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Chinese micro dramas going global to Latin America: a study on the innovative mechanism of digital narrative from the perspective of fusion theory

Ruyi Zhang*
School of Foreign Languages,Qingdao University,China
***Corresponding author E-mail:1369506313@qq.com**

Abstract:
In recent years, Chinese micro dramas have rapidly entered the Latin American market through digital platforms such as ReelShort, especially attracting widespread attention in Mexico. This study starts from Stuart Hall's theory of coherence and comprehensively uses literature analysis, case analysis, and in-depth interview methods to systematically examine the localization strategies and dissemination effects of Chinese micro dramas going abroad to Latin America. Research has found that, firstly, at the cultural level, micro dramas precisely connect the profound "Telenovela" television tradition in Latin America with the fragmented entertainment needs of the digital age, filling the market gap between traditional long dramas and international streaming content; Secondly, at the level of content production, a dual layered mechanism of "localized replacement of surface symbols" and "preservation of deep emotional logic" has been formed, which not only resolves cultural barriers but also preserves high-intensity emotional stimulation; Thirdly, at the user psychological level, a closed-loop psychological model of "low decision threshold high narrative stickiness low risk payment" has been constructed, reshaping viewing behavior into an efficient "light entertainment" consumption paradigm. Research has shown that the success of Chinese micro dramas in Latin America reflects a transnational narrative innovation model based on digital platforms, integrating local culture and universal emotions, providing a new theoretical perspective and empirical basis for understanding the flow of cultural products and local adaptation in the global context.

Keywords:
micro drama, Joint theory, Cross cultural communication, Localization strategy, Latin American market

1 Introduction

Against the backdrop of accelerated integration of global media formats, cross-cultural content dissemination has become an important phenomenon in the digital age. Understanding its localization strategies and effects is of great significance for cultural adaptation and industrial practice. In recent years, Chinese micro dramas have rapidly entered the Mexican market through digital platforms such as ReelShort. They have not stopped at the level of language translation, but actively integrated the local deep "Telenovela" narrative tra-

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dition with the fragmented and fast-paced form of short videos, forming an emerging cultural product called "digital emotional fast food".

This phenomenon raises two levels of core questions: firstly, what localization modifications have been made to such short dramas in Mexico? Secondly, what kind of dissemination effect and audience acceptance has this transformation strategy based on "cultural integration" actually produced? This study attempts to explore the localization logic and cross-cultural adaptation mechanism in the global dissemination of short dramas by empirically examining the content analysis of popular TV dramas on the platform, starting from the theory of cross-cultural communication and integration.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Chinese micro dramas

Chinese micro dramas have attracted research from multiple perspectives in academia. From the study on the driving factors behind the rise and development of Chinese micro-dramas, Zhao Lirong in A Study on the Development of Micro-Dramas from the Perspective of Uses and Gratifications Theory (2020) analyzes from the perspective of uses and gratifications theory, attributing the development of online micro-dramas to the era of fragmentation, which aims to meet users' content consumption needs for psychological satisfaction. Tang Tiantian, Wen Manlu, in the Research on Emotional Communication of unfashionable Expression in Internet Short Dramas (2022), from the perspective of subculture, discussed that the reason why online short drama can attract the audience's attention is that it has realized the audience's bottom consolation, content consumption, entertainment carnival and other emotional experiences.

From the perspective of research on the innovation of Chinese micro dramas, Wang Xuelian and Jiang Xin analyzed the innovative strategies of micro dramas from the perspectives of discourse, cultural context, cultural symbols, and empathetic communication in their article Innovative Strategies of Chinese Cultural Short Videos from the Perspective of Cultural Communication: Taking "Escape from the British Museum" as an Example (2024). Zhu Tian and Wen Yi believe in their article The Trend and Future Breakthrough of Online Micro Drama under the Demand of Multiple Subjects (2021) that the innovation of online micro drama lies in its ability to meet the needs of multiple subjects, including creator subjectivity expression, user content consumption, and platform breakthrough.

From the perspective of narrative strategy research in Chinese micro dramas, Gao Kai and Zhang Huijin explored in their book Ultimate Experience and Emotional Satisfaction: Global Communication Practice of Micro dramas (2023) the narrative style centered on the emotional logic of Alpha CEO and sweet pet elements in micro dramas, which brings a satisfying experience to global audiences. Hu Zheng provides a narrative interpretation of online micro dramas from the perspective of emotional communication in his book From 'Emotional Massage' to 'Emotional Consumption': The Development Logic of Online Micro dramas (2021). Lina Breidokien ė studied the humor and satirical narrative of micro dramas in Posthumanism as Science Fiction. The Case of Netflix's Altered Carbon and Love, Death and Robots (2020), using the short drama "Love, Death and Robots" as an example.

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From the perspective of platform research on micro dramas, ELLINGSEN S, TURNBULL S E, BASSAGET J argue in Quibi disaster: how to lose $1.75 b on something you don't understand (2021) that the reason for the collapse of Quibi (Quick Bites) online micro drama streaming platform is due to its operating system being inconvenient for users to communicate and share, as well as the balance between platform quality control and production costs of micro dramas. Wang Peinan explored in Exploration of International Communication of ReelShort Drama Platform's' Local Mode, Overseas Content (2024) the exploration of short drama platforms represented by ReelShort based on the Chinese local short drama market, promoting the complete model of "technology business content" for short dramas to go global and have had a significant impact in overseas markets.

From the research on the phenomenon of Chinese micro dramas going global, Liu Lei and Gao Hui pointed out in their article Research on the International Communication Strategy of Online Micro dramas (2024) that the trend of online micro dramas going global is still on the rise, but there are problems such as vulgar content, lack of localization, high cost of going global, and frequent copyright chaos. In the future, efforts can be made to focus on the refinement and localization of micro dramas, integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into short drama works, exploring new content production models, and accelerating the integration of art and technology innovation to help micro dramas achieve cost reduction and efficiency improvement when going global. Pang Huimin and Li Jie summarized the audience acceptance situation and path of Chinese micro dramas from the perspective of overseas audience acceptance in their study Research on Audience Acceptance in the Overseas Breaking Communication of Chinese Micro dramas (2025). They believe that their localized expression and unique narrative techniques meet the emotional needs of overseas audiences. Zhu Jingwen and Ouyang Hongsheng, in Observations on the Industrial Model of Chinese Micro-Series Going Abroad to Southeast Asia in the Context of Streaming Media (2025), conducted a study on the industrial practices of Chinese micro-series expanding into Southeast Asia.

Although these studies have studied Chinese micro dramas from various aspects, they have not conducted regional analysis on the dissemination of Chinese micro dramas in Latin America.

2.2 Joining theory

After Stuart Hall proposed the theory of conjugation, it has received high attention from scholars both domestically and internationally, and has achieved relevant research results.

In related research abroad, David Morley and Kuan Hsing Chen's Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies (1996) is the earliest published work on the topic of Hall. Helen Davis focused on analyzing Hall's ideological framework in Understanding Stuart Hall (2004), comprehensively introducing Hall's influence, and delving into Hall's early thought process, theoretical research on television and media, and other issues. James Procter summarized Hall's cultural theory research paradigm in six parts in Stuart Hall (2004), pointing out the significance of Hall's proposal of cultural research paradigms. Jennifer Daryl Slack and Lawrence Grossbergides reviewed Stuart Hall's contributions in Stuart Hall, Cultural Studies 1983: A Theoretical History (2016), exploring how Hall used cultural research methodologies such as the Conjugation Theory to analyze social phenomena and how his theory continues to be relevant in contemporary contexts.

However, these studies focus on analyzing Hall's overall ideas and cultural research theories, and do not

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involve specific case studies of cross-cultural communication from the perspective of fusion theory.

In relevant domestic research, Zou Weihua, in his study Stuart Hall's Theory of Conjugation (2012), takes “Conjugation Theory” as the theme, deeply examines its evolution in Hall's thought, focuses on thinking about the core and characteristics of “Conjugation Theory”, and highlights its significance and value for cultural theory and postcolonial literature. Yang Dongli explored in The Evolution of Conjugation Theory and Cultural Studies (2021) the special value of Conjugation Theory for cultural studies, and depicted the development of Conjugation Theory in cultural studies - “Conjugation”, “Double Conjugation”, and “Triple Conjugation”. Xi Shaoying and Hu Min selected four Indian films as case studies in their article Research on the Integration Strategy of International Communication in the Indian Film Industry: A Case Analysis of Four Indian Films (2019) to explore the success of Indian films in overseas markets, which cannot be achieved without the integration strategy of local culture and internationally recognized (Western) values.

However, these studies did not explore the phenomenon of Chinese micro short dramas going global from the perspective of the theory of integration, nor did they focus on cross-cultural communication between China and Latin America. Therefore, they did not answer questions about the localization strategies of Chinese micro short scripts and the dissemination effects in Latin America.

2.3 Conclusion

Therefore, starting from the theory of conjugation, this article attempts to answer the following questions: Firstly, what systematic and structural localization transformations have been carried out in Chinese micro dramas in Mexico? Secondly, what kind of dissemination effect and audience acceptance has this transformation strategy based on the theory of conjugation produced in Latin America, represented by Mexico?

3 Research Methodology

This article adopts research methods such as literature analysis, case analysis, and in-depth interviews to attempt to answer the above questions.

3.1 Literature analysis method

To further explore the acceptance soil provided by the Mexican local cultural market for Chinese micro dramas, this study first adopts the method of literature analysis. By systematically reviewing academic literature on the cultural tradition of Telenovela in Mexico, the current status and models of international streaming media development in Latin America, and digital fragmentation narrative theory, the aim is to construct a theoretical framework for understanding the emotional structure of audiences, media consumption habits, and market gaps in Latin America. This analysis will provide a deep cultural logic and market basis for understanding the specific localization strategies of Chinese micro dramas going global in Latin America in the future.

3.1.1 Analysis purpose

The purpose of this study is to systematically sort out the origin, narrative characteristics, and audience

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emotional structure of Telenovela cultural traditions in Latin America, in order to gain a deeper understanding of its popular cultural psychological foundation; Further explore the content strategies and acceptance limitations of international streaming platforms represented by Netflix in Latin America, clarify the differences in their "cultural distance" and rhythm characteristics, and diagnose market gaps; Ultimately, a theoretical connection will be established on this basis to explore the potential intersection between Mexico's local media consumption habits (emotional intensity, dramatic intensity) and contemporary digital consumption demands (fragmentation, instant gratification).

3.1.2 Literature operation and analysis results

3.1.2.1 Screening criteria

Literature screening will follow the following criteria: priority will be given to selecting core journal articles, academic monographs, and authoritative institution reports in the fields of media studies, Latin American studies, and cultural studies to ensure authority; The literature should directly involve Mexican media culture, Latin American streaming media ecology, or short format digital narrative research to ensure relevance to this article; Mainly focusing on literature from 2010 to 2025, while also including classic theoretical literature that laid the foundation for the study of "Telenovela" to ensure timeliness.

3.1.2.2 Specific operation

Using "Telenovela" as the keyword, a search was conducted in both Chinese and English databases such as CNKI and Web of Science, and 26 foreign journals were selected and published before 2019. Among them, Juan Pi ñó n argues in Disruption and continuity on telenovela with the surge of a new hybrid prime time fictional series: The super series (2019) that traditional television dramas have long dominated the entire Latin American region. However, in recent years, they have been challenged by the new digital mobile media environment, and in order to better adapt to the consumption habits of audiences in the digital age, Latin America has begun to adopt a subgenre of television dramas - crime themed television dramas (narconovela). This type of theme is similar to the elements of "revenge," "stimulation," and "reversal" in the micro dramas of China's overseas expansion to Latin America, laying the foundation for the rapid acceptance of Chinese micro dramas by audiences in Latin America. Noah Tsika studied in Miracles from Mexico: Christianity, corporate restructuring, and the telenovela in Nigeria (2019) that DStv - the main digital satellite television provider on the African continent and a subsidiary of the South African conglomerate MultiChoice - began airing the Latin American Spanish language soap opera Taste of Love in early 2015. This type of drama gained fame and recognition in Nigeria and other parts of South Africa due to its formulaic emphasis on heterosexual love stories and "dirty deals" between super rich individuals. This study analyzed the traditional TV drama style in Latin America, especially in Mexico, and found that elements such as "love", "rich man", and "Alpha CEO" are consistent with the style of Chinese micro dramas, which helps to promote the dissemination of micro dramas in Latin America. Sofia Rios, in Transnational Telenovela Remakes: Challenging Dominant Models and Old Fashioned Heroines (2017), analyzed the plot and lead actors of Mi pequeña traviesae to not only clarify its importance as a traditional Mexican television drama, but also explore the industry opposition between Mexican television companies Televisa and TV Azteca. In addition, by comparing the two versions of Mi pequeña traviesae in Mexico and Brazil, it is believed that emotional TV dramas in Mexico mainly unfold through the

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performance of the female lead. The emotional presentation style of Mexican TV dramas proposed in this study is similar to the expression style of Chinese micro dramas, providing conditions for the successful export of micro dramas to Latin America.

The “viewing habits” and “emotional expectations” developed by Mexican audiences over a long period of time, extracted from these literature, serve as cultural benchmarks for evaluating the acceptance potential of Chinese micro dramas. This indicates that Mexican audiences have a long-term preference for highly dramatic and emotionally intense family ethics, love conflicts, and revenge narratives, providing potential acceptance soil for strong plot Chinese short dramas.

Using keywords such as “Netflix” and “Latin America”, a search was conducted in both Chinese and English databases such as CNKI, resulting in the selection of 21 Chinese and foreign journals published between 2011 and 2024. Among them, Gómez Rodrigo and Muñoz Larroa Argelia discussed in Netflix in Mexico: An Example of the Tech Giant’s Transnational Business Strategies (2023) how to expand Mexico's audiovisual system using local elements and technological innovation by analyzing Netflix's cross-border business strategy in Mexico. Wu Liangyu believes in Audiovisual Monroe Doctrine: Reconstruction and Content Production of Latin American Film and Television Industry in the Streaming Media Era (2024) that streaming companies led by Netflix are engaged in digital film and television production and distribution, as well as international expansion. Streaming media platforms have begun to lead the digital transformation process of the global film and television industry, gradually changing the basic elements of the traditional film and television industry, such as industry structure, communication logic, content strategy, and viewing methods. Based on factors such as geography, history, and culture, Latin America has become the first stop for American streaming companies to expand overseas. At the same time, local streaming media platforms in Latin America are in a weak position, and the overall pattern of the film and television industry has changed, highlighting the new trend of the “audio-visual Monroe Doctrine” in the Americas, which is manifested in the form of streaming media platforms and their film and television content.

These documents analyze and acknowledge the localization production and dissemination strategies of international streaming platforms represented by Netflix in Latin America, which have excellent content but slower pace and stronger cultural distance, and may have "rhythm differences" and "cultural barriers" that fail to fully meet the underlying entertainment needs. Through literature analysis, identify the gaps and undersaturated demand in the Latin American digital entertainment market, namely the slow pace of traditional long dramas and high cultural discounts on international platform content. However, China's mini dramas make up for the fragmented time in the Internet era and the market gap of stimulating entertainment with the high-energy reversal of 1-2 minutes per episode, becoming a new type of digital emotional fast food in Latin America.

3.2 Case analysis method

This section adopts a case analysis method to conduct a two-dimensional coding of the popular Latin American micro dramas on the ReelShort platform, focusing on the replacement of surface cultural symbols and preservation of emotional narrative cores. At the same time, two typical cases are selected to break down the plot and analyze the localization adaptation mechanism.

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3.2.1 Encoding table analysis

This article selects the two hottest micro dramas in Latin America on the ReelShort platform based on indicators such as views, collections, and discussions, and encodes the relevant elements of "surface cultural symbol replacement" and "emotional narrative core preservation".

Table1 Joint Level 1: Surface Symbols and Cultural Exchange

Short drama title Substitution element	Sí a primera vista (2025.6.22)	La Doble Vida de Mi Esposo Multimillonario(2024.11.30)
Main Actor Ethnicity	☑ Hispanic	☑ Hispanic
	□ Asian descent	□ Asian descent
	□ White ethnicity	□ White ethnicity
	□ Black ethnicity	□ Black ethnicity
Clothing and styling style	□ Casual daily	□ Casual Daily
	☑ Business suit	☑ Business suit
	□ Localization	□ Localization
	☑ Internationalization	☑ Internationalization
	☑ Modernization	☑ Modernization
Main scene locations	☑ Urban Street	☑ Urban Street
	□ Square Park	□ Square Park
	☑ luxury villa	☑ luxury villa
	☑ company office	□ Company Office
	☑ high-end restaurant	□ High end restaurant
	□ High end shopping mall	☑ High end shopping mall
	□ Wedding Church	☑ Wedding Church
	☑ In car/garage	☑ In car/garage
Main environmental characteristic	Colors:□Bright and vibrant	Colors:□Bright and vibrant
	☑elegant and refined	☑elegant and refined
	Features:□Localization	Features:□Localization
	☑Modern	☑Modern
Local customs	□Celebrating specific festivals	□Celebrating specific festivals
	☑ Eating local food	☑ Eating local food
	☑ Drinking specialty drinks	☑ Drinking specialty drinks
	☑ Using distinctive slang	☑ Using distinctive slang
Religious elements	□ Church scene	☑ Church Scene
	Wearing a cross	☑ Wearing a cross
	☑ Prayer Movement	□ Prayer Action
	□ Religious festivals mentioned	□ Religious festivals mentioned
	☑ Religious terminology mentions	□ Religious language mention
	□ Religious ornaments	☑ Religious ornaments

Table 2 Joint Level 2: Emotional Narrative and Logical Preservation

Short drama title Retain the elements	*Sí a primera vista* (2025.6.22)	*La Doble Vida de Mi Esposo Multimillonario*(2024.11.30)
Core plot types	☑ Alpha CEO Love	☑ Alpha CEO Love
	☑ contract marriage	☑ contract marriage
	☑ Reverse attack and slap the face	☑ Reverse attack and slap the face
	□ Rebirth and Revenge	□ Rebirth and Revenge
	□ Others	□ Others
Main conflict types	□ Class differences	□ Class differences
	☑ Emotional misunderstanding	☑ Emotional misunderstanding
	☑ Family Conflict	☑ Family Conflict
	☑ Workplace competition/bullying	□ Workplace competition/bullying
	☑ Betrayal and deception	☑ Betrayal and deception
	☑ Money Conflict	☑ Money Conflict
	□ Other	□ Others
Number of turns	□ 0-5 times	□ 0-5 times
	☑ 6-10 times	☑ 6-10 times

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Suspense setting location	☑ opening credits □ In the film ☑ end credits	☑ opening credits □ In the film ☑ end credits
The mechanism of creating a sense of pleasure	☑ The protagonist wins ☑ The antagonist is punished ☑ harvest love ☑ Get money ☑ Career development ☑ Change of identity and status	☑ The protagonist wins ☑ The antagonist is punished ☑ harvest love ☑ Get money □ Career development ☑ Change of identity and status

Table note: In the table“ ☑” Represents the use/possession of this element in the micro drama, “□” represents not used/not possessed.

The above coding results demonstrate the common characteristics of the two short dramas in terms of surface cultural symbol replacement and emotional narrative core preservation.

3.2.2 Plot analysis

Although these two short dramas share the core settings of Alpha CEO, “comeback”, and “contractual marriage”, there are many details worth studying in the complexity of character relationships and the design of emotional transitions. The following will unfold the two dramas separately for a deeper breakdown of the plot.

3.2.2.1 Sí a Primera Vista

The emotional tension of this drama mainly comes from the emotional journey of the female lead Abril from betrayal to counterattack, as well as the subtle transition from “contract” to “sincerity” between her and Cristóbal.

3.2.2.1.1 In depth analysis of character roles

Abril (female lead): Her core motivation is “counterattack and proof”. Faced with the betrayal of her ex boyfriend who broke up after graduation and the provocation of her new girlfriend, Abril chose to immediately “splash water” to counterattack, showcasing the bold character of the female lead from the beginning of the entire drama. Faced with challenges such as being betrayed by her long-time boyfriend, being betrayed by her biological parents for personal gain, and being bullied in the workplace, her decision to flash marry may seem impulsive, but it is actually a cry from her inner self proving herself. The plot revolves around her setbacks and growth, with frequent occurrences of “pleasure”.

Cristóbal (male lead): As a “Alpha CEO”, he chose to marry the female lead in order to reassure his grandmother. The combination of business elites and a strong emphasis on family ties not only enhances the dramatic plot, but also makes the male lead's character extremely charming.

Cristóbal's grandmother: She is the key catalyst for the plot and the opportunity for the male and female leads to meet and quickly get married. Compared to the success of her grandchildren's careers, she cares more about Cristóbal’s emotions and life status. This kind old man also fits the impression of elders among young people in China and Mexico, enhancing the audience's sense of immersion in micro dramas.

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3.2.2.1.2 Key nodes in plot progression

The key to the establishment of this drama lies in the “impulsive decision”. Faced with her grandmother's concerns and urging for marriage, Cristóbal chose Abril, who had just broken up with her ex boyfriend and passed by. The female lead also chose to act with Abril, and the two quickly went to the Civil Affairs Bureau to get married. The fateful encounter, unexpected actions, and rapid progress of the male and female leads immediately capture the audience's interest at the beginning of the plot, leading the plot into the main storyline of their relationship. After marriage, Abril discovered that her husband was actually a billionaire CEO. This dramatic reversal of identity exposure and transformation presents a plot from shock to gradual adaptation. In terms of career growth, faced with the difficulties and “impossible” tasks of leaders, Abril was pleasantly surprised to find that the interviewee whom others considered extremely difficult was actually his flash marriage partner Cristóbal. Therefore, her outstanding completion of work, counterattacks against leaders, and ambiguous tug of war with the male lead in interviews brought a “satisfying” experience to the audience. The core focus of this drama lies in the emotional game under the "contract marriage", where the male and female protagonists support each other in various difficulties and challenges, such as parents selling their biological daughter for money, Abril being tested by the crisis of the mafia, and Cristóbal rushing to the rescue as soon as he learns of it, demonstrating his strength and tenderness. The two of them sublimated their emotions in their relationship, gradually transforming from a contract to genuine love.

3.2.2.2 La Doble Vida de Mi Esposo Multimillonario

The drama of this drama mainly comes from the reversal of the male lead Sebastián's identity under a contractual marriage, as well as the emotional journey of the female lead Natalia from being forced to accept it to truly falling in love.

3.2.2.2.1 Character relationship network and individual motivations

The reason why the plot of this drama is attractive is that it constructs a complex network of character relationships, and each character has its own dramatic function of existence:

Natalia (female lead): Her core motivation is to “save her mother”. This motivation runs through all the behaviors in the early stages - enduring humiliation from stepmothers and step sisters, and accepting arranged marriages. But as the plot progressed, her motivation gradually shifted from “sacrificing for her mother” to “living for herself”, especially when she discovered her husband's true face, the plot mainly unfolded through her choices.

Sebastián (male lead): His motivation is to “endure and wait” and “secretly guard”. The reasons behind his hiding his identity are twofold: firstly, to investigate enemies within the family, and secondly, to protect Natalia from being targeted by his opponents. Every time he made a secret move and protected Natalia, the audience looked forward to the moment when the truth was finally revealed.

Stepmother and stepsister: They are typical “oppressor” characters, but the series gives them a certain sense of hierarchy. The stepmother’s thinness stems from jealousy towards her husband’s ex-wife and coveting the family property; My younger sister, on the other hand, developed an instinctive jealousy towards Natalia’s

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beauty and kindness. Their every oppression is a catalyst that drives Natalia closer to Sebastián.

Natalia's biological father: This character is the most complex. He is cowardly and chooses to remain silent in the face of his current wife's arrogance; But he also harbors some guilt towards Natalia and her daughter.

3.2.2.2.2 Detailed explanation of core plot design

The first five episodes of this drama completed the classic character layout, but the subsequent plot design is even more exquisite:

The presentation of "dual life": The specific presentation of "dual life" is not only a contrast in wealth, but also a carefully designed daily behavior of Sebastián. He often appears casual in front of others, but in private, when he realizes that Natalia has been bullied by her family, he immediately launches an investigation and operates in secret to seek revenge.

The progression of truth disclosure: Natalia discovers that the truth about her husband's identity is not a single event, but rather a layered progression. From her first suspicion of Sebastián's consumption in a high-end shopping mall, to her husband using commercial resources to solve problems when her stepmother made things difficult for her, to Sebastián paying for her mother's medical expenses and arranging surgery, Natalia gradually began to realize the complexity of his identity and eventually discovered that the notorious man was actually a hidden power "boss".

3.2.2.2.3 Delicate portrayal of emotional development

Natalia's emotional changes towards Sebastián went through five stages:

Forced acceptance period: For the sake of her mother, she accepted this newly released and useless husband, filled with grievances and despair.

Curiosity observation period: She found that her husband was not as bad as rumored - he remembered her preferences, silently brought her hot tea when she was tired, treated her equally and politely.

The period of hidden love: From the first time Natalia was discriminated against by the counter girl in a high-end shopping mall, when the male lead stood up for her, to the help of her husband when she was troubled by her stepmother and stepsister, she gradually became curious and dependent on this mysterious man.

Struggling and Doubting Period: She vaguely sensed her husband's difficulties, and began to ponder and entangle with Sebastián's identity.

Full acceptance period: After the truth was revealed, she understood her husband's plan and gradually felt his care and love. Their relationship became even stronger after experiencing the test.

3.3 In depth interview method

Interview outline: A study on the psychological acceptance and consumption behavior of Chinese micro dramas among Latin American users.

Interview objective: To explore the psychological motivations, viewing behavior patterns, willingness

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to pay, and underlying cognitive and emotional mechanisms of users in Latin America who watch Chinese micro dramas, and to validate the psychological model of "low viewing threshold+high narrative stickiness+low-risk payment".

Part 1: Opening and Basic Information

1. Self introduction and research explanation, obtaining informed consent from the respondents.

2. Basic information of the interviewee:

(1) Age and gender

(2) Country/City

(3) Common social and entertainment platforms (TikTok, YouTube, Netflix, ReelShort, etc.)

(4) Average daily time spent watching short videos/dramas

Part 2: Habits of Watching Short Dramas and Psychological Entrance

1. In what situations do you usually watch short dramas? (such as commuting, rest breaks, bedtime, etc.)

2. What is the main reason why short dramas attract you to start watching? (Duration, storyline, cover, recommendation algorithm, etc.)

3. Compared to traditional TV dramas (such as Telenovela) or Netflix series, what are the different feelings of short dramas in "entering the viewing state"?

Part 3: Narrative structure and psychological stickiness (validated by the Zeitgeist effect)

1. Short dramas often set suspense or twists at the end of an episode, what impact does this have on your viewing behavior?

2. Do you often have the impulse to "watch another episode"? Under what circumstances does it usually occur?

3. How do you think the narrative rhythm of short dramas (such as rapid reversals and emotional orgasms) affects your attention?

4. Have you had any experiences of continuing to recall or search for plot development after the plot was "unfinished"?

Part 4: Willingness to Pay and Consumer Psychology

1. Have you ever paid to unlock the follow-up content of a short drama? If so, under what circumstances did the first payment occur?

2. What impact do you think the paid pricing of short dramas has on your consumption decisions?

3. Is payment more driven by impulse or planned consumption? Do you feel regret or satisfaction after pay-

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ing?

4. What is the psychological difference between paying for short dramas and buying movie tickets or subscribing to streaming media?

Part 5: Localization and Emotional Identity

1. What elements in the Chinese short dramas you have watched make you feel "close to local life"? Which ones still feel "very Chinese"?

2. Does the character setting (such as Latin American actors, local scenes, cultural symbols) enhance your sense of immersion?

3. Does the emotional logic presented in the short drama (such as counterattack, revenge, and love conflicts) resonate with Latin American culture?

Part 6:Reflection on Behavioral Influence and Use

1. Has watching short dramas affected your patience with other long video content?

2. Would you proactively share the content of the short drama with friends or family? Why?

3. What role do you think short dramas play in your entertainment life? (Entertainment, emotional release, social topics, etc.)

Part 7: Conclusion and Open Questions

1. Do you have any suggestions or expectations for the development of Chinese short dramas in Latin America?

2. Do you have any other ideas about the viewing experience of short dramas that you would like to add?

3. Thank you for your participation, indicating that further research may be needed.

4 The connection between the acceptance soil and emotional structure of Mexico's local cultural market

This study systematically examines the media cultural traditions and contemporary digital consumption ecology in Latin America, and finds that the Mexican domestic market provides a unique and profound emotional and cultural foundation for the acceptance of Chinese micro dramas. This foundation is mainly reflected in the following three aspects.

4.1 Deep "Telenovela" cultural tradition and high dramatic preference

Mexico and even the entire Latin American region have a long tradition of "Telenovela" viewership, which usually revolves around family ethics, emotional entanglements, class conflicts, and love stories as the core narrative, with highly dramatic plots, strong emotional expressions, and distinct moral oppositions. After decades of media immersion, Latin American audiences have formed a stable preference and viewing expectation for narrative modes with strong plot, fast pace, and high emotional involvement. This aesthetic inertia is not passive acceptance, but an active emotional need-the audience is accustomed to seeking dramatic projec-

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tions of daily life in fictional narratives, and achieving psychological release and participation in social topics through emotional resonance.

It is worth noting that with the rise of the digital media environment, the dominant position of traditional TV novels is being challenged. In order to adapt to the mobile and fragmented viewing habits, local production and broadcasting institutions in Latin America have also begun to explore variants of narrative forms, such as a drama that combines crime, suspense, and family feuds. This new type of drama not only maintains high emotional tension, but also incorporates more strong stimulating elements such as “revenge,” “conspiracy,” and “identity reversal.” Its narrative logic and emotional rhythm are significantly similar to the core pleasure points of “counterattack,” “face slapping,” and “rebirth” in Chinese micro dramas. This indicates that Latin American audiences are not unfamiliar with highly condensed and plot intensive narratives, and their emotional structures themselves have the potential to accept rapid reversals and high-intensity emotional shocks.

4.2 Localization strategy of international streaming media platforms and their “cultural discounts” and “rhythm differences”

International streaming giants represented by Netflix have already conducted in-depth localization layout in Latin America, attempting to narrow the cultural distance with audiences by investing in local production, using local actors, and integrating regional cultural symbols. Although the dramas produced by these platforms are well produced and have complete narratives, they may not fully meet the underlying entertainment needs of local audiences in two dimensions: one is cultural discount, that is, although they have undergone surface localization, their narrative core, values, and emotional logic often still have distinct global middle-class or “Anglo Saxon” cultural colors, and there is a subtle gap between them and the more direct, passionate, and destiny oriented emotional expression in Latin America; Secondly, there is a difference in rhythm. Traditional streaming dramas still follow the framework of 40-60 minutes per episode and overall seasonal broadcast, with relatively gentle narrative development that requires viewers to invest a long period of continuous attention and patience.

This “sophisticated but distant” and “complete but slow” content supply has left a structural gap in the Latin American digital entertainment market: the vast audience, especially the younger generation and users in the lower tier market, have not been fully satisfied with their desire for fragmented entertainment content that can quickly provide emotional stimulation, instant satisfaction, and stronger cultural closeness. Their media consumption time is becoming increasingly fragmented, their attention continues to shorten, their tolerance for “waiting” and “preparation” decreases, and they crave efficient emotional experiences in "time gaps" such as commuting and rest breaks.

4.3 The demand for digital “emotional fast food” and the precise positioning of Chinese micro dramas

Chinese micro dramas are precisely positioned at the intersection of the aforementioned market gap and emotional needs. Its core innovation lies in the combination of the verified narrative model of “strong plot, fast rhythm and high cool point” originating from the Chinese online literature market and the hyper frag-

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mented viewing scene in the mobile Internet era to create a “digital emotional fast food” with only 1-2 minutes per episode. This form is not a simple segmentation of traditional long videos, but a reconstruction based on mobile phone vertical screen interaction and algorithm recommendation logic.

From the perspective of coherence theory, the initial acceptance of Chinese micro dramas in Latin America was first achieved through the successful integration of their “emotional logic” with the "dramatic complex" that had long been formed in Latin America. The core plotlines of micro dramas, such as “domineering love”, “contractual marriage”, and “revenge”, are essentially highly refined and accelerated dramatic conflicts, which are isomorphic to the common themes of family grudges, class love, and fate reversal in Telenovela. Micro dramas densely display these conflicting moments in minutes, precisely catering to the urgent need of digital age audiences for “instant emotional satisfaction”, and filling the “double gap” of slow pace in traditional long dramas and insufficient cultural closeness on international platforms. Therefore, Chinese micro dramas are not scrutinized as "foreign cultural products" in Latin America, but are accepted as a “new type of dramatic narrative carrier” that is more efficient and suitable for current media usage habits. Its success is rooted in a keen insight and precise response to the deep needs of local emotional structures.

5 Efficient Cultural Adaptation Strategy: the Mechanism of Combining Surface Symbol Replacement with Deep Emotional Logic Preservation

Based on in-depth content analysis of two popular Chinese overseas micro dramas, Si a primera vista and La Doble Vida de Mi Esposo Multimillario, in Mexico, this study found the core mechanism of their localization strategy: the effective “connection” between the systematic replacement of surface cultural symbols and the preservation of the integrity of deep emotional narrative logic, achieving the maximum balance between cultural affinity and commercial pleasure formula.

5.1 Joint level 1: comprehensive localization and replacement of surface symbol system

To ensure that Latin American audiences have a sense of cultural closeness and immersion in the first place, and to avoid “cultural heterogeneity” becoming a viewing threshold, Chinese micro dramas have thoroughly localized and reconstructed their visible, audible, and perceptible surface symbols in the process of going abroad.

Firstly, the local reset of character image: the protagonist and main characters are almost entirely played by Latin American actors, whose appearance, temperament, and behavior conform to the aesthetic cognition of Latin American audiences. The clear setting of ethnic background enables the audience to quickly find an anchor of identity on the character.

Secondly, the transplantation of scene and material culture: the physical space where the story takes place is completely transplanted into the urban environment of Latin America. Localized streets, squares, restaurants with regional characteristics, and home furnishings frequently appear in the drama. Especially in scenes that symbolize wealth and modern life, such as luxury villas, high-end office buildings, luxury shopping malls, and luxurious wedding churches, they all adopt international modern styles, but at the same time reveal Latin American regional characteristics through scene details. This approach satisfies the audience’s fantasy of a

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"luxurious lifestyle" while ensuring the "recognizability" of the scene.

Thirdly, the embedding of daily customs and religious elements: localization strategies delve into the texture of daily life. The characters consume common local foods (such as corn tortillas, specific sauces), drink specialty drinks (such as tequila, local coffee), and communicate using slang rich in local colors. More importantly, Catholic culture, as the spiritual background of Latin American society, is naturally woven into the narrative. In the scene, a church appears, characters perform prayer actions, religious language or festivals are mentioned in conversations, and even key events (such as weddings) take place in the church. These elements are not rigidly added, but as natural components of the character's life and values, greatly dissolving cultural barriers and enhancing the authenticity and credibility of the narrative.

5.2 Joint level 2: cross cultural preservation of deep emotional narrative logic and "pleasure Point" structure

In contrast to the complete replacement of surface symbols, Chinese micro dramas strictly retain their core "formula" that has been proven successful in the Chinese market in terms of narrative core and emotional driving mechanism.

Firstly, the retention of the core plot module: Analysis shows that classic scenes such as "domineering love" (the love between a Alpha CEO and an ordinary female lead), "Contract Marriage" (a marriage that begins with profit calculation and ends in true love), and "Counter Strike" (the weak protagonist counterattacks and humiliates the opponent) have been fully transplanted. These plot modules are highly abstract and emotionally universal, with their charm rooted in primitive desires for power, dignity, love, and fairness, making them easy to resonate across cultural boundaries.

Secondly, the maintenance of high-intensity conflict density: Micro dramas maintain a high concentration of dramatic conflicts in a very short amount of space. Conflict types such as internal family conflicts, workplace bullying, betrayal and deception in intimate relationships, and intense confrontations triggered by money are intensively used. Each episode contains at least one clear point of conflict or emotional outburst, ensuring that the audience's attention is consistently captured.

Thirdly, the design of the "suspense excitement" loop mechanism: In terms of suspense settings, core hooks are thrown at the beginning and plot twists or suspense are created at the end of the film, perfectly utilizing the "Zeitgeist effect" to force the audience to feel anxious and exploratory, driving continuous click behavior. In terms of fulfilling "pleasure", the end of each small narrative unit clearly fulfills one or more "pleasure": the protagonist wins in the conflict, the antagonist is publicly humiliated or punished, the love relationship makes breakthrough progress, gains huge wealth or key resources, and social identity leaps. This instant and clear positive feedback provides viewers with high-intensity and high-frequency emotional rewards.

5.3 The effectiveness of the bonding mechanism: dual satisfaction of cultural closeness and emotional efficiency

This combination strategy of "surface replacement+core preservation" is essentially a highly rational and template based cultural translation and reproduction. It does not pursue deep cultural integration or artistic in-

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novation, but rather aims to achieve the maximum emotional resonance and commercial transformation as its direct goal.

Its effectiveness lies in thoroughly localizing surface symbols, dismantling the psychological barriers of cultural access, and enabling the audience to enter the story without any obstacles; By standardizing the preservation of deep emotional logic, the maximization of emotional stimulation in narrative products is ensured, and the precise delivery of the "refreshing point" experience that has been tempered by the market is achieved. The audience feels an extremely dramatic story that takes place in their own country and locality, but its emotional rhythm and reward mechanism are more compact and dense than traditional local dramas. This explains why Chinese micro dramas can quickly open up the market in Latin America: they use localized “shells” to package globally circulated “emotional fast-moving consumer goods”, which not only meets the needs of cultural identity, but also greatly improves entertainment efficiency per unit of time. It is an efficient cultural adaptation and business model innovation in the digital age.

6 User Psychological Acceptance Model: A Closed Loop of Low Threshold, High Stickiness, and Low-risk Payment

Based on the analysis of in-depth interview data with users of micro dramas in Latin America, this study extracts a psychological mechanism model for the acceptance and monetization of Chinese micro dramas on the user side. The model forms a closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing psychological loop around three stages: low decision threshold, high narrative stickiness, and low-risk payment, which constitutes the underlying logic of its commercial success.

6.1 Psychological entrance: ultra-low decision-making cost and situational adaptation

The interview showed that the viewing behavior of micro dramas is highly embedded in users’ fragmented daily time streams. Commuting, work breaks, queuing and waiting, and a moment before bedtime are typical consumption scenarios. In this context, the user's decision-making logic exhibits the following characteristics.

Firstly, the low psychological threshold driven by duration: the cognition of “only one or two minutes” completely eliminates the psychological burden of users trying to watch. It is seen as a “zero risk” entertainment exploration, without the need for psychological preparation and time commitment like deciding to watch a movie or a long drama.

Secondly, the key role of algorithm recommendation and visual hooks: In information streams such as TikTok and YouTube, the precise push of algorithms and the cover of TV series (often presenting strong emotional conflicts or luxurious scenes) constitute the most direct “attraction”. Users are usually captured by these highly stimulating visual information without a clear viewing target, thus “sliding in” to watch.

Thirdly, the comparative experience with traditional content: Compared to traditional TV novels or Netflix series that require a long immersion to enter the plot, micro dramas make users feel like they can “immediately see the most exciting part of the story”. This “instant gratification” portal experience perfectly matches the consumer psychology of seeking efficiency and hating waiting in the mobile Internet era.

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6.2 Psychological stickiness: Zeigernick effect and narrative addiction mechanism

Once entered for viewing, micro dramas quickly build strong psychological stickiness through precise narrative design.

Firstly, the forced interruption and unfinished tension of suspense: almost all respondents confirmed that encountering suspense at the end of the film is the norm. This intentional interruption of the plot is not the end of watching, but the beginning of psychological activity. The "Zeitgeist effect", in which people have a deeper memory of unfinished tasks and a stronger desire to solve them, is fully activated. Users will have a continuous curiosity of "what will happen next?" and repeatedly "ruminate" on the plot in their minds.

Secondly, the impulse cycle of "watching another episode": due to the extremely short duration of a single episode, the cost of satisfying suspense seems low, making the decision to "watch another episode" easy. This impulse is particularly strong before bedtime and during rest, which can easily lead to unconscious continuous viewing behavior and form a "rolling" consumption habit.

Thirdly, rhythm control and attention locking: Micro dramas abandon all foreshadowing and idle writing, with a small turning point or emotional point every few tens of seconds. This high-speed information bombardment and emotional roller coaster experience completely captures the user's attention without any chance of distraction, resulting in a strong sense of immersion and time passing.

6.3 Consumer conversion: psychological rationalization of low risk pricing and impulsive payment

The design of the payment process is the key to model monetization, and its psychological mechanism is sophisticated and effective.

Firstly, triggering of paid scenarios: Paid behavior usually occurs when the plot reaches its climax and suspense is pushed to its peak (for example, when the female lead is about to discover the truth or the villain's conspiracy is about to succeed). At this point, the user's emotional investment and exploration desire reach their peak, and the payment decision is more like an "instinctive reaction" driven by strong emotions, used to alleviate the anxiety caused by suspense.

Secondly, the micro pricing strategy: the single unlocking fee is extremely low, and this pricing strategy has a dual psychological effect: firstly, it reduces the perceived risk of payment. It is not like a "formal" consumption, but more like a "beggar's errand" or a change payment to buy a bottle of water, with extremely low decision-making guilt; The second is to simplify decision-making complexity, as users do not need to weigh whether the series is worth the price, as the cost is so small that it can be almost ignored.

Thirdly, the redefinition of consumer nature: Users have clearly distinguished between paying and purchasing movie tickets or subscribing to streaming media. The latter is seen as a "planned purchase" of a cultural product or service, while payment for micro dramas is understood as an impulse or emotional consumption of "paying for immediate curiosity". After payment, even occasional flashes of "whether it's a waste" are quickly offset by the "pleasure" rewards provided by the following plot, transforming into a sense of satisfaction of "buying big pleasure with small money".

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6.4 The significance of psychological model integration: constructing a "light entertainment" consumption paradigm in the digital age

In summary, Chinese micro dramas have successfully constructed a interlocking system at the user's psychological level: attracting entry with ultra-low barriers, creating psychological dependence and addiction loops with narrative "hooks", and finally realizing monetization at a negligible cost at emotional highs. This model completely reshapes viewing behavior from traditional "cultural appreciation" or "leisure activities" to a "light entertainment" consumption in the digital age-fast, high-frequency, low investment, strong feedback, and emotional instant satisfaction as the core commodity.

The success of this psychological model in Latin America is due to its deeper integration with the digital users, especially the younger generation, who demand efficient emotional outlets in high-pressure social environments. Micro skits provide a deterministic, non waiting "emotional solution": experiencing a mental comeback from repression to explosion within minutes. It is not only a filler for fragmented time, but also a low-cost and convenient "digital psychological massage". This deep emotional functional fit allows micro dramas to go beyond the scope of simple content products and be embedded as a part of users' digital lives, thereby ensuring their user stickiness and commercial sustainability.

7 Summary

This study, from the perspective of the theory of engagement, comprehensively examines the multi-level innovation mechanism of Chinese micro dramas successfully entering the Latin American market through literature analysis, content analysis, and in-depth interviews. Research has found that its success is not accidental or solely driven by capital, but rather stems from a precise and systematic "engagement" practice.

At the cultural level, it combines the profound dramatic tradition of Latin America with the fragmented entertainment needs of the digital age, filling the market gap in the form of "emotional fast food". At the level of content production, it adopts an efficient integration strategy of "comprehensive localization and replacement of surface symbols" and "standardized preservation of deep emotional logic", which not only eliminates cultural barriers but also ensures the emotional effectiveness of narrative products. In terms of user psychology and business, it has built a closed loop psychological model of "low threshold high stickiness low risk payment", and reshaped the viewing behavior into a "light entertainment" paradigm that conforms to the consumption habits of mobile Internet.

Therefore, the rise of Chinese micro dramas in Latin America represents a new digital narrative industry model based on global digital platforms, integrating local cultural insights and standardized emotional technologies. It challenges the traditional creative and distribution logic of the film and television industry, demonstrating the possibility of efficient cross-border circulation of cultural products through precise "culture technology psychology" integration in the context of globalization. Of course, this model also triggered thinking about cultural homogenization, content depth and sustainable innovation. In the future, if China's mini dramas want to achieve long-term development in Latin America, they need to explore deeper integration with local creative forces and further expand and deepen their narrative themes and emotional dimensions on the basis of maintaining the existing efficiency advantages.

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