

Cross-cultural TikTok study offers insights into user behavior and motivations

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TikTok is a popular social media platform where users can create and share short videos, often featuring music, dance, comedy, and other creative content.

Research [published](#) in the *International Journal of Mobile Communications* has compared TikTok usage between China and the United States of America and offers invaluable insights into user behavior and motivations on the social media platform and how they differ between these two regions. The study involved surveying 150 Chinese and 148 U.S. users and introduced the Comprehensive Gratifications Engagement Model to reveal how users interact with TikTok content.

Jian Shi, Mohammad Ali, and Fiona Chew of Syracuse University, New York, U.S., make several points based on their study. First, TikTok users engage more in [self-promotion](#) and with the platform's video content compared with other short-video apps such as Snapchat. This would suggest that part of TikTok's unique appeal is its potential for working as a goal-oriented activity.

Second, differences in user engagement between TikTok users in China and the U.S. were apparent, particularly when it comes to the degree of gratification people hope for in using the app, users in the U.S. seek a greater degree of gratification than those in China, the team reports. Understanding such cultural differences is essential for companies hoping to tailor [marketing strategies](#) on social media in different countries.

Fundamentally, TikTok is widely used as a pastime to help someone escape their everyday life, to relax, to learn, but also as a tool for procrastination and as a status-seeking tool and to impress others. Thankfully, it's not all about self-aggrandizement, people also want to meet and discover interesting people on the app and to make connections

and thus feel like they belong to an interesting community. There remains an element of social in this form of [social media](#). The specifics as detailed in the paper showed the nuanced differences between users in China and the U.S.

More information: Jian Shi et al, Understanding gratifications for engaging with short-video: a comparison of TikTok use in the USA and China, *International Journal of Mobile Communications* (2024). [DOI: 10.1504/IJMC.2024.136627](#)

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