

New Age of Navigation: Emerging Trends in the Overseas Expansion of Live Streaming Amidst Globalizational Transformations (Postprint)

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Abstract

In the process of the digital economy wave reshaping the global business landscape, live streaming is becoming a new form of infrastructure connecting China's supply chain with global consumer markets. Platforms like TikTok, through their “content + e-commerce” model, have broken through cultural boundaries, yet face a dual squeeze of geopolitical games, data sovereignty contests, and compliance challenges amid global fragmentation. Currently, the United States' containment of Chinese digital pl...

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Introduction

In the process of the digital economy wave reshaping the global business landscape, live streaming is becoming a new form of infrastructure connecting China's supply chain with global consumer markets. Platforms like TikTok, through their “content + e-commerce” model, have broken through cultural boundaries, yet face a dual squeeze of geopolitical games, data sovereignty contests, and compliance challenges amid global fragmentation. Currently, the United States' containment of Chinese digital platforms under the banner of “national security” not only reflects the rule reconstruction in the era of digital capitalism, but also reveals the real dilemma of deep interweaving between technological power and international order.

This paper systematically analyzes the new trends of live streaming going overseas from five dimensions: global environment, market ecosystem, marketing strategy, corporate strategy, and technological empowerment, aiming to provide theoretical reference and practical insights for Chinese live streaming enterprises to cope with global changes and build sustainable competitiveness.

I. Geopolitical Economy and Globalization Risks Triggering Domino Effects

First, TikTok's predicament reflects the escalating challenges of globalization. Geopolitical economics studies how states, within specific geographical spaces, maximize national economic interests through the interaction of economics and politics against the backdrop of globalization. Its theoretical framework seeks to explain the relationships between geopolitical regions, political power, and economic strategies [?]. As a benchmark platform for Chinese live streaming going overseas, TikTok has faced a U.S. demand to divest its American operations under the pretext of "national security," experiencing Biden's divestment bill and two extensions of the ban enforcement by Trump, during which tariffs on China continued to escalate. Chinese enterprises still face dilemmas in the global geopolitical and economic game. From a geopolitical dimension, the United States, under the banner of "data security," views TikTok as a vehicle for Sino-U.S. digital sovereignty competition, fearing its information manipulation power could infiltrate political processes, and uses legislative means to curb the political influence penetration of Chinese digital enterprises. From a geoeconomic dimension, TikTok's commercial success has challenged the traditional advantages of American companies like Meta, and the ban aims to weaken the international competitiveness of Chinese digital enterprises, ensure U.S. dominance in global digital economy rule-making, and hinder China's value ascent in the digital industry chain. As global external risks continue to intensify, live streaming going overseas must address emerging challenges.

Second, compliance and risk diversification will enhance the resilience of live streaming going overseas. Geopolitical and economic risks compel the live streaming industry to construct a new development paradigm, which suggests that live streaming enterprises need to pay attention to the following points in future operations: First, compliance is the core lifeline. Geopolitical risks highlight the importance of data security, content review, and compliance with local laws. Live streaming platforms need to establish a global compliance system, actively adapting to regulatory frameworks of various countries, especially in cross-border data flow, user privacy protection, and local content review, to avoid becoming victims of political games. Second, decentralized layout disperses risks. Over-reliance on a single market makes one vulnerable to policy shocks. The live streaming industry needs to diversify risks through multi-regional market layouts while exploring localized operation models, such as joint ventures and local team management, to reduce the chain reactions caused by "one-size-fits-all" bans. Third, technological sovereignty and data localization. Competition for data sovereignty among nations compels enterprises to adjust their technical architecture. Future live streaming platforms need to adopt solutions such as "regional cloud services" and "local data centers" to ensure data compliance while balancing operational efficiency and security costs.

II. Market Environment Will Face a New Round of Reshuffling

Currently, the global trade channel system is undergoing a fundamental transformation in power structure. Market entities represented by top anchors and e-commerce platforms achieve vertical integration of channel power through traffic aggregation and model innovation, forming a systematic replacement for traditional multi-level distribution systems.

First, channel power is gradually being reconstructed, with top anchors and platforms creating a substitution effect on the intermediary ecosystem. On the one hand, top anchors squeeze the survival space of intermediaries. With their traffic monopoly advantages and scale bargaining power, top anchors are reshaping the underlying logic of cross-border commodity circulation. Anchors transform their traffic assets into channel control power, forming a short-chain closed loop of “anchor-consumer,” and by directly cooperating with brands and factories, they weaken the role of intermediaries in the distribution chain and reshape market structure. For example, Xin Xuan anchor Dan Dan participated in the Seoul China-Korea Entrepreneurs Exchange Conference, deeply partnering with renowned Korean companies such as LG Group and Amorepacific Group, and hard-launched a C2M model where Korean factory goods go directly to Chinese live streaming rooms, cutting the chain of “brand → general agent → provincial agent → retailer” [?]. On the other hand, the “platform-factory” model is gradually becoming “disintermediated.” Rochet and Tirole (2006) proposed the definition of a two-sided market: “If a platform can change transaction volume by increasing charges to one side while equally reducing charges to the other side, then this market is called a two-sided market.” In two-sided markets, price structure affects transaction volume, and platforms should design reasonable price structures to attract participants on both sides [?]. Based on two-sided market theory, platforms begin to intervene in the seller market to obtain more benefits. With their perfected operation models, they directly connect with factories, weakening the market share of multi-level distributors and achieving disintermediation. DHgate, through its “China Factory Direct Connection” model, breaks the multi-layer markups of traditional trade chains. Even under the United States’ continuously escalating tariff policies, it has launched a “Tariff Escort Plan,” and currently, DHgate’s downloads have soared on the U.S. Apple App Store rankings.

Second, the trend of ecological collaboration is strengthening, and cross-border live streaming industry belt alliances are gradually forming. The overseas expansion of live streaming e-commerce will lead to the formation of cross-border live streaming industry belt alliances, which take China’s local industry belts as the core, unite cross-border service providers and overseas local resources, and build a collaborative network covering the entire chain of “production-live streaming-fulfillment.” Its core is to deeply integrate China’s local manufacturing and supply chain capabilities with overseas market demand and traffic resources through industrial collaboration, forming a scaled and specialized

cross-border live streaming ecosystem. The model types are mainly divided into two categories: one is the China industry belt + overseas warehouse + local live streaming alliance, and the other is the platform-dominated alliance. For example, China's "Four Little Dragons of Going Overseas" have launched industry belt support plans, but these are only the embryonic form of cross-border live streaming industry belt alliances [?]. The essence of cross-border live streaming industry belt alliances is to address systemic risks under global changes through ecological collaboration. In the future, their development will be driven by three forces: first, rooting downward—deeply integrating local manufacturing capabilities with overseas market characteristics; second, empowering upward—using technological tools to break through scaling bottlenecks; and third, weaving outward—building a multi-center supply chain network that resists risks.

III. Live Streaming Marketing Strategies Will Shift Towards Emotional Value

Against the backdrop of globalization, the path of live streaming going overseas requires not only attention to products themselves but also emphasis on consumers' emotional experiences and emotional value. Live streaming overseas marketing strategies are undergoing a paradigm shift from functional value to emotional value.

First, emotional marketing will become an important strategy for capturing the minds of overseas consumers. The concept of emotional marketing was proposed by American professor Barry Feig, referring to enhancing the connection between brands and consumers by focusing on consumers' emotional needs and using methods such as emotional resonance, emotional expression, and emotional experience [?]. Research shows that when consumers have no significant differences in rational cognition of products, irrational cognition plays a decisive role in consumer behavior, and consumers are driven by their own emotions to make purchases [?]. Evidently, emotional marketing can promote brand cognition and consumption decision-making. For example, Pop Mart's explosive popularity in Southeast Asia, conducting live streaming sales activities on TikTok, precisely captures the emotional consumption of contemporary young people based on the characteristics of "soft object attachment" and the "surprise" element of blind boxes. MINISO, through global IP cooperation, tightly integrates the brand with consumers' emotional needs, enhancing the brand's global influence through emotional marketing.

Second, the deep integration of social platforms and e-commerce enhances emotional consumption experiences. With TikTok's explosive popularity overseas, the integration of social platforms and e-commerce has become an important trend in live streaming e-commerce going overseas. This integration places greater emphasis on emotional value, combining shelf e-commerce, content e-commerce, and interest e-commerce to provide consumers with richer emotional experiences. According to a research report released by the British research institution Retail Economics, 82% of social users engage in shopping-related

activities when using social and entertainment platforms (with TikTok users accounting for 93%), 88% of TikTok users have discovered brands they are interested in purchasing on the platform—the highest among all social and entertainment platforms—and half of UK users make purchases directly through social platforms [?]. Social platforms can, to a certain extent, improve e-commerce platform conversion through emotional rendering. The domestic cleaning brand Seaways, relying on the TikTok platform, through influencer marketing, precise placement, and emotional content operation, achieved TOP3 in cross-border categories within three months of entering the Southeast Asian market, becoming a model of social-commerce integration [?].

Evidently, future live streaming e-commerce going overseas needs to place greater emphasis on mining emotional value and creating emotional experiences. This new model centered on emotional experience can not only eliminate cultural barriers in cross-cultural communication but also strengthen brand user stickiness, building new advantages for global competition.

IV. Live Streaming Enterprises Urgently Need Strategic Transformation to Build a Second Growth Curve

Against the dual backdrop of global digital economy development and geopolitical pattern reconstruction, Chinese live streaming enterprises going overseas are facing a strategic inflection point from “traffic harvesting” to “value deepening.” Extensive growth relying solely on model replication is no longer sustainable. Enterprises urgently need to build a second growth curve through systematic capability reconstruction, which will become the core of strategic transformation for live streaming enterprises.

First, product and service transformation from “localization” to “glocalization.” “Localization” refers to adapting products or services to specific regions through language, functionality, and other adjustments to meet market demand. “Glocalization” emphasizes deeper integration into local culture and community needs, focusing on preserving local uniqueness. Currently, live streaming enterprises going overseas are generally in the “localization” stage, focusing on superficial modifications such as language translation and payment adaptation. “Glocalization” requires enterprises to deeply embed themselves in the cultural fabric and community ecology of target markets, meaning that enterprises must not only adapt products and services to local markets but also integrate local elements into corporate culture and management models. For example, Haier in the Vietnamese market successfully won the recognition of local users by sponsoring beauty pageants, enhancing refrigerator ice-making technical support, and community development, and created the new AQUA brand.

Second, supply chain transformation from “rigidified” to “flexible and agile.” In the supply chain turmoil triggered by global trade wars, traditional rigidified supply chain systems struggle to cope with the dual uncertainties of geopolitics and consumer demand. Currently, product SKU segmentation, daily product

updates, and long-tail orders are becoming mainstream, focusing on production based on sales and demand response. Traditional large-scale standardized production models can no longer meet market changes. Having a flexible and agile supply chain has become a “buffer” for live streaming e-commerce enterprises to resist external risks. The core of a flexible supply chain lies in using advanced information technology to achieve real-time monitoring, dynamic optimization, and intelligent decision-making. For example, SHEIN’s “small orders, quick response” model uses digital tools for small-batch production and rapid replenishment. This flexible and agile supply chain model enables SHEIN to achieve rapid iteration, high-frequency new product launches, and short-cycle operations [?].

Third, organizational capacity transformation from “centralized control” to “ecological symbiosis.” Traditional hierarchical organizations struggle to adapt to the complexity of cross-border operations. Live streaming enterprises need to build flexible ecologically symbiotic organizations. Distributed decision-making systems, self-organization and self-coordination mechanisms, and benefit-sharing mechanisms have become key to enhancing organizational flexibility and innovation capabilities. For example, live streaming e-commerce enterprises can delegate some decision-making authority to local teams, enabling them to respond quickly according to local market conditions. Among these, the benefit-sharing incentive mechanism is particularly important. For instance, Haier has established a dynamic partnership system that encourages employees to buy shares, invest, and even go public. This organizational model not only improves enterprise adaptability but also enhances partners’ sense of participation and enthusiasm.

The strategic transformation of live streaming going overseas essentially opens new value spaces through systematic capability reconstruction. This transformation is not only an inevitable choice to address challenges but also a key to seizing discourse power in the next generation of the Internet.

V. Technological Iteration of Live Streaming E-commerce Empowering Overseas Expansion

First, AI going overseas drives the experience upgrade of live streaming e-commerce. Under the massive wave of going overseas, AI going overseas currently covers various applications from underlying infrastructure to middle technology layers to terminal application layers, and the service ecosystem can provide comprehensive empowerment support [?]. It has already penetrated multiple segments of live streaming e-commerce, including insights, product selection, procurement, operations, customer service, and real-time translation. AI going overseas can largely empower live streaming going overseas and drive the upgrading of live streaming e-commerce enterprises. For example, in AI operations, Focus Technology’s AI foreign trade assistant “Mike” can provide services including marketing customer acquisition, creative copywriting, and procurement negotiation communication according to different business scenarios

of enterprises. In AI procurement, Alibaba International Station has upgraded intelligent image search, intelligent demand posting, intelligent communication, and intelligent logistics services based on the procurement needs of global small and medium-sized enterprises [?].

Second, overseas database construction has become one of the core competencies for going overseas. Overseas data assets will be key to building moats for live streaming enterprises and platforms. They can not only help enterprises accurately understand consumer needs, optimize operational decisions, and improve customer experiences but also enhance market competitiveness and support globalization strategies. Anker Innovations has built a VOC (Voice of Customer) consumer insight system that systematically integrates and analyzes Amazon platform reviews, emails, phone calls, and massive user testing data. After quantitative processing, it conducts analysis and interpretation to understand consumers' real thoughts and needs, thereby building its own user database.

When AI technology breakthroughs and data asset accumulation create a multiplier effect, China's live streaming going overseas will advance from traffic competition to technical ecosystem competition, injecting new variables into the global digital trade pattern.

Conclusion

In the context of global changes, live streaming going overseas is not only a competition of technological revolution and business innovation but also a survival test under geopolitical and economic games. TikTok's predicament confirms that "we are in a world of intertwined changes and chaos, with frequent local conflicts and turmoil, rampant hegemonism and power politics, and overlapping traditional and non-traditional security threats." Facing competition for data sovereignty, high compliance barriers, and market channel transformations, the future journey of going overseas must always uphold the innovative spirit of "when in poverty, one changes; when one changes, one succeeds." Only by forging core capabilities with "compliance as the shield and innovation as the spear" in the midst of changes can we open up a "new maritime era" in the counter-current of de-globalization.

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