

Video-streamed Intangible Cultural Heritage, Ethnic Perceptions, and Cross-cultural Competence in China

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Abstract: The aim of the present study was to investigate the capacity of video-streamed content related to intangible cultural heritage (ICH) associated with Chinese ethnic minorities to enhance cross-cultural competence and perceptions about ethnic minority communities among users from China's ethnic majority. Moreover, the research examined how users' motivations and demographic factors moderate these relations. Utilizing a quantitative online questionnaire to examine video-streaming users in China, the research employed linear regression and hierarchical regression analyses to test these relationships. The findings indicated that cross-cultural attitudes and skills served as positive predictors of participants' affinity for ethnic minorities, suggesting more favorable cross-cultural attitudes and skills led to more liking of ethnic minorities. However, these factors did not forecast stereotypical perceptions of ethnic minorities. Notably, cross-cultural knowledge was found to have no predictive capability regarding either affinity or stereotypical perceptions. Furthermore, user motivations to use live-streamed ICH content, specifically amotivation and regulation, were found to significantly moderate the connections between cross-cultural competence and attitudes toward ethnic minorities. In other words, participants who perceived the benefits of using live-streamed ICH content contributed to the relationships. These findings provide substantial insight into the complex interrelationship between digital media use, cross-cultural competence, and interethnic attitudes in China's context. The study highlights the ability of video-streamed ICH content to foster positive interethnic relations while unpacking subtle influences of user motivation in the process. The findings presented here may guide the development of approaches aimed at utilizing digital platforms to enhance cultural comprehension and mitigate stereotypes within multicultural communities internationally, thus enriching the overarching discussion regarding the influence of digital media on the formation of cross-cultural perceptions and interactions.

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In the contemporary digital era, various communication platforms have fundamentally altered the manner in which individuals engage, disseminate information, and access media. These platforms, encompassing social media networks and dedicated streaming services, have become essential components of our everyday existence, significantly influencing public dialogue and cultural interactions. Within this expansive digital framework, video streaming platforms have arisen as a notably impactful medium, reshaping the domains of media creation and consumption.

Video streaming services are fundamental components of the modern media landscape, disseminating content across multiple sectors such as e-commerce (Guo et al., 2021), social networking (Burroughs, 2015; Robinson, 2014), digital gaming (M. R. Johnson & Woodcock, 2019; Ruberg et al., 2019), and mobile technologies (Garcia-Pineda et al., 2018). These services have transformed the dynamics of audience interaction, content production, and distribution methodologies. For instance, they have enabled direct interaction between content creators and their audiences, fostered novel forms of user-generated content, and allowed for more personalized modes of viewing. In addition, the quality and range of streamed content have greatly improved, leading to changes in the ways in which consumers behave and what they expect. Researchers have investigated video streaming as a unique mode of media creation and consumption (M. R. Johnson & Woodcock, 2019), delving into its usage within different entertainment industries, including film, music, and television (Herbert et al., 2018). Recently, scholars have focused on an innovative application of streaming technology: the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage (ICH; Lu, 2020). Particularly 47% of Gen Z and one-third of Millennial users preferred to watch live-streamed content and social videos instead of traditional television and movies (Manfredi, 2024). The Deloitte survey of 3,517 participants also found that over 72% of younger audiences enjoy learning about other cultures from their media consumption (Manfredi, 2024). This advancement introduces both possibilities and difficulties for safeguarding culture and promoting intercultural comprehension among audiences from different demographic and socio-economic backgrounds.

In the context of China, this conjunction of digital platforms with cultural heritage has attained considerable importance. The recent development of a standard on the digital preservation of intangible cultural heritage by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism adds to an already existing hierarchical protection framework, which requires cooperation between national and local authorities (Bi, 2023; Zhou et al., 2019). This new standard, *Digital Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Digital Resource Collection and Cataloging*, is in line with the *Ten-categories/Four-level Catalog Classification* system and takes into consideration problems identified by Zhou et al. (2019) in resource management and standardization. It includes digital documentation, storage, and dissemination guidelines for ICH in all categories, with an emphasis on authenticity and respect for original cultural contexts. The standard aims to guide resource utilization, assist in constructing an ICH big data system, and support professional training, addressing issues highlighted in previous research (Bi, 2023; Zhou et al., 2019). In conjunction with the acknowledgment of emerging national-level inheritors of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), the initiatives undertaken underscore China's persistent dedication to safeguarding its varied cultural legacy. This commitment is further reinforced by established policy frameworks, notably the *Intangible Cultural Heritage Law of the People's Republic of China* (Bi, 2023; Zhou et al., 2019).

The digital landscape in China is distinctly influenced by its socio-cultural and regulatory environment. Prominent platforms such as Douyin and Kuaishou, although they play an active role in promoting intangible cultural heritage—especially from ethnic minority

groups—frequently embody governmental narratives that can oversimplify these cultures, neglecting their dynamic characteristics and ongoing contributions to the fabric of Chinese society (Lin & Jackson, 2022). While these digital initiatives have the potential to act against cultural erasure and even create ethnic solidarity by allowing minority groups a venue for disseminating their traditions to a broad audience, they also carry potential risks of cultural appropriation and misrepresentation in the face of the growing commercialization of ethnic content. Online, ethnic minorities often present stylized cultural identities, quantified through social media metrics or are subject to the ethnic majority Chinese “Hanization” of their cultures (L. Li, 2015; J. Li & Qu, 2022; Tang, Yang, & Dong, 2022). However, there are also viral occurrences such as Ding Zhen, which illustrate the capacity of digital media to not only conserve cultural heritage but also transform perceptions, attracting the majority of urban audiences and facilitating connections across cultural barriers (Cong et al., 2022; Tang, Huang, & Pu, 2021). This representation within the digital realm underscores the complexities surrounding authenticity versus commercially driven content, prompting inquiries into cultural identity and intercultural comprehension in the contemporary digital era.

When working with such complex issues, cross-cultural competence becomes important for fostering an understanding of ethnic diversity in China. As Lustig and Koester (2006) point out, culture is “a learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, norms, and social practices” (p. 25) that guide group behavior. Whereas ethnicity and culture are often used synonymously, they are not the same thing. It is a fact that the cultural heritage an ethnic minority possesses is deeply rooted in that group’s lineage and customs (Lustig & Koester, 2006). Considering China, which officially recognizes 56 different ethnic groups, the majority of 91% of the population belongs to the Han race, while the remaining 55 different ethnicities contribute much to the unique culture of the nation (L. Huang, 2023).

Cross-cultural competence has been proven to be effective in digital environments across various contexts. Raska et al. (2016) introduced the concept of Virtual Cross-Cultural Experience (VCCE). According to their findings, VCCE, defined by virtual encounters between students from different countries, strongly increased student motivation and deep intercultural awareness. The researchers noticed improvements in students’ confidence regarding intercultural communication and their ability to act appropriately across cultures. This innovative methodology presented here indicates the potential of technology in enabling significant cross-cultural experiences without necessarily crossing physical borders, hence being very close to what is intended in our research. M. Huang (2024) further explains that social media environments have increasingly become integral for cross-cultural communication and cultural representation. Their investigation emphasizes the role of social stratification and technological advancement in influencing how individuals interact with the environment and thus interact cross-culturally. More importantly, they conjoin in stressing that nuanced research into the differences in online behaviors due to culture is crucial for cross-cultural communication in digital times. This is in line with our emphasis on the potential of ICH content in video streams to increase the ability for cross-cultural competence and attitudes toward ethnic minorities.

Numerous physical efforts have been made by advocates, academic institutions, and governments to achieve a cross-cultural understanding of ethnic minorities in China. The Chinese government has implemented policies for the protection and promotion of ethnic minority languages in schools (Adamson & Feng, 2009). Indeed, Adamson and Feng (2009) state that efforts have been made to standardize minority languages and provide written forms for languages that had only oral forms. In this direction, autonomous regions have been established for ethnic minorities, and various models of bilingual education have been developed and implemented in more than a few regions. Committees by the government have been developed to advance the rights related to minority languages; also, legal frameworks like

the Law for Nationality Autonomous Regions have been established to provide partial protection of the same. Grassroots efforts have also been seen, which include petitions by minority intellectuals for the protection of their languages. These were, however, very uneven in different minority regions and have often been preempted by efforts to promote standard Han Chinese (Adamson & Feng, 2009).

This study explores the argument that understanding and enhancing cross-cultural competence is pivotal for the delivery of digital content that is sensitive to the multifaceted nature of China's ethnic landscape and that is more readily accepted by the Han majority. We argue that cross-cultural competence, particularly regarding attitudes and skills, is vital in shaping perceptions about ethnic minorities and thus serves an important role in fostering harmonious intergroup relations. Yet, it is recognized that the interaction between cross-cultural competence and intergroup attitudes is complex, influenced by individual motivations to use digital platforms, and involves more than a reduction in stereotyping.

The aim of this paper is to investigate how video-streamed ICH content influences the cross-cultural competence and attitudes towards ethnic minorities of the Han majority in China. We unpack such complex dynamics of digital cross-cultural interactions by analyzing the moderating effects caused by user motivations and demographics. These findings could usefully inform strategies leveraging digital platforms for promoting cultural understanding and a reduction of stereotypes within multiethnic and multicultural societies. In trying to answer these questions, one must consider not only the complications but also the opportunities of digital interactions. The complications include misrepresentation, perpetuation of stereotypes, and commodification of culture; the opportunities are increased visibility for minority cultures, direct cultural exchange, and the possibility of correction of misunderstanding through authentic representation. The present study contributes to the broader debate on the impact of digital media on the development of cross-cultural understandings and interactions through an examination of these complex dynamics. It identifies the potential for intercultural communication through streaming platforms within a networked world. It reaches for connections with sociocultural contexts in a rich ethnic landscape and develops new insights that may help policy development and practical applications for digital cultural preservation and intercultural communication.

Physical Interaction with Intangible Cultural Heritage Between Ethnic Majorities and Minorities in Contemporary China

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO; 2011), cultural heritage refers to “traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts” (para. 1). China's cultural heritage is shaped significantly by political agendas. The government employs traditions to foster national unity and ethnic harmony, using them as tools to curate historical narratives (Silverman & Blumenfield, 2013). The selective protection or promotion of minority cultural sites reveals the political motivations behind heritage definition (Silverman & Blumenfield, 2013). However, works by Zhao (2013) and Peters (2013) emphasize tensions between local communities and government, especially when commerce clashes with heritage. R. Litzinger (2004) illustrates this with disputes over Yunnan mountaineering regulations, showcasing deeper conflicts between local governments and indigenous minorities.

McCarthy (2009) points out another paradox of the Chinese government: while it champions the distinctiveness of minorities, it is vigorous in suppressing those seen as threats to national unity or modernization. This promotion of ethnic harmony often operates from a

predominantly Han perspective, reinforcing Han dominance. R. A. Litzinger (2000) further illustrates this point, analyzing the research on the Chashan Yao ethnicity. He suggests that representations of minorities often relate more to constructing a Han identity than acknowledging the uniqueness of the minorities themselves, dubbing this a type of “Oriental Orientalism” (R. A. Litzinger, 2000, p. 3).

Before the rise of social media, tourism was pivotal in reconstructing minority cultural identities. The impact on heritage sites, intensified by the “heritage fever” era and the Great Western Development program, has been significant (Liu, 2013; Su, 2013; Zhao, 2013). Since 1999, the State has championed heritage tourism, notably with initiatives like the three golden weeks. In southwestern China, this tourism combats poverty and preserves ethnic heritage. As tourism evolves, there is a heightened interest in the intangible cultural heritage of ethnic minorities.

The commercialization of ethnic minority tourism complicates the relationship between visitors and locals (Liu, 2013). Studies by Su (2013) and Liu (2013) delve into the challenges of maintaining authenticity amidst the pressures of tourism and the influence of political narratives. O’Brien and Brown (2020) argue that commercial tourism ventures often reduce ethnic cultures to exotic commodities. Such commodification, driven partly by the government's effort to appeal to foreign tourists (Schein, 1997), results in a blend of identity construction and commercialization, with political undertones always present.

In cultural heritage tourism, Zou et al.’s (2021) research highlights the need for festivals that align with visitor expectations while preserving minority culture authenticity. Beyond grand heritage sites, grassroots cultural festivals play a vital role in shaping visitor perceptions. It is essential for stakeholders to balance visitor interests with authentic cultural representation. Festivals, when well-curated, are pivotal in promoting China’s ethnic minority heritage. Yilmaz and Tasci’s (2015) study on host-guest interactions in tourism suggests that increased interaction with local minority residents reduces perceived social distance, enhancing intergroup harmony.

The interplay between cultural heritage and tourism in China is thus complex, influenced by government policies, commercial interests, and preservation goals. The government's approach leans towards selective promotion and Han dominance. However, with the evolving tourism landscape, the narrative on cultural heritage is not solely top-down. Our study delves into the potential of video streaming and digital exposure of ethnic minority heritage to enhance cross-cultural competence among the ethnic majority. We argue that digital engagements in today’s age have the potential to both preserve minority cultures and improve majority-minority relations, emphasizing the importance of our research.

Digital Interaction with Intangible Cultural Heritage between Ethnic Majorities and Minorities in Contemporary China

Video streaming platforms can effectively boost public awareness of ethnic minority intangible cultural heritage (ICH), which encompasses aspects like craftsmanship, customs, and oral traditions (Hou et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2019; Wang, 2020). Lu et al. (2019) found that live streaming, including talks, performances, and tutorials, can share this cultural knowledge. Heuman and Gambarato (2023) suggest that such streaming contributes to cultural memory and sustainability. For instance, TikTok videos have increased sales of ICH products (Qian, 2021).

Ethnic minority vloggers in China use Douyin (the Chinese version of TikTok) to showcase their cultural heritage amidst dominant ethnic challenges. S. Chen et al. (2023) revealed a complex ecosystem of ethnic minority vlogging on Douyin, where cultural experts prioritized preservation while non-experts sought traffic and profit. Content strategies varied based on perceived audience ethnicity. The study highlighted platform features like the music

library facilitating cultural sharing and the cultural breakthrough phenomenon when content reached wider audiences. Most vloggers used Mandarin Chinese to increase visibility despite having ethnic languages. Economic opportunities emerged as long-term motivators. Vloggers and viewers engaged in collective moderation to protect their culture from misinterpretation, illustrating the challenges of maintaining cultural authenticity in digital spaces. This reveals vlogging's role in cultural sustainability and suggests ways for ICT tools to support minority cultures. Yet, the growth of social media platforms has also commercialized cultural heritage, amplified by the previous pandemic-induced travel restrictions (Lai, 2021).

Research indicates that exposure to ICH is vital for preservation (Isa et al., 2019). Digital technology has particularly increased accessibility to cultural heritage for the youth (Ng et al., 2022). China has enlisted 30 online influencers and Internet stars to promote its cultural heritage (Jing, 2023). Lu (2020) notes that video streaming in China serves to share knowledge and preserve cultural heritage. Yet, as Lu et al. (2019) observed, few young audiences engage with these streams. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (n.d.) states that many youths are unaware of their cultural heritage, risking the loss of identity and belonging. For ethnic minority youth, streaming platforms have bridged this gap to promote and share their ICH (Lu, 2019).

Nüshu, a distinct script, has especially sparked interest in digital heritage politics. Morgner et al. (2022) found that respondents perceive Nüshu as authentic and simple. Still, discussions on platforms like TikTok mostly focus on content motivation, often bypassing minority cultural heritage representation. Historically, ethnic minorities were commodified, as Schein (1997) noted with Miao women's objectification. Likewise, today, platforms like TikTok and Kuaishou feature Han individuals visiting minority areas for commercial purposes, but there is an emerging emphasis on ethnic creators narrating their stories. This suggests a move towards more genuine representation. L. Li and Kang (2022) highlighted the role of ethnic minority influencers on these platforms. Though subject to state censorship, these platforms offer room for ethnic minority's individual stories. However, despite the potential empowerment of minority voices on TikTok, dominant Han narratives can sometimes eclipse the true voices of minorities. In a more recent study, L. Li and Kang (2024) found that young Chinese ethnic minority users' cultural background significantly influenced their social media habits on platforms like Douyin. Ethnic minority users favored multi-language features, cultural content, and influencers with similar backgrounds. However, mainstream Chinese culture strongly influenced their usage preferences, potentially leading to the fading of ethnic minority culture online. L. Li and Kang (2024) suggest platform design and policy measures to encourage cultural diversity and protect ethnic minority content in the digital space. Therefore, the intersection of video-streaming technologies, influencer culture, and cross-cultural competence forms an intriguing medium for virtual cultural exchange. In our study, we are interested in the impact of this exchange on the ethnic majority perception of ethnic minorities in the Chinese socio-cultural context.

Cross-Cultural Competence

In an increasingly diverse world, cross-cultural competence is vital both domestically and globally (Hammer et al., 2003). We prefer the term *cross-cultural* over the often interchangeable intercultural (J. P. Johnson et al., 2006). While both pertain to interactions between cultures (Hammer et al., 2003), "intercultural communication" highlights misunderstandings due to differing cultural expectations (Lustig & Koester, 2006, p. 52). Cross-cultural aligns more with our study's focus, as it analyzes contrasting knowledge across cultures (J. P. Johnson et al., 2006). It pertains to studying an idea within multiple cultures, contrasting interactions within one culture to those from another (Lustig & Koester, 2006). This approach

is invaluable for understanding cultural impacts (Lustig & Koester, 2006). We concentrate on interactions between China's ethnic majority and minorities' distinct cultural heritages.

Johnson et al. (2006) emphasized that cross-cultural competence includes general and specific knowledge, language proficiency, and interaction skills. A key facet of this competence is cultural knowledge, which helps individuals navigate misunderstandings with those from other cultures (Wiseman et al., 1989). General cultural knowledge focuses on understanding cross-cultural differences, while culture-specific knowledge delves into an individual's understanding of another culture's economic, historical, and political contexts, social structures, and values (Bird et al., 1993; Johnson et al., 2006). Moreover, attributional knowledge is an awareness of appropriate behavior, using both factual and conceptual knowledge to understand actions in the target culture (Bird et al., 1993).

Acquired over time, cultural abilities and skills encompass learned capacities (Johnson et al., 2006). Communication competence, a prominent skill among these, empowers individuals to "recognize and respect discernible cultural differences between message senders and receivers" (Aririguzoh, 2022, para. 1). These competencies frequently include proficiency in foreign languages, adaptability to the behavioral norms and values of diverse cultures, and conflict resolution strategies (Johnson et al., 2006). Those with high cross-cultural competence can effectively minimize misunderstandings and miscommunication (Aririguzoh, 2022).

The final dimension of cross-cultural competence is related to the personality traits, beliefs, norms, and values that individuals absorb from their native culture (Johnson et al., 2006; Van Ham, 2022). Such personality traits are postulated as the precursors to cross-cultural competence (Johnson et al., 2006). Azadipour (2019) discovered that extroverted personality traits most accurately predicted cross-cultural language competence, whereas other traits (e.g., sensing vs. intuitive, thinking vs. feeling, judging vs. perceiving) lacked significant contribution. Similarly, scholars like Sinicrope et al. (2007) introduced analogous dimensions of cross-cultural competence, including behavioral flexibility, communicative awareness, empathy, knowledge discovery, respect for others, and tolerance for ambiguity.

In our study, cross-cultural competence emerges as a pivotal factor because it directly influences attitudes towards ethnic minorities, reflecting its critical role in fostering positive intergroup relations. Such competence underscores the necessity of integrating attitudes and skills that promote empathy and understanding across cultural divides, demonstrating the potential for improved social cohesion and a reduction in stereotypical perceptions when individuals are equipped with the knowledge and sensitivity to navigate diverse cultural landscapes effectively. This acknowledgment of cross-cultural competence as fundamental in bridging cultural gaps and fostering inclusivity sets the stage for a deeper examination of how the motivations, demographics, and usage behaviors of video-streaming users influence their interaction with video-streamed ICH content, further shaping their cross-cultural understanding and attitudes towards ethnic minorities.

Video-Streaming Users' Motivations, Demographics and Usage of Video-Streamed ICH Content

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) informs studies on motivations behind emerging technology use (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018). Hilvert-Bruce et al. (2018) surveyed 2,227 Twitch users, identifying eight socio-motivational factors for live-streaming engagement, emphasizing community and social aspects like social interaction, community sense, and making new friends. They also highlighted information-seeking and entertainment motives. C. C. Chen and Lin (2018) confirmed that entertainment and social interaction determined live-streaming use among 313 Taiwanese users. Cabeza-Ramírez et al. (2020) studied gamers and found a correlation between motivations and usage behaviors, with gamers prioritizing informational

motivations over entertainment or social reasons. TikTok users are driven by convenience, entertainment, information, and social interaction (Falgoust et al., 2022).

The UGT offers an audience-centric perspective, while the Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000) suggests that media consumption is driven by intrinsic and extrinsic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Reinecke & Oliver, 2016). Consuming video-streamed ICH content of ethnic minorities, SDT provides a fitting framework. Competence motivation reflects the desire to learn and grow (Cherry, 2022), potentially fostering inclusivity (Cherry, 2022). Viewing such cultural content can affirm one's values in a diverse society (Reinecke & Oliver, 2016). Autonomy suggests that choosing this content can instigate societal shifts (Cherry, 2022). Relatedness pushes users towards cultural content for connection and community (Reinecke & Oliver, 2016). Cabeza-Ramírez et al. (2020) indicated that users' motivations strongly impact their engagement with live streaming, with informational motivations being most predictive. Cao (2022) highlighted that Chinese youth prefer ICH videos demonstrating creativity, leading to a greater appreciation of traditional crafts and bolstering cultural confidence.

Video-streaming research suggests that users' gender and age could influence their perceptions of platforms (C. C. Chen & Lin, 2018). Female users are swayed by their preference for influencers, while interactions with celebrities influence males. Younger users value the flow experience more than older ones in live-streaming (C. C. Chen & Lin, 2018). Cabeza-Ramírez et al. (2020) examined the effects of age and gender on user motivation, finding no significant moderation. Lu (2020), combining survey data and interviews, discovered that in China, beyond video games, knowledge-sharing live streams attract significant engagement. Topics range from language and science to cooking and adventures. Streamers focus on engaging youth in ICH practices, with popular content like Chinese culinary techniques. Viewers appreciate ICH streams for their educational and interactive nature, drawn to relatable streamers and detailed demonstrations. These streams provide access to Chinese arts like Guqin music and Peking Opera. Additionally, viewers are increasingly interested in purchasing artifacts, recognizing their cultural value and discerning authenticity.

To examine cross-cultural competence in accordance with the above contexts and demographics among Chinese users, we posited the following research questions and hypotheses in our study:

1. How does the use of video-streaming platforms and content from ethnic minority and indigenous communities influence users' acquisition of cross-cultural knowledge and attitudes towards these communities?
2. What motivates users to engage with video-streamed ICH content from ethnic minority communities, and how does this motivation impact their cross-cultural attitudes and skills?
3. How do demographic factors of video-streaming users modulate the influence of cross-cultural knowledge and attitudes on their perceptions of ethnic minority communities?
4. Is there a link between users' engagement with video-streamed cultural heritage content and their responses to incidents of discrimination towards ethnic minority and indigenous communities?

H₁₋₁: Video-streaming users' cross-cultural knowledge could affect their attitudes toward ethnic minority communities.

H₁₋₂: Video-streaming users' cross-cultural attitudes and skills could affect their attitudes toward ethnic minority communities.

H₂₋₁: Motivation to use video-streamed ICH content from ethnic minority communities could moderate the relationship between cross-cultural knowledge and their attitudes toward ethnic minority communities.

H₂₋₂: Motivation to use video-streamed ICH content from ethnic minority communities could moderate the relationship between cross-cultural attitudes and skills and their attitudes toward ethnic minority communities.

H₃₋₁: Demographics of video-streamed users could moderate the relationship between cross-cultural knowledge and attitudes toward ethnic minority communities.

H₃₋₂: Demographics of video-streamed users could moderate the relationship between cross-cultural attitudes and skills and attitudes toward ethnic minority communities.

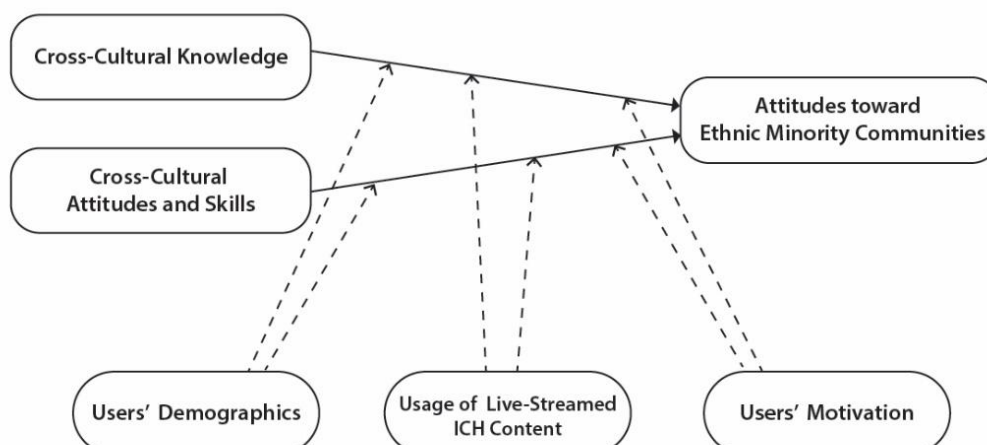
H₄₋₁: Usage of video-streamed ICH content could moderate the relationship between cross-cultural knowledge and attitudes toward ethnic minority communities.

H₄₋₂: Using video-streamed ICH content could moderate the relationship between cross-cultural attitudes and skills and attitudes toward ethnic minority communities.

Theoretical Model

Overall, we argue that cross-cultural competence is crucial in shaping attitudes towards ethnic minorities, indicating the importance of these competencies for positive intergroup relations and reducing misunderstanding (Hammer et al., 2003; Lustig & Koester, 2006). Therefore, we proposed H₁₋₁ and H₁₋₂ to visualize these relationships. However, the relationships between users' cross-cultural competence and their attitudes toward ethnic minorities are nuanced, significantly moderated by individual motivations for using digital platforms as widely studied in past UGT literature (Cabeza-Ramírez et al., 2020; C. C. Chen & Lin, 2018; Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018). To empirically assess the roles of users' motivation, we proposed H₂₋₁ and H₂₋₂. We further argue that fostering positive intergroup relations goes beyond demographic distinctions (C. C. Chen & Lin, 2018) and usage patterns of live-streaming platforms (Cabeza-Ramírez et al., 2020) and requires understanding and addressing the complex motivations behind digital engagement. We proposed H₃₋₁, H₃₋₂, H₄₋₁, and H₄₋₂ to capture their effects. The following theoretical model summarizes the above-postulated research hypotheses (H₁-H₄) to guide our study (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Theoretical Model



Methodology

Justifications for Online Data Collection

The selection of online data collection is justified because similar studies on streaming have already used this method to study consumer behaviors (J. Chen & Liao, 2022; Mao, 2022). Furthermore, nearly one-third of Internet users watch at least one streaming video weekly, and much video-streaming content is delivered via popular social media platforms (Kutuchief, 2022). Therefore, we initially posited that it was most likely that online data collection is the most efficient way to reach and recruit those video streaming users to take part in our study. Our study employed an online quantitative questionnaire to survey video-streaming users in China.

We published the questionnaire on some of the most popular Chinese social media platforms, WeChat, Weibo, and Douban, and video streaming platforms such as TikTok and Bilibili after receiving Ethics clearance from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China.

Sampling Method and Sampling Characteristics

In our convenience sample, a form of sampling where the target population is both easily reachable and useful when your aim is to collect people's views and attitudes (Golzar et al., 2022), 19.7% of the participants are male ($N=23$), while 79.5% are female ($N=93$). Those who are 20-29 years old account for 85.47% of the sample ($N=100$), 30-39 years old ($N=5$, 4.27%), 40-49 years old ($N=1$, .85%), 50-59 years old ($N=11$, 9.40%). The average age of the participants is 26.89 years old ($SD=8.76$). Generation Z users (born after 1996) account for 84.62% of the participants ($N=99$), while non-Generation Z users account for 15.39% ($N=18$) of the sample. The participants' marital status included 84 single participants (71.8%), and married participants were 15 (12.8% of the sample). Self-identified the Han majority ($N=112$, 95.7%) and non-Han minority ($N=5$, 4.3%).

Most participants have used live-streaming technology less than 2 times a week ($N=42$, 59.2%). Most video-streaming technology is used for less than 30 minutes ($N=35$, 22.14%) and between 1 to 3 hours ($N=16$, 30.6%). Regarding the purposes of using live-streaming technology among our sample², entertainment ($N=93$) and fun ($N=53$) are the main purposes of using live-streaming technology, while learning ($N=10$) and studying ($N=9$) are not the major purposes among our respondents in the sample.

Instrumentation and Reliability Coefficients

The online questionnaire was divided into five sections: (1) demographics, (2) usage behaviors of technology and content, (3) users' motivation, (4) their cross-cultural competence, and (5) their attitudes toward ethnic minorities. While the first section asked standard nominal questions such as gender, age, marital status, and ethnicity, the second focused on the amount of usage and purpose of video-streaming technology using nominal scales. These two sections provide empirical data to assess the moderating effects of demographics (H_{3-1} and H_{3-2}) and usage behaviors (H_{4-1} and H_{4-2}).

To examine the moderating effects of user motivations to use live-streaming technology, scales in section 3 were adapted from the User Motivation Inventory (n.d.). They would use a 7-point Likert-type scale with 1=*Strongly Disagree* and 7=*Strongly Agree*. Sample statements include the following: "I use live-streaming technology, but I question why I continue to use

² Participants were allowed to select multiple items. Therefore, percentage was not computed.

it”, “I would feel guilty if I quit using live video streaming technology,” “Using live video streaming technology is a sensible thing to do,” “Using live video streaming technology is consistent with my deepest principles and values,” among others. To better detect and analyze the multi-dimensionality of these motivation factors, we calculated the composites for each dimension after using the Exploratory Factor Analysis with PCA and Varimax rotation procedures. The 11-item scale was divided into amotivation (2 items, $\alpha=.69$), regulations (that combines introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation) (7 items, $\alpha=.83$), and intrinsic motivation (2 items, $\alpha=.80$). Cronbach’s alpha coefficients assessed reliability for these factors. All dimensions were reliable at 0.7, with an acceptable reliability level.

In section 4 of the survey, participants’ cross-cultural competence was measured by *The Intercultural Attitudes Skills and Knowledge Short Scale* (ASKS; Purdue University, n.d.) to assess “the degree to which individuals internalize attitudes, skills, and knowledge associated with effective and appropriate intercultural communication [para 1].” Sample questions include the following: “I welcome and initiate interactions with people who are culturally different from me,” “I ask questions and seek answers about other cultures different than my own,” “I use a worldview different from my own to interpret the views and actions of persons from different cultures,” “I understand the importance of politics, history, beliefs, values, economics, and communication styles to members of other cultural groups,” “I actively seek to improve my understanding of the complicated differences between cultures,” among others. The 11-item scale was factor analyzed with PCA and varimax rotation. It converged into *cross-cultural attitudes and skills* (7 items, $\alpha=.84$) and *cross-cultural knowledge* (4 items, $\alpha=.78$). Cronbach’s alpha coefficients assessed reliability for these factors. All dimensions were acceptable at 0.7 with an acceptable reliability level.

Participants’ attitudes toward ethnic minorities in section 5 were adapted from the *Survey of American Attitudes toward Jews* (PEW Research Center, 2021) with a list of 7-point Likert-like statements with 1=Strongly Disagree and 7=Strongly Agree. The 8-item scale measuring attitudes toward ethnic minorities was divided into *Stereotypical Perceptions* (4 items, $\alpha=.78$) and *Affinity* (2 items, $\alpha=.74$). Cronbach’s alpha coefficients assessed reliability for these factors to meet the 0.7 threshold. The table provides insights into Chinese participants’ stereotypical perceptions and affinity towards ethnic minorities. The individual questionnaire items help to break down specific aspects of these attitudes, while the composite scores offer a more holistic view. The mean scores give an average indication of sentiment, while the standard deviation values indicate the variability in responses. Empirical data collected from section 4 and section 5 were employed to test H_{1-1} and H_{1-2} .

Findings

Users’ Cross-Cultural Competence in Predicting Attitudes toward the Ethnic Minority Communities (H_1)

Regression analysis procedures were used to determine the relationships between users’ cross-cultural competence and attitudes toward ethnic minority communities (H_1). Following Mansfield and Helms (1982), the researchers executed a series of multicollinearity tests before multiple regression analysis procedures among highly correlated predictor variables in a regression model. The variance inflation factors (VIF) procedure assessed this problem in the regression models. The computed VIF equaled one and did not surpass the threshold of 5, as proposed by Bernstein’s (2001, as cited in Yang, 2007) suggestion that, generally, severe multicollinearity exists if a VIF is larger than 5. In the three regression models, all VIFs were

below 5. As a result, the initial analysis indicated that multicollinearity was not a problem for the regression models.

In the two regression models, all VIFs ranged between 1.55 and 2.48 and were below 5. As a result, the initial analysis indicated that multicollinearity was not a problem for the regression models. The provided analysis shows that the predictor cross-cultural attitudes and skills plays a significant role in forecasting the affinity toward the ethnic minorities ($\beta=.26$, $t=2.37^{**}$). Interestingly, findings suggest that individuals with higher cross-cultural attitudes and skills might have slightly reduced stereotypical perceptions, as indicated by a negative coefficient ($\beta=-.11$). Conversely, a rise in cross-cultural knowledge seems to coincide with a slight increase in stereotypical perceptions ($\beta=.15$). This is somewhat surprising, as one would anticipate that more knowledge might diminish stereotypes. However, it is essential to note that both observed trends are not statistically significant, with t -values of 0.34 and 1.31, respectively, which fall below the typical threshold (± 1.96) for statistical significance at a 95% confidence level. Thus, while these results provide food for thought, they are not decisive in establishing a clear relationship between these cross-cultural factors and stereotypical perceptions. H_1 is partially supported (Table 1).

Table 1

Linear Regression Analysis of Cross-Cultural Competence on Attitudes toward the Minorities

Predictor Variables (Cross-Cultural Competence)	Outcome Variable 1: Stereotypical Perceptions of the Ethnic Minorities	Outcome Variable 2: Affinity toward the Ethnic Minorities
Cross-Cultural Attitudes and Skills	Model 1 ¹ Standardized Coefficient $\beta=-.11$, $t=.34$	Model 1 ² Standardized Coefficient $\beta=.26$ $t=2.37^{**}$
Cross-Cultural Knowledge	Model 1 ¹ Standardized Coefficient $\beta=.15$ $t=1.31$	Model 1 ² Standardized Coefficient $\beta=.16$ $t=1.49$

Note. * $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$ *** $p<0.001$

¹ $R=.123$, $R\text{ square}=.02$, $F=.88$, $df\ 2/114$, $p>.05$, $Durbin-Watson=1.52$, $VIF=1.55$

² $R=.375$, $R\text{ square}=.14$, $F=9.32$, $df\ 2/114$, $p<.001$, $Durbin-Watson=1.78$, $VIF=1.55$

The Moderating Role of User Motivation (H_2)

To answer H_2 , hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to determine if the users' motivation to use live-streaming platforms could moderate the above relationships. Cross-cultural attitudes, skills, and knowledge reported in H_1 , users' motivation factors were found to affect the above relationships significantly. The results of hierarchical regression analyses were used to estimate the incremental and total variance associated with the variable groups and are reported in Table 2.

Five independent variables were selected and grouped into two blocks separately. Participants' cross-cultural competence was entered in the first block. Users' motivations were entered in the 2nd block. Users' motivation factors best and consistently predict users' stereotypical perceptions of ethnic minorities among participants. Two motivational factors were found to moderate the above relationships significantly. Users' amotivation (i.e., lack of a strong motivation to use the live streaming technology) moderates the relationships in their stereotypical perceptions among the sample ($\beta=.22$, $t=1.31^*$). Additionally, regulations such as social expectations, social norms, peer pressure, and compliance also positively moderate the

above relationship in their stereotypical perceptions among the sample ($\beta=.33, t=2.38^{**}$). Users' motivations were found to be a stronger moderator of their cross-cultural competence (Table 2).

These two user motivational factors (i.e., Amotivation and Regulations) were observed to predict participants' affinity toward ethnic minorities. Two motivational factors were found to moderate the above relationships positively or negatively. Users' lack of self-motivation reasons (Amotivation) to use live-streaming platforms moderates the relationships in their affinity toward the ethnic minorities negatively among the sample ($\beta=-.21, t=-2.44^*$). Yet, the regulations factor also positively moderates the above relationship in their stereotypical perceptions ($\beta=.35, t=3.48^{***}$) (Table 2). RH2 is, therefore, partially supported.

Table 2

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Cross-Cultural Competence on Attitudes toward the Minorities as Moderated by Users' Motivation to Live-Streaming Platforms.

Step 1	
Outcome Variable 1: Stereotypical Perceptions of the Ethnic Minorities	Model 1 ¹
Cross-Cultural Attitudes and Skills	Standardized Coefficient $\beta=-.11$ $t=-.96$
Cross-Cultural Knowledge	Standardized Coefficient $\beta=.15$ $t=1.31$
Step 2	
Outcome Variable 1: Stereotypical Perceptions of the Ethnic Minorities	Model 2 ²
Cross-Cultural Attitudes and Skills	Standardized Coefficient $\beta=-.14$ $t=-1.22$
Cross-Cultural Knowledge	Standardized Coefficient $\beta=.06$ $t=2.38$
Amotivation (AMOS)	Standardized Coefficient $\beta=.22$ $t=1.31^*$
Regulations (R)	Standardized Coefficient $\beta=.33$ $t=2.38^{**}$
Intrinsic Motivation (IM)	Standardized Coefficient $\beta=-.13$ $t=-1.30$
Step 1	
Outcome Variable 2: Affinity toward the Ethnic Minorities	Model 3 ³
Cross-Cultural Attitudes and Skills	Standardized Coefficient $\beta=.26$ $t=2.37^{**}$
Cross-Cultural Knowledge	Standardized Coefficient $\beta=.16$ $t=1.49$
Step 2	
Outcome Variable 1: Stereotypical Perceptions of the Ethnic Minorities	Model 4 ⁴
Cross-Cultural Attitudes and Skills	Standardized Coefficient $\beta=.29$ $t=2.89^{**}$
Cross-Cultural Knowledge	Standardized Coefficient $\beta=.08$ $t=.74$
Amotivation (AMOS)	Standardized Coefficient $\beta=-.21$

Regulations (R)	$t=-2.44^*$ Standardized Coefficient $\beta=.35$
Intrinsic Motivation (IM)	$t=3.48^{***}$ Standardized Coefficient $\beta=-.12$ $t=-1.26$

Note. * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

¹ $R=.12$, $R\text{ square}=.02$, $F=.88$, $df\ 2/114$, $p>.05$, $VIF=1.55$

² $R=.39$, $R\text{ square}=.15$, $F=3.94$, $df\ 5/114$, $p<.005$, $Durbin-Watson=1.70$, $VIF=1.07$ to 1.65

³ $R=.38$, $R\text{ square}=.14$, $F=9.32$, $df\ 2/114$, $p<.001$, $VIF=1.550$

⁴ $R=.50$, $R\text{ square}=.25$, $F=7.51$, $df\ 5/114$, $p<.001$, $Durbin-Watson=1.80$, $VIF=1.07$ to 1.65

The Moderating Effects of User Demographics (H₃) and Streamed Video Usage (H₄)

To answer H₃, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to determine if the users' demographics would moderate the relationships between cross-cultural competence and attitudes toward ethnic minorities (H₃). Ten independent variables were selected and grouped into three blocks separately. Cross-cultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills were entered in the first block. Users' motivation factors were entered in the second block. Demographic variables (e.g., gender, Gen Z, and ethnicities) were entered in the third block, and two usage predictors were entered in the fourth block. The results of hierarchical regression analyses were used to estimate the incremental and total variance associated with the variable groups and are reported in Table 3. This approach offered the most conservative test possible. It ensured that any effects attributed to users' attitudes toward ethnic minorities would not be due to their relationship with other factors included in the model.

As demonstrated in Table 3, only users' generation (whether they belong to Gen Z or not as an age/generational cohort) moderate the relationships stipulated in H₁ and H₂. The Gen Z demographic may harbor marginally fewer stereotypical views of ethnic minorities compared to other age groups. Yet, this subtle difference does not carry statistical significance ($\beta=-.06$, $t=-.35$), meaning that we cannot state that Gen Z's perspective on ethnic minorities is definitive in this regard. Furthermore, unexpectedly, among demographic factors, none show a significant moderating effect on the relationship between cross-cultural competence and affinity toward ethnic minorities in this study. This indicates that while cross-cultural competence plays a role in shaping affinity toward ethnic minorities, demographic factors like gender, marital status, generation, and usage patterns might not significantly influence this relationship in this context, indicating their weak predictive power; thus, H₃ was not supported (Table 3).

The hierarchical regression analysis procedures were used to determine the relationships in H₄. The results indicate that both frequency of use and the amount of time spent on live-streamed ICH content show a positive association with stereotypical perceptions of ethnic minorities. This means that as the frequency of watching ICH content increases, there is an increase in stereotypical perceptions. However, neither of these relationships is statistically significant, suggesting caution when drawing conclusions about the effects of ICH content consumption on shaping stereotypical perceptions based on this dataset. Unexpectedly, the frequency of engaging with live-streamed ICH content shows a negative association with affinity toward ethnic minorities. In contrast, the time spent on such content has a slightly positive association. However, neither relationship is statistically significant. This suggests that, based on the provided data, the frequency and time spent on ICH content do not have a statistically meaningful moderating effect on the relationship between Chinese participants' cross-cultural competence and their attitudes toward ethnic minorities. Therefore, H₄ was not supported (Table 3).

Table 3

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Cross-Cultural Competence on Attitudes toward the Minorities as Moderated by Users' Motivation to Live-Streaming Platforms, Demographics, and Usage of Live-Streamed ICH Content.

Step 1	
Outcome Variable 1: Stereotypical Perceptions of the Ethnic Minorities	Model 1 ¹
Cross-Cultural Attitudes and Skills	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.11$ $t=-.92$
Cross-Cultural Knowledge	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.15$ $t=1.28$
Step 2	
Outcome Variable 1: Stereotypical Perceptions of the Ethnic Minorities	Model 2 ²
Cross-Cultural Attitudes and Skills	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.13$ $t=-1.19$
Cross-Cultural Knowledge	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.06$ $t=.51$
Amotivation (AMOS)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.22$ $t=2.41^*$
Regulations (R)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.33$ $t=3.06^{**}$
Intrinsic Motivation (IM)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.13$ $t=-1.27$
Step 3	
Outcome Variable 1: Stereotypical Perceptions of the Ethnic Minorities	Model 3 ³
Cross-Cultural Attitudes and Skills	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.07$ $t=-.65$
Cross-Cultural Knowledge	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.03$ $t=.25$
Amotivation (AMOS)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.11$ $t=1.13$
Regulations (R)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.39$ $t=3.31^{***}$
Intrinsic Motivation (IM)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.16$ $t=-1.48$
Gender ^a (Male)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.04$ $t=.38$
Marital Status ^b (Single)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.20$ $t=-1.10$
Gen Z ^c (Gen Z)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.06$ $t=-.35$
Frequency ^d (Heavy users)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=1.64$ $t=.10$
Time ^e (Heavy users)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.07$ $t=.70$
Step 4	
Outcome Variable 2: Affinity toward the Ethnic Minorities	Model 4 ⁴
Cross-Cultural Attitudes and Skills	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.26$ $t=2.44^{**}$

Cross-Cultural Knowledge	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.16$ $t=1.44$
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Step 2 Outcome Variable 1: Affinity toward the Ethnic Minorities	Model 5 ⁵
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Cross-Cultural Attitudes and Skills	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.31$ $t=2.93^{**}$
Cross-Cultural Knowledge	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.08$ $t=.71$
Amotivation (AMOS)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.20$ $t=-2.36^*$
Regulations (R)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.34$ $t=3.43^{***}$
Intrinsic Motivation (IM)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.12$ $t=-1.22$
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Step 3 Outcome Variable 1: Affinity toward the Ethnic Minorities	Model 6 ⁶
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Cross-Cultural Attitudes and Skills	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.35$ $t=3.26^{**}$
Cross-Cultural Knowledge	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.03$ $t=.23$
Amotivation (AMOS)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.29$ $t=-3.08^{**}$
Regulations (R)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.41$ $t=3.66^{***}$
Intrinsic Motivation (IM)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.12$ $t=-1.17$
Gender ^a (Male)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.02$ $t=-.27$
Marital Status ^b (Single)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.33$ $t=-1.90$
Gen Z ^c (Gen Z)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.14$ $t=-.80$
Frequency ^d (Heavy users)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=-.15$ $t=-1.39$
Time ^e (Heavy users)	Standardized Coefficients $\beta=.03$ $t=.29$

Note.

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

¹ $R=.12$, $R\text{ square}=.02$, $F=.84$, $df\ 2/113$, $p>.05$, $VIF=1.55$

² $R=.39$, $R\text{ square}=.15$, $F=3.90$, $df\ 5/110$, $p<.005$, $VIF=1.06$ to 1.67

³ $R=.46$, $R\text{ square}=.21$, $F=2.80$, $df\ 10/105$, $p<.001$, $Durbin-Watson=1.688$, $VIF=1.07$ to 1.65

⁴ $R=.38$, $R\text{ square}=.14$, $F=9.47$, $df\ 2/113$, $p<.001$, $VIF=1.55$

⁵ $R=.50$, $R\text{ square}=.25$, $F=7.43$, $df\ 5/110$, $p<.001$, $VIF=1.06$ to 1.67

⁶ $R=.55$, $R\text{ square}=.30$, $F=4.43$, $df\ 10/105$, $p<.001$, $Durbin-Watson=1.94$, $VIF=1.29$ to 4.50

^a. Coded as 0=female, 1=male.

^b. Coded as 1=Single (and in-love), 0=Married, Divorced, Remarried, and Widowed

^c. Coded as 0=Non-Gen Z users, 1=Gen Z users (born after 1996)

^d. Coded as 0=Light users (Seldom), 1=heavy users (every day and 3-5 times a day)

^e. Coded as 0=Light users (below one hour), 1=Heavy users (more than one hour)

Discussion and Implications

The present research examines how ICH video content streaming in the context of ethnic minorities in China can improve cross-cultural competency by engendering positive attitudes toward ethnic minority groups among members of the dominant ethnic group in China. More importantly, we attempt to explore how the goals and demographics of users determine this interaction. This research was guided by four sets of central research questions and their hypotheses, involving the effects of cross-cultural competence on attitudes towards ethnic minorities, the importance of user incentives, the influence of demographics, and the resulting impact of video-streamed ICH content.

The study delivered several interesting findings that further enhance the understanding of cross-cultural competence and its impact on attitudes towards ethnic minorities concerning video-streamed ICH content. Our research indicated that subjects with attitudes and skills of a cross-cultural nature were able to show more empathy toward ethnic minorities. At the same time, attitudes and skills did not change their stereotyped perceptions. Somewhat surprisingly, however, there was no effect of knowledge about other cultures on either partiality or stereotyping of ethnic minorities. User motives, especially amotivation and regulation, played an important role as intervening variables in the associations between cross-cultural competency and attitudes toward ethnic minorities. Intercultural communication and understanding resulting from video-streaming did not depend on generational cohort, especially distinguishing Generation Z from non-Generation Z individuals. Surprisingly, neither time spent nor the frequency of exposure to video-streamed information about ICH significantly modified the relationship between cross-cultural competence and attitude towards ethnic minorities.

The fact that cross-cultural attitudes and skills are a strong predictor of affinity toward ethnic minorities aligns with the previous research underlining the importance of such competencies in developing constructive relationships between groups. Indeed, Azzopardi and McNeill (2016) and Mammadova (2021) have pointed out the paramount importance of cultural consciousness for effectively working across differences and addressing social inequities. Yet, our findings question the popularly held views regarding the relationship between cross-cultural competence and stereotyped thinking. In contrast to the findings of Garrett-Rucks (2013), who determined that as participants developed intercultural competence (including attitudes, knowledge, and skills), they tended to move away from stereotypical views, our study did indeed find no significant relationship in the scores on cross-cultural attitude and skills, stereotypical thinking. This difference may be due to the unique nature of our sample, which focuses on video-streamed ICH information, or it can suggest that these variables are more complexly related to each other than initially speculated.

The absence of a substantial correlation between cross-cultural knowledge and attitudes towards ethnic minorities is particularly interesting. This discovery contradicts the research conducted by Wiseman et al. (1989) and Wu (2023), which emphasized the influence of cultural knowledge in resolving cultural and cross-cultural misconceptions. Likewise, other studies have found a correlation between increased intercultural competence and intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes (see Bennett, 2008). Our findings indicate that, in relation to video-streamed ICH information, knowing alone may not be enough to impact attitudes toward ethnic minorities.

The results of our study regarding the moderating influence of user motives, specifically amotivation and regulation, add to the expanding body of research on digital media consumption. Cabeza-Ramírez et al. (2020) and Hilvert-Bruce et al. (2018) found that informational motivations were the strongest predictor of the use of live-streaming platforms, followed by tension release/entertainment and social motivations. Our findings indicate that these motivations have a more subtle influence when factoring in cross-cultural attitudes. The

importance of amotivation in our study expands Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) by illustrating how the absence of apparent motivation might impact users' involvement with cultural content and, as a result, their perceptions across different cultures. This implies that while examining UGT in relation to cultural content, it is important to consider not only positive motivations but also the effects of amotivation or unclear reasons. Our research contributes complexity to this comprehension by illustrating how amotivation can simultaneously intensify stereotyped judgments and diminish affinity towards ethnic minorities.

S. Chen et al.'s (2023) study on Chinese ethnic minority vloggers provides interesting context for these findings. They found that cultural experts and non-experts from ethnic minority groups participated in creating and sharing cultural vlogs, with experts more motivated by cultural factors and non-experts by social and economic factors. This co-involvement of different community members in using vlogs for cultural sustainability aligns with our finding that user motives play a role in shaping the impact of engaging with ICH content. Furthermore, S. Chen et al. (2023) observed that vloggers' imagined audience shifted over time from only intra-ethnic viewers to also include mainstream viewers from the Han Chinese majority, catalyzed by the platform's algorithms. This cultural breakthrough prompted vloggers to adapt their content and strategies to cross-culturally appeal to different audiences. While our study did not directly examine content creation strategies, this finding underscores the importance of a future qualitative approach to complex cultural and social dynamics when Han majority of users engage with ICH content on digital platforms.

Overall, the above findings have various practical ramifications for policymakers, content creators, and platform developers in China and other countries with a diverse ethnic composition. For example, the dissemination of ICH is made possible through multimedia, augmented reality, and mobile platforms in Greece (Mathioudakis et al., 2022). According to UNESCO (2022), ICH is inherently global phenomenon and involves over 678 inscriptions from 140 countries. At the beginning of this study, it was highlighted that China has recently introduced a standard for ICH digital preservation and guidelines for digital documentation, storage, and dissemination of ICH across various categories. Social media as a form of dissemination of ICH and guidelines for intercultural engagement, appeal, and use of this media is notably absent. Zhang and Jing's (2022) study revealed that 38% of international visitors learned about China's intangible cultural heritage exhibits through online sources. This highlights the growing significance of digital platforms in facilitating cross-cultural exchange. The internet's role as a primary information channel for foreign tourists underscores its effectiveness and convenience in bridging cultural divides and disseminating knowledge about intangible heritage across borders. The dissemination of digital ICH should continue leveraging diverse new media platforms like WeChat, Weibo, websites, Zhihu, Kwai, and Tiktok to expand the reach and acceptance of the heritage among the whole Chinese population (K. Yan & Li, 2023). We would further argue that promoting constructive interethnic relations through digital platforms should prioritize both the dissemination of information and the cultivation of cross-cultural attitudes and skills. When creating and promoting ICH material, it is important for creators and developers to consider user motivations, as these have a substantial influence on the level of engagement and understanding of cross-cultural knowledge.

In our study, the generational cohort (Gen Z vs. non-Gen Z) demographic did not have a statistically significant influence on the impact of video-streamed ICH content on cross-cultural competence and attitudes toward ethnic minorities. Despite this, generational disparities may have some impact on how consumers interact with ethnic minority ICH content. Sun and Ch'ng (2024) highlight how digital technologies can enhance engagement with ethnic minority ICH, particularly among digital natives. These technologies bridge gaps between artifacts and cultural contexts, potentially fostering cross-cultural understanding. However, digital technology implementation should consider all age groups for inclusive access. L. Li

and Kang (2024) argued that mainstream Han Chinese culture reflects the prevailing attitude and the value of China's online society, significantly affecting young Chinese ethnic minority users' social media affordance. Almost all (92.86%) young ethnic minority participants claim they are influenced by mainstream Han culture, resulting in their preferences being similar to standard users. This plays a negative role in developing the interethnic cross-cultural environment and may continue to harm the cultural diversity in the online cultural ecosystem. Sun and Ch'ng (2024) noted potential conflicts between ICH representation and ethnic minorities' emotional connections to their cultural artifacts, emphasizing the need for community involvement in curation and digital innovation. This underscores the importance of a nuanced, inclusive approach to digital ICH dissemination that respects cultural sensitivities while fostering cross-cultural competence.

This is especially relevant in utilizing popular developments among younger generations and disseminating these in the digital sphere. It also has wide-ranging potential to result in more efficient approaches for the preservation and promotion of multiethnic and multicultural societies on a global level. For instance, in the US, hate crimes related to ancestry, ethnicity, and race account for 64.8% of 7,074 incidents involving 8,753 victims (Department of Justice, 2023). Statistics released by the FBI confirmed an alarming increase of hate crimes by 11.6% in 2021, targeting victims of different ethnicity, religion, and sexuality groups (Lynch, 2023). These alarming developments reflect the polarization and disinformation created by social media. Social media and influencers have played an important role in disseminating extremism and racism by posting and repeating racial hate messages (Contreras, 2023). For example, Bella Hadid, an Instagram influencer and model, shared content that accused Israel of colonialization and ethnic cleaning with her 43 million followers (Sales, 2021).

Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the potential of video-streamed intangible cultural heritage (ICH) content related to Chinese ethnic minorities to enhance cross-cultural competence and attitudes toward ethnic minority communities among ethnic majority users in China. Our findings provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between digital media consumption, cross-cultural competence, and interethnic attitudes in the Chinese context.

As initially argued, we found that cross-cultural competence, particularly attitudes and skills, is crucial in shaping attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Gonçalves and Sousa (2022) argue that cultural intelligence enables those proficient in intercultural communication to better comprehend and value the varied viewpoints from different cultural backgrounds. Our results revealed that cross-cultural attitudes and skills positively predicted participants' affinity toward ethnic minorities, supporting our hypothesis that these competencies are important for positive intergroup relations. However, contrary to our expectations, cross-cultural knowledge did not significantly predict affinity or stereotypical perceptions. This challenges traditional assumptions about the straightforward relationship between cultural knowledge and reduced stereotypes, suggesting a more nuanced dynamic in video-streamed ICH content.

The study also confirmed our argument that the relationship between cross-cultural competence and attitudes toward ethnic minorities is significantly moderated by individual motivations for using digital platforms. User motivations, particularly amotivation and regulation, emerged as significant moderators of the relationships between cross-cultural competence and attitudes toward ethnic minorities. This finding aligns with and extends the UGT in the context of ICH content consumption, highlighting the complex role of motivation in shaping cross-cultural perceptions.

Our hypothesis regarding the influence of demographic factors was not supported. The generational cohort (Gen Z vs. non-Gen Z) did not moderate the effects of video-streamed ICH

content on cross-cultural competence, suggesting that age does not affect how users engage with and internalize cultural content. Similarly, other demographic factors and usage patterns did not show significant moderating effects, indicating that the impact of ICH content consumption on cross-cultural attitudes may be more general across different user groups than initially anticipated. However, future research can be extended to delve deeper into the impact of demographic factors such as generation on the moderating effect of digitalization on cross-cultural competence. As noted by Lifintsev and Wellbrock (2019), digitalization significantly simplifies cross-cultural communication, with 79.2% of young respondents in their study agreeing or strongly agreeing that “[D]igitalization significantly simplifies cross-cultural communication” (p. 97).

Unexpectedly, we found that the frequency and duration of engagement with video-streamed ICH content did not significantly moderate the relationship between cross-cultural competence and attitudes toward ethnic minorities. This instead suggests that the quality and nature of user engagement may be more important than quantity. Future research could, therefore, explore the direct influence of cultural content exposure on intercultural attitudes. This approach is supported by Ni’s (2024) assertion that in our current media-saturated environment, the stories and visuals presented across various media platforms wield significant influence. These media representations can profoundly shape individuals’ worldviews and their understanding of diverse cultural identities. Consequently, this process often leads to the formation of cultural stereotypes that impact intercultural communication. By examining this relationship more closely, researchers could gain valuable insights into how media consumption affects cross-cultural perceptions and interactions.

These findings contribute to the broader discourse on the role of digital media in shaping cross-cultural perceptions and relationships, as proposed at the beginning of this article. They highlight the potential of video-streamed ICH content in fostering positive interethnic relations while revealing the potentially nuanced role of user motivations and demographics in this process. The study thus underscores the complexity of using digital platforms to promote cultural understanding and reduce stereotypes in multicultural societies like China.

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of how video-streamed ICH content influences cross-cultural competence and attitudes toward ethnic minorities in China. It demonstrates that while digital platforms offer significant potential for fostering cultural understanding, the process is complex and influenced by various factors, including user motivations, generational differences, and the nature of cross-cultural competencies. These insights can inform future research and practical initiatives aimed at promoting positive interethnic relations through digital media not only in China but also in other multicultural contexts.

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