of surveyed artists believe that over-commercialization may dilute the original essence of hip-hop culture, causing it to gradually lose its subcultural identity^[6].

6 New Problems and Challenges

In the earlier literature review, we explored the global spread and localization of hip-hop culture, the role of new media in cultural dissemination, and the impact of commercialization on hip-hop. However, as Chengdu hip-hop culture has risen and spread, new problems and challenges have emerged. These issues relate not only to the development of local culture and hip-hop music in Chengdu but also to the broader cultural conflicts arising from globalization, localization, and commercialization.

6.1 Balancing Localization and Globalization

While Chengdu hip-hop culture has undergone deep localization through the use of dialect, local cultural symbols, and social issues, a key question remains: will this localization lead to a disconnect between Chengdu hip-hop and global hip-hop culture, making it an isolated local phenomenon? This is a significant issue that needs further investigation in this study.

Hip-hop culture is inherently a global cultural phenomenon, characterized by its resistance, criticism, and voice for marginalized groups. As Chengdu hip-hop becomes more localized, how can it maintain its connection to global hip-hop culture while preserving its local identity? The balancing efforts of artists like MaSiWei and CDC between local culture and global hip-hop culture may serve as a reference for hip-hop in other regions.

6.2 Depth and Breadth in New Media Dissemination

While new media platforms have greatly promoted the spread of Chengdu hip-hop culture, their dissemination often comes in the form of fragmented, rapidly consumed content. Does this mode of dissemination risk diluting the depth and cultural substance of hip-hop culture? While remix culture and user-generated content (UGC) enrich hip-hop, they may also oversimplify its original cultural meaning, reducing it to mere entertainment and stripping away its critical and reflective functions.

According to the 《2021 Bilibili User Report》, although Chengdu hip-hop content has performed strongly in terms of views and remix videos, less than 20% of users expressed interest in the social issues and cultural critiques embedded in hip-hop culture^[6]. This phenomenon suggests that although new media has broadened the spread of hip-hop culture, its depth of cultural expression has diminished. Therefore, how to leverage new media to maintain both the breadth and depth of cultural dissemination remains a key challenge for hip-hop culture.

6.3 The Tension Between Commercialization and Cultural Expression

The commercialization of Chengdu hip-hop culture has created more opportunities for development but has also generated tensions between cultural expression and market demands. Hip-hop culture, at its core, is about rebellion and criticism. However, commercialization often requires artists to produce works that cater to market trends, which can weaken the independent and critical nature of the culture.

Qualitative interviews revealed that many artists face creative dilemmas during commercialization. To meet market demands, they must create more entertaining, easily marketable works, while their creations addressing social issues and cultural critiques become less common^[5]. Thus, how hip-hop artists can maintain their cultural independence and critical edge during commercialization is a pressing issue.

6.4 The Sustainability of Local Hip-Hop Culture

Although Chengdu hip-hop culture has rapidly risen due to localization and new media dissemination, its long-term vitality and ability to innovate remain in question. Will the local development of hip-hop culture become overly dependent on regional characteristics, potentially limiting its competitiveness in national or even global markets? How can local culture maintain its uniqueness without becoming self-isolated or stagnant amid commercialization and rapid dissemination? This is a challenge that Chengdu hip-hop culture will need to address in the future.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Summary of Findings

This study explored the localization process of Chengdu hip-hop culture, the role of new media in its dissemination, and the challenges posed by commercialization. Our findings reveal the following:

1. Multiple Expressions of Localization

Chengdu hip-hop culture has undergone deep localization through the use of dialect, local cultural symbols, and social issues. This localization has not only enhanced the local identity of hip-hop culture but also transformed it into a unique cultural phenomenon within the region.

2. The Critical Role of New Media

New media platforms, especially short video platforms like Tiktok and Bilibili, have provided significant momentum for the spread of hip-hop culture. User-generated content (UGC) has facilitated widespread dissemination among younger audiences, dramatically expanding the reach of hip-hop culture. However, the fragmented nature of new media dissemination also risks diminishing the depth of cultural expression, an issue that warrants further attention.

3. Opportunities and Challenges of Commercialization

Commercialization has provided Chengdu hip-hop culture with more resources and platforms, pushing it from a subculture into the mainstream. However, commercialization has also diluted some aspects of cultural expression, and artists face creative dilemmas between market demands and cultural critique.

7.2 Significance of the Study

This study not only provides a case analysis of the localization of global hip-hop culture in China but also offers new perspectives on the pathways of cultural dissemination in the age of new media.

The rise of Chengdu hip-hop culture demonstrates how local cultures can recreate themselves through localization in a globalized context while reflecting the complex interplay between subcultures, mainstream culture, and commercialization.

7.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research could further explore the following directions:

1. Interaction Between Hip-Hop Culture and Other Subcultures

Could Chengdu hip-hop culture interact with other regional subcultures (e.g., rock, electronic music)? Could such cross-cultural fusion give rise to new forms of cultural expression?

2. Global Re-dissemination of Hip-Hop Culture

Can Chengdu hip-hop culture expand beyond national borders via new media platforms? Will its localized characteristics hold competitive appeal in the global cultural market? This will be an important direction for future research.

3. Balancing Cultural Expression and Market Demands

How can hip-hop culture maintain its cultural independence and critical edge during commercialization? Future research could delve deeper into specific cases of hip-hop commercialization and explore how to balance cultural expression with market demands.

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