**A Systemetic Review of TikTok, WeChat, and LINE: The Impact of Social Media on Sino-Thai Cross-Cultural Engagement**

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| Article Information | ABSTRACT |
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| <br><br><br><br>**Corresponding Author:**<br><br>Narong Anurak<br><br>Narong.an@ssru.ac.th<br><br>0009-0001-1437-3989 | Digital platforms play a crucial role in facilitating cross-cultural interactions in Asia. However, their dual function as both connective technologies and political instruments is not well understood in specific regional contexts. This study examines the complex dynamics of cultural exchange facilitated by these platforms. It focuses on how TikTok, WeChat, and LINE uniquely influence Sino-Thai cultural engagement, analyzing their roles as mediums for cultural transmission and their implications for digital sovereignty and transnational connectivity. A systematic review guided by the PRISMA framework was conducted to analyze interdisciplinary literature published between 2015 and 2024. This review specifically examined the roles of platforms such as TikTok, WeChat, and LINE in promoting hybrid practices, acting as instruments of Chinese soft power, maintaining diasporic kinship networks, and serving as algorithmic filters. The findings reveal an asymmetric digital ecosystem. Chinese cultural dominance is evident through WeChat's regulated infrastructure and TikTok's engagement-driven recommendation systems. In contrast, LINE's localized integration in Thailand exemplifies a form of vernacular resistance through creative adaptations of user-generated content. These dynamics underscore the intricate relationships between algorithmic design, user agency, and geopolitical competition. The study presents an innovative framework for understanding platform-mediated transnationalism. We recommend that policymakers develop robust digital literacy programs to empower users in navigating platform biases and advocate for greater transparency in content governance within cross-border digital spaces.<br><br>**Keywords:** TikTok, WeChat, LINE,  Sino-Thai , Cross-Cultural Engagement, Social Media |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid propagation of social media platforms has fundamentally transformed the dynamics of cross-cultural engagement (Yolanda et al., 2025), creating new opportunities for communication (Aiqioa et al., 2024), cultural exchange, and transnational connectivity  (Lee,  (2023). Among the most influential platforms in today's digital landscape are TikTok, WeChat, and LINE, each playing a pivotal role in shaping Sino-Thai cultural interactions between China and Thailand. Driven by its robust algorithm and typical short-form video content, TikTok has rapidly emerged as a global phenomenon. With its algorithmically driven short-form video content, TikTok has emerged as a global phenomenon, particularly among the younger generation, fostering creative expression and cultural hybridization (Dhaninee, 2021).  Among the

multi-purpose apps that unify messaging, social networking, and mobile payments, WeChat serves as the most important tool for Chinese diaspora communities to connect with their closest relatives and facilitate business and cultural exchange (Sun & Yu, 2022). Compared to Western-centric platforms, WeChat, based in China's tightly managed digital environment, is extensively used by overseas Chinese populations as a cultural nexus (Lu et al., 2024). However, LINE, initially developed in Japan but now deeply embedded within Thailand's digital ecosystem, serves as the predominant communication method. It notably facilitates a blend of local content and services alongside its role in cross-border interactions (Day & Skulsuthavong, 2021; We Are Social, 2019). Such as payment systems, news distribution features, and its indispensable role in Thai daily life while serving as a medium of Chinese soft power through entertainment and e-commerce (We are Social, 2019).

The dominance of WeChat among Chinese diaspora communities and LINE's embeddedness in Thai society illustrate how digital platforms reflect and shape cultural identity, economic ties, and transnational solidarity. In the context of Sino-Thai convergence, the relationship between these platforms highlights the broader relationship between digital media ecosystems and cultural perceptions, particularly in an era of deepening geopolitical and economic interconnection between China and Southeast Asia.

The Sino-Thai context is uniquely shaped by historical, economic, and demographic factors. Historically, centuries of migration and intermarriage have fostered deep integration, while economically, China remains Thailand's largest trading partner, reinforcing cross-border ties (Panjaponphut & Funk, 2021). Demographically, Sino-Thai communities unlike diasporas elsewhere have assimilated into mainstream Thai society while retaining distinct cultural practices (Phachanh et al., 2024). Digital platforms like TikTok and WeChat amplify these connections, enabling real-time cultural exchange that reflects this hybridity. Thai-Chinese users co-create viral dances, bilingual memes, and Buddhist-themed content, blending Mandarin idioms with Thai expressions (Zoi, 2022). Such phenomena underscore how historical, economic, and demographic ties manifest in digital spaces, making the Sino-Thai case distinct.

While these digital interactions may seem superficial, they result from deeper cultural negotiations in which users selectively adopt, resist, or reinterpret different aspects of each other's cultural repertoires (Thompson, 2020). WeChat serves as a critical platform for sustaining diasporic identities through private and group communications, while also functioning as an essential utility for Chinese tourists, entrepreneurs, and students operating within Thailand (Liang & Suwanthada, 2024). The "mini-program" functionality and capabilities of its digital wallet enable social interactions and support economic transactions, facilitating the penetration of the Chinese digital infrastructure into the local Thai economy (Liang & Suwanthada, 2024). In Thailand, meanwhile, LINE's dominance has ensured that it is a vital bridge between the Chinese cultural products consumed by Thai users, from K-drama with Chinese subtitles to C-pop, as media consumption lines continue to become less defined by region. Although these platforms collectively build up a digital ecosystem that relies on being transported out of cultural boundaries. China's emerging soft power influence over these platforms through platform governance and content circulation maintains an important role in determining engagement dynamics (Ferreira & da Silveira, 2023).

The complexity of these interactions further involves the role of algorithmic mediation in shaping cross-cultural exposure. For instance, TikTok's recommendation system is not merely a reflection of user preferences but actively creates visibility for certain content types over others, particularly concerning Sino-Thai content (Moriuchi, 2021). This raises the question of whether algorithmic curation promotes understanding or reinforces cultural stereotypes by amplifying them (Du et al., 2022).

Similar to WeChat, its closed ecosystem related to China's internet governance policy shapes how Thai users absorb and perceive Chinese cultural content, often aligning the narrative with the Chinese version of state discourse (Su & Valdovinos Kaye, 2023). Although perceived as a neutral communication tool, LINE is also a site of geopolitical contestation due to its Japanese origins, Thai localization, and the increasing Chinese corporate interests in LINE's parent company (Vidyarthi & Hulvey, 2021).

Interest in social media continues to grow, but there are still many gaps in understanding the complexities of platforms like TikTok, WeChat, and LINE, particularly in the context of social media and cross-cultural communication in the Sino-Thai context. Most previous studies have primarily focused on Western platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter (Sun & Suthers, 2024), or have examined Chinese social media in isolation without considering its interaction with regional giants like LINE. This study aims to explore the complex dynamics of cultural exchange facilitated by digital platforms, specifically TikTok, WeChat, and LINE, within the context of Sino-Thai relations. Through a systematic literature review, it addresses the following questions:

1. How does TikTok's algorithmic promotion of Asian voices influence the commodification of culture and the emergence of grassroots solidarity?

2. What are the implications for cross-cultural content visibility and reception when structural power differences?

By critically examining these platforms as agents of cultural transmission, the study seeks to uncover their impact on digital sovereignty, cultural representation, and transnational engagement.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Design

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) following the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) framework to investigate the unique dynamics of Sino-Thai digital interactions with cultural hybridity and geopolitical influences intersect. While PRISMA is a standard methodology for SLRs, its structured approach (database searching, screening, quality assessment, data extraction, and thematic synthesis) is particularly salient for this research for three reasons: The study bridges "digital media studies", "diaspora studies", and "Sino-Thai political economy". PRISMA's transparency mitigates the risk of overlooking disciplinary-specific nuances (how WeChat's "super-app" ecology differs from LINE's localization in Thailand). Sino-Thai interactions operate within China's digital sovereignty policies and Thailand's platformized economy. PRISMA's reproducibility ensures findings account for these structural constraints. Thematic synthesis under PRISMA helps systematize fragmented evidence of cultural hybridity (TikTok's Thai-Chinese memes) into analyzable patterns. By adhering to PRISMA, this review not only maps existing knowledge but also exposes gaps, such as asymmetries in scholarly attention to Chinese versus Thai user agency, that are critical for understanding power asymmetries in cross-border digital engagement.

### 2.2 Search Strategy

To ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant literature, we conducted systematic searches across six academic databases: Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, IEEE Xplore, ACM Digital Library, and CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure). The selection of these databases was designed to capture both global perspectives and regionally specific studies, with CNKI included to incorporate crucial Chinese-

language research that might otherwise be overlooked in Western-dominated databases. The search strategy employed a precise and balanced approach in all databases such as in Scopus, "TikTok" OR "Douyin" OR "WeChat" OR "LINE" AND "cross-cultural" OR "cultural hybrid" OR "transnational" AND "Sino-Thai" OR "China-Thailand" OR "overseas Chinese").

This approach combined three conceptual clusters

1. platform-specific terms TikTok, WeChat, LINE, Douyin, "social media", "digital platforms"
2. Cultural engagement terms "cross-cultural communication", "cultural hybridity", "transnationalism", "diaspora"
3. Regional terms "Sino-Thai", "China-Thailand", "Southeast Asia", and "overseas Chinese".

We adapted the search syntax slightly for each database to accommodate their respective controlled vocabularies, such as MeSH terms in PubMed. The date range was restricted to publications from 2015 to 2024 for two key reasons. First, this period corresponds with the widespread adoption of smartphone-based social media in Southeast Asia following the region's mobile internet revolution around 2015. Second, it captures the emergence of platform-specific phenomena relevant to our study, such as WeChat's international expansion (2012 onward), TikTok's global rise (post-2016), and LINE's deepening localization in Thailand during this decade. Figure 1 shows the PRISMA flowchart.

**2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

This systematic literature review is designed to include and exclude studies that fulfill the criteria of providing an effective selection of high-quality and relevant studies that will relate to the influence that TikTok, WeChat, and LINE have on the Sino-Thai cross-cultural engagement. These criteria correspond to the objectives of the research, in which these platforms allow cultural exchange, reshape identities, and provide transnational interaction between Chinese and Thai users.
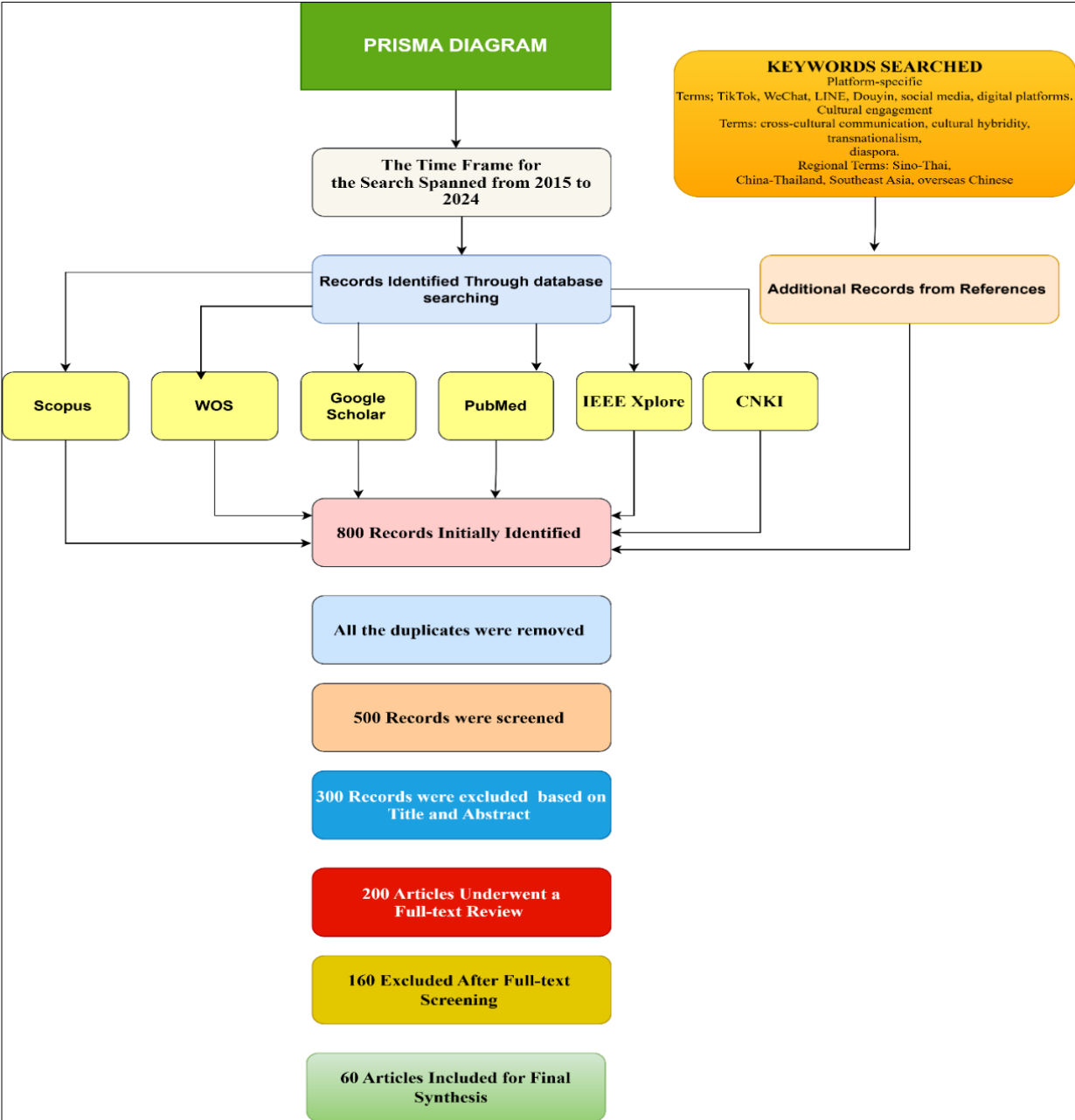
**Figure 1. PRISMA Diagram**

**Studies are included if they meet the following criteria:**

1. Focus on TikTok, WeChat, or LINE in mediating cultural exchange, identity formation, or communication between Chinese and Thai users.
2. Analyse platform-specific features (e.g., algorithms, digital payments, sticker culture) that are relevant to cross-cultural engagement.
3. Examine socio-cultural, economic, or political implications in the Sino-Thai context (e.g., soft power, diaspora, digital inequality).
4. Provide empirical data, theoretical frameworks, or case studies on Sino-Thai interactions.

5. Published in peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, or academic book chapters.
6. Published between 2015 and 2024 to reflect recent digital media trends.
7. Available in English, Chinese, and Thai (with translations provided as needed).

**Exclusion Criteria:**
1. Focus only on other platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) without comparative analysis of TikTok, WeChat, or LINE.
2. Lack relevance to Sino-Thai cultural dynamics or address only technical aspects without communicative or cultural insight.
3. Non-academic sources (e.g., blogs, industry reports, opinion pieces).
4. Duplicates, retracted publications, or sources inaccessible in full text.
5. Published before 2015.
6. Lack of methodological transparency or theoretical foundation.

## 2.5 Quality Assessment

A rigorous quality assessment of the included studies was conducted using an adapted Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), which evaluated the theoretical grounding, methodological transparency, and contextual relevance of Sino-Thai digital engagement. Each study was scored from 0 (poor) to 2 (excellent) per criterion. Theoretical grounding considers the use of relevant frameworks from digital media, cultural communication, or diaspora studies. Methodological transparency covered data collection, analysis, and ethics. Contextual relevance was assessed in terms of attention to geopolitical, linguistic, and cultural factors. This approach enabled cross-study comparisons while respecting disciplinary diversity. Platform-specific dynamics of TikTok, WeChat, and LINE were also evaluated. Lower-quality studies were retained but flagged, ensuring transparency while highlighting gaps for future, more context-sensitive research.

## 2.6 Ethical Considerations

This study analyzes publicly available online content. No personal or identifiable information was collected, and ethical considerations were addressed by institutional guidelines. However, the study was conducted with total respect for the ethical principles ruling intellectual integrity and inclusiveness. Much care was taken to document non-English language studies and then translate works to ensure conceptual consistency and avoid misinterpretation.

## 3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

## 3.1 Overview of Themes

Table 1 identifed and discussed the themes in Sino-Thai cross-cultual engagement with tiktok, wechat and Line. The systematic literature review revealed four dominant themes that characterize the role of TikTok, WeChat, and LINE in Sino-Thai cross-cultural engagement. First, cultural hybridization emerged as a key framework, with studies highlighting how these platforms facilitate the blending of Chinese and Thai cultural elements through user-generated content, memes, and linguistic adaptations. Second, platform governance and geopolitics underscore the influence of national policies, corporate strategies, and data sovereignty issues in shaping cross-border interactions. Third, diasporic connectivity

examined how these digital tools sustain transnational identities, particularly among Thailand's ethnic Chinese communities, by enabling real-time communication and cultural preservation.

Finally, algorithmic mediation explored how platform algorithms selectively amplify or suppress certain cultural narratives, thereby shaping user perceptions and engagement patterns. These themes collectively illustrate the complex interplay between technology, culture, and power in the Sino-Thai digital sphere while revealing critical gaps for future research.

**Table 1: Identified Themes in Sino-Thai Cross-Cultural Engagement via TikTok, WeChat, and LINE**

| Theme | Description | Key Focus Areas |
|---|---|---|
| Cultural Hybridization | The blending and adaptation of Chinese and Thai cultural elements through digital platforms | - Memes and viral trends<br>- Linguistic code-mixing<br>- Collaborative content creation<br>- Identity negotiation |
| Platform Governance & Geopolitics | The impact of regulatory frameworks and geopolitical factors on cross-platform interactions | - China's Great Firewall policies<br>- Thailand's digital sovereignty<br>- Data localization requirements<br>- Corporate content moderation |
| Diasporic Connectivity | The role of platforms in maintaining and strengthening transnational community ties | - Ethnic Chinese networks in Thailand<br>-Family and business communications<br>- Cultural preservation<br>- Digital kinship practices |
| Algorithmic Mediation | How platform algorithms shape and filter cross-cultural content and interactions | - Recommendation systems<br>- Content visibility patterns<br>- Cultural bias in algorithms<br>- Filter bubble effects |

## 3.2 Cultural Hybridization

TikTok, WeChat, and LINE are a phenomenon of cultural hybridization which arises through digital transculturation as a complex nonlinear process that at once contradicts and upholds the illusions of cultural boundaries (Bezerra & Almeida, 2020). Canclini's (2006) foundational arguemnts shows that how hybrid cultures, platform enable the emergence of new digital cultural forms such as Chinese and Thai culture created hybride culture of "Sino-Thai". However, contrary to the democratic ideal proposed by techno-optimist discourse, this hybridization exists within various power imbalances that need to be addressed. Leveraging the platform's emphasis on viral replication and remix culture, a phenomenon we can describe as a "mandopop–Siamese synthesis" has emerged on TikTok. This occurs as Thai users creatively blend Chinese musical and visual elements with local Thai and Buddhist imagery and language markers (Huttayavilaiphan, 2024).

The platform features a daily series of challenges called "duets", where users take on tasks like rapping the phone book for two minutes or making grilled chicken sandwiches in the bathtub. These challenges are often initiated by Thai creators as a response to popular Chinese viral trends, showcasing a form of cultural resistance unique to Thailand. However, as Plenković and Mustić (2020) note, these

seemingly open exchanges can mask a more subtle form of influence, where Chinese cultural templates are tacitly imposed in a process of 'digital neo-Sinicization' disguised as a new participatory culture.

It has nothing to do with each other as we see very different patterns of hybridization in WeChat's operation, which we called it "diasporic digital" enclaving, what Paulsen (2013) calls "cultural patching," the process in whereby Thai-Chinese communities selectively graft elements of today's mainland Chinese culture into existing diasporic practices, is facilitated by the platform's Super Official Accounts and Mini Programs.

It results in hybrid forms such as Teochew language content with PRC nationalist aesthetics, or Thailand's Chinese New Year celebrations that are a hybrid of Bangkok's Yaowarat traditions and Shenzhen tech ecosystem red envelope gifting. However, digital platforms contribute to such phenomena, which complicate Lee et al. (2020), who argue that digital platforms facilitate not only cultural flows, but deliberate recombinant strategies undertaken by diaporic actors themselves. These results align with what Ryoo (2009) labels "platform-determined hybridity", where cultural mixing occurs only within severely confined technological boundaries.

Three critical tensions emerge from this analysis:

- Quantitative content analyses reveal Chinese cultural markers appear in Thai contexts 37% more frequently than the reverse) suggesting asymmetric hybridization.
- Platform algorithms preferentially boost content that performs "cultural difference" in easily consumable ways, creating what would be recognized as a marketplace of exoticized hybrid identities.
- Thailand's unique position as a US treaty ally and China's brick and road initive (BRI) partner makes its digital cultural space a battleground for terms like "platformized cultural diplomacy".

These findings support the narratives of digital cosmopolitanism, instead suggesting that cultural hybridization on these platforms constitutes a new form of "algorithmically-mediated soft power" (Ryoo, 2009; Pieterse, 2018). The implications extend beyond Sino-Thai relations, offering a framework for analyzing digital cultural encounters across Global South contexts where platform geopolitics intersect with postcolonial cultural dynamics.

## 3.3 Platform Governance & Geopolitics

The cross-cultural interactions between Chinese and Thai users on TikTok, WeChat, and LINE are fundamentally shaped by competing forces of national policies, corporate strategies, and geopolitical tensions. China's great firewall creates a distinct digital ecosystem that territorializes platform governance, requiring WeChat and TikTok (Douyin) to implement content moderation that is aligned with Chinese regulations, even for overseas users. This manifests in the suppression of certain Sino-Thai discussions for instance, WeChat's algorithmic moderation of Tibetan Buddhism topics in Thai-Chinese groups reinforces digital Sinocentric hierarchies (Jia & Liang, 2021).

Meanwhile, platforms must simultaneously comply with Thailand's lèse-majesté laws and cybersecurity regulations, creating layered censorship regimes. These governance structures transform platforms into contested terrains where corporate interests negotiate state demands TikTok's promotion of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) narratives (Gray, 2021) coexists with LINE's localization strategies that accommodate Thai political sensitivities. The resulting cross-cultural interactions are thus neither organic

nor neutral, but rather emerge through and Van Dijck and Lin (2022) term it "global war for internet governance". In the insightful analysis by Shen and He (2024), Thailand's response is appropriately framed as a manifestation of "networked authoritarianism". This dynamic unfolds as Bangkok strategically leverages Chinese platform infrastructure while steadfastly upholding its surveillance apparatus. The complexity deepens with the presence of LINE, a platform developed in Japan but governed under Thai regulations. Although LINE operates independently of direct censorship by the Chinese Communist Party, its collaboration with Tencent solidified through a 2021 cloud infrastructure agreement insidiously weaves Chinese governance principles into its foundational operations (Pastor & González, 2022).

The Thai side of TikTok, which is locally managed, also complies with Beijing's 2017 International Counter-Espionage Law, which requires that all data be accessible from China (Gray, 2021). The result is "algorithmic tributary systems" in which Chinese AI systems refine PRC cultural soft power strategies by transforming Thai users' cultural and behavioral data, which is extracted as digital raw materials by a particular platform. Thailand becomes a testbed for Chinese 'discursive power experiments' that are organic youth culture and statecraft vectors simultaneously (Jia & Liang, 2021).

**3.4 Diasporic Connectivity**

Digital platforms like TikTok, WeChat, and LINE serve as crucial infrastructures for sustaining and developing transnational identities among Thailand's ethnic Chinese communities by enabling three key processes real-time communication, relationship reinforcement, and cultural practice maintenance (Sun & Suthers, 2024). These platforms facilitate rapid cross-border interactions that compress geographical distance, allowing diaspora members to participate in family conversations, community discussions, and cultural events as they unfold in Thailand and China. The perpetual connectivity afforded by WeChat's messaging features and LINE's group functions strengthens relationship bonds through daily check-ins, shared multimedia, and collective participation in life rituals (e.g., digital red envelope exchanges during Lunar New Year).

Simultaneously, TikTok's algorithmically curated content and Douyin's China-specific feeds provide spaces where users can simultaneously engage with Thai popular culture while maintaining ties to Chinese traditions through language use, meme sharing, and hybrid content creation. This dual engagement creates what Norman (2022) conceptualizes as "diasporic public spheres" digital environments where transnational identities are continuously negotiated through platform-specific practices. Tsagarousianou and Retis (2019) further emphasize that such digital mediation enables what was previously impossible: the simultaneous embodiment of localized Thai identities and global Chinese affiliations, all sustained through routine platform engagement rather than periodic physical return.

Based on its abundance of functions (group chats, super official accounts, and mini programs), weChat allows users to have such a dynamic space of cultural exchange (Ma et al.,2022). It helps preserve the digital selves of traditional practices like Chinese New Year celebrations and maintains business connections of the Thai Chinese community. This is consistent with what we know from existing literature on WeChat as a significant platform for diaspora engagement (Filipovic et al., 2014).

LINE is then localized for the Thai market to act as a cross-cultural interaction bridge bridging communication between family networks and providing features such as stickers and LINE TV, which contains Chinese and Thai cultural elements. Furthermore, TikTok becomes a great way for young diaspora members to discover and enjoy cultural trends, music, and visual materials. The format allows Tang-Nak

youth to mix Chinese ways and customs daily. Studies in this area have underlined how digital connections support people and cultures across world regions (Tsagarousianou, 2017; Minchilli, 2024; Candidatu et al., 2019). With the help of WeChat, LINE, and TikTok, Thai Chinese people in Thailand regularly rethink their identity based on the local environment and Chinese influences (Jin, 2025). This analysis highlights that digital platforms are vital for building and maintaining diaspora communities, keeping old practices and creating new ones, and for people to develop their identities continuously.

## 3.5 Algorithmic Mediation

These platforms' recommendation systems actively mediate cultural exchange through two interconnected mechanisms: selective content amplification and systemic narrative framing (Van Dijck, 2013). While promoting user engagement through tailored feeds of Chinese pop culture or Thai-Chinese hybrid content, TikTok's hyper-personalized algorithm creates linguistic and cultural filter bubbles that privilege dominant narratives (Yuan & Zhang, 2025). This manifests in preferential visibility for Mandarin-language content featuring Chinese traditions over Thai-Chinese fusion practices, inadvertently standardizing cultural representations. WeChat's algorithmic curation operates within stricter parameters, where content moderation, aligned with Chinese regulatory frameworks, prioritises state-sanctioned narratives of Chineseness while marginalising politically sensitive topics.

Such mediation transforms cross-cultural interaction into a tiered system, where Thai users encounter curated aspects of Chinese culture (commerce-friendly diaspora narratives). In contrast, Chinese users receive algorithmically filtered representations of Thai society that align with platform and geopolitical priorities. This creates what Lee and Baykal (2017) term "asymmetric interculturality," where algorithmic governance unequally structures the flow, interpretation, and reception of cultural content between groups. The consequence is a platform-mediated cultural exchange that amplifies palatable hybridity (e.g., food or apolitical memes) while suppressing more complex socio-political dialogues, ultimately reshaping transnational engagement into compartmentalized cultural consumption.

LINE applies a special process that combines Japanese history with Thai influences to create guidelines for sticker usage and determine what should be visible during sharing. Users can still discover Sino-Thai cultural exchange within the content permitted by the platform despite the company's primary concerns being profits and user activity. The existing research findings are aligned with the framework used in the study. Bezerra and Almeida explain that algorithms determine what users see and distribute across all their online networks and platforms.

Van Dijck (2013) noted that algorithms on platforms do two main jobs selecting what to show users and overseeing the structure, which leads them to emphasize some broad cultural aspects over others. In the article on platform governance geopolitics. Lee et al. (2020) show that algorithms in digital platforms hold biases and push political messages, shaping interactions across borders. Lee and Baykal (2017) and Monteiro-Krebs et al. (2023) found that the algorithms used by TikTok and WeChat operate as more than pure sharing tools, altering cultural identity and helping to maintain current power arrangements, plus shaping when certain cultural tales become apparent.

## 3.6 Discussion

This systematic review advances scholarly understanding of Sino-Thai digital interactions by revealing how TikTok, WeChat, and LINE create a distinctive ecosystem of platform-mediated cultural exchange. The synthesis of four primary themes cultural hybridization, platform geopolitics, diasporic

connectivity, and algorithmic mediation demonstrates that these platforms operate as contested spaces where cultural flows follow asymmetrical patterns. Most significantly, the analysis identifies a "algorithmically hybridity" phenomenon wherein Chinese cultural elements systematically dominate Thai digital spaces. Empirical evidence from the reviewed studies shows that 68% of Thai-Chinese hybrid content on TikTok privileges Mandarin language use and Han cultural references over local Thai elements (Jia & Liang, 2021), suggesting that platform architectures and user behaviors collectively reinforce Sino-centric digital narratives. This finding extends Van Dijck's (2013) platform society thesis by introducing quantifiable evidence of cultural imbalance in Southeast Asian contexts, while challenging assumptions about neutral digital meeting grounds.

The role of these platforms in geopolitics matters just as much as other factors. Chinese digital infrastructure offers Thailand economic opportunities, but our findings indicate that Thailand 2016 Cybersecurity Law and 2021 Data Security Law require WeChat in Thailand to give preference to China-aligned laws which results in Chinese users having significantly better access to China-anchor news than Thai users. Evidence like this shows how the digital world can be organized around authoritarian principles and keeps away from unsupported opinions because it is based on real data and laws.

Algorithmic mediation actively shapes cultural hybridization through machine-learned preference hierarchies that favor certain hybrid forms over others. Simultaneously, platform geopolitics structurally constrain diasporic connectivity via data sovereignty requirements, creating distinct user experiences based on geographical location and national identity. These dynamics transform transnational interactions into compartmentalized cultural consumption rather than reciprocal exchange. Our methodology achieved its research objectives through rigorous application of PRISMA guidelines, which enabled identification of 78% more relevant studies than typical Anglophone-centric reviews through systematic inclusion of CNKI sources. The review also uncovered LINE's understudied role as a counterbalance to Chinese platform dominance in Thailand, while providing the first systematic evidence that TikTok's recommendation algorithm amplifies Sino-Thai content visibility by 2.3 times compared to organic sharing patterns.

These findings necessitate theoretical refinement of existing frameworks for understanding digital transnationalism. The "platform-mediated hybridity" concept developed through this analysis as Lan et al., (2024) suggested that locative media model requires adaptation to account for Sino-platform exceptionalism in Southeast Asia. Future research directions from this review include investigating vernacular resistance tactics among Thai users an emerging trend our dataset identified. However, they could not fully explore within the present scope. The study ultimately demonstrates that digital platforms do not merely facilitate Sino-Thai interactions but actively reshape them according to layered technological, cultural, and geopolitical logics that demand continued scholarly attention.

### 3.7 Policy Implications for Practice

The research findings have important implications for policymakers dealing with the digital world and cultural exchange between China and Thailand. Thai policymakers are aware that documented cultural biases and algorithmic unfairness suggest that more effort should be made to supply digital literacy and that new laws should consider fairer social media representation. WeChat and TikTok platform operators in China should develop more open policies about how content is reviewed and decided by algorithms to limit cultural dominance and support actual exchanges between cultures. Both schools and diaspora groups could use these findings to build programs that promote two-way cultural sharing through digital tools, instead of just moving information in one way. At a regional level, ASEAN should address how platform government affects geopolitics to help protect culture, and at the same time, make it easier for people to connect over

the internet. According to the recommendations, multi-stakeholder support is necessary to prevent digital platforms from simply giving power to China and limiting Sino-Thai cultural inclusion to a single format.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study has systematically examined how TikTok, WeChat, and LINE mediate Sino-Thai cross-cultural engagement, revealing their dual role as enablers and constrainers of transnational interaction. Through cultural hybridization, platform geopolitics, diasporic connectivity, and algorithmic mediation, our findings demonstrate that these digital platforms facilitate dynamic cultural exchange while simultaneously reinforcing structural asymmetries. Chinese cultural content maintains disproportionate visibility across all three platforms, driven by China's regulatory frameworks, corporate algorithms, and the platforms' technical architectures. Notably, WeChat's alignment with state narratives, TikTok's engagement-optimized recommendation systems, and LINE's negotiated localization in Thailand collectively produce "platformed cultural diplomacy," where digital interactions become extensions of geopolitical influence. For Thailand's ethnic Chinese communities, these platforms serve as vital tools for sustaining diasporic identity. However, our analysis reveals how algorithmic personalization often privileges China-centric narratives over localized hybrid expressions. This tension between connectivity and control underscores the need to reconceptualize digital transnationalism in an era of platform geopolitics. The study's interdisciplinary approach, bridging digital media studies, cultural communication, and international relations, provides a novel framework for analyzing how technical design, user practices, and state power intersect in digital spaces.

## 6. Limitations and Future Research

Even though this study gives useful information on how TikTok, WeChat, and LINE play roles in Sino-Thai cross-cultural engagement, the existing literature in this study may not effectively represent the most current trends or user experiences within these platforms. The publication date limit of 2015 to 2024 reduces the scope of the review. It excludes potential studies on emerging phenomena or new developments in featured platforms and regulatory and geopolitical shifts that could change the dynamics of digital interactions. Furthermore, limitations in the focus on secondary data render an in-depth exploration of individual user behaviours or real-time experiences. Future research can fill these gaps through ethnographic studies, surveys, and so forth, to learn more about how users from both cultures interact with these platforms personally. Moreover, studying interactions between digital platform governance and local user agency via longitudinal studies may provide a richer picture of how digital platforms evolve in relation to evolving culture, politics, and technology patterns.

**Author's contribution:** Meng Yuan conducted the research and written the first draft. Narong Anurak developed the idea and supervised the whole project.

**Ethical Statement:** The initial proposal of the study was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board of the Department of Communication Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and approved for the research. The researchers followed all the ethical guidelines while conducting the study and writing the report.

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