

# Reusable Media Elements and User Participation in Douyin Imitation Video Culture

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## Abstract

Imitation is a common form of participation on short-video platforms. Users reproduce familiar sounds, gestures, dialogue, roles, and visual formats, while also adapting these elements to their own styles. This study examines how reusable media elements shape user participation in Douyin imitation-video culture; it combines a content analysis of 200 imitation videos with descriptive survey data from users experienced in creating imitation videos. The video analysis identifies recurring elements used in imitation practices, including audio, action, scene, role, and narrative structure. The survey data show how users select imitation content and which elements they commonly reproduce; preliminary findings indicate that imitation often involves several reusable elements rather than one single feature. Users also consider both popular trends and personal style when deciding what to imitate. They reproduce shared content structures, but they also choose performance, expression, and presentation. Imitation on Douyin is not simple copying. It is a form of social media participation that combines shared formats with individual adaptation. The study contributes to research on user participation by showing how imitation practices are organized through recurring content elements and personal creative choices.

**Keywords:** Content Creation; Creative Adaptation; Participatory Practices; Personal Expression; Short-Form Platforms