

Analysis of Weibo Short Video Advertising Creation: A Case Study in the Fashion and Beauty Industry

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Abstract. In order to explore the creative characteristics of short video advertisements in the field of fashion and beauty on Weibo, this study uses short videos containing advertisements as sample materials. Based on literature review, it establishes classification indicators for short video advertisements, which are categorized into Unboxing review, Product placement, Item recommendation, and Brand customization. Based on the above classification, this study employs content analysis method to explore the creative patterns and underlying reasons of short video advertisements in the field of fashion and beauty on Weibo from four dimensions: Product information, Video information, Advertisement design, and Appeal strategy. Two creative recommendations for short video advertisement creation are proposed: (1) Mining brand concepts and product characteristics to craft comprehensive short video advertisements. (2) Creating innovative short video advertisements through refined narrative strategies.

Keywords: Short video, Advertisement creation, Weibo, Fashion and beauty, Content analysis.

1. Introduction

With the vigorous development of information technology and the gradual maturity of 5G technology, short videos, which integrate the advantages of multimedia content such as text, images, and videos, are revitalizing, bringing new opportunities for the advertising industry. Short video advertisements, with their wide dissemination and personalized content advantages, have shown strong vitality and are favored by numerous advertisers and brands. As 5G technology continues to be popularized, short video advertisements will also carry greater development advantages, demonstrating the superiority of the convergent media era and ushering in an important period of development [1].

Empowered by big data technology, short video product content creativity is closely integrated with advertising marketing. High-quality content enhances its connection with the audience, while leveraging scenarios to meet diverse user demands. Through technical means, precise dissemination is achieved, promoting user consumption and sharing behaviors. This has become an important mechanism for the dissemination of short video advertisements and influencing audience behavior [2].

In this context, with graphic and textual content as the primary mode of expression, Weibo has also ventured into the production and dissemination of short video advertisements. Among the more than 40 verticals on Weibo, fashion and beauty stand out as significant domains for monetization. Leveraging the advantages of hot topics and social platforms and deeply integrating with platform content, Weibo employs various methods such as scientific popularization, opinion dissemination, scene integration, and voicing hot topics to produce, disseminate, and monetize high-quality short video advertisements through a vast and high-quality matrix of fashion and beauty Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs).

2. Research Review

Current research focuses on short video ads technology and the principle of ads. D. Belanche et al. conducted a study on 286 YouTube users, investigating the adaptation process of this ad format by

focusing on the video ads that can be skipped before scrolling [3]. Wei et al. proposed a multimodal retrieval-driven intelligent advertising video production system, which only needs to input descriptive copy. The system can automatically generate scripts, then extract key queries, retrieve relevant short video clips in the video library, and finally synthesise a short video of advertisement [4]. Mariana Arantes et al. conducted a user experience-centered investigation using surveys and diaries with a group of real YouTube viewers, focusing on how user experience influences user behavior (decision to skip or watch an advertisement) when they see a video advertisement [5]. In terms of research categorisation, X.YU et al. categorised advertisements into free media coverage, free media, and paid media based on the channel of distribution; According to persuasion intention, they are classified into avoiding direct persuasion, unaware persuasion, and direct persuasion [6]. R.Bytyçi classified short video advertisements into pre-roll ads, mid-roll ads, and post-roll ads according to the location of advertisement placement [7]. In addition, the classification dimensions are related to short In terms of research methodology, Cao et al. conducted a study around the narrative migration theory, which showed that short video narratives enhance brand attitudes, an effect achieved by reducing individuals' psychological resistance to official advertisements and providing them with immersive experiences [8].

3. Research Design

3.1. Data Source

This study selects short videos from Weibo influencers in the field of fashion and beauty between July 1, 2022, and November 1, 2023, as the analytical objects.

Weibo is chosen as the media platform for the following reasons. Firstly, Weibo platform includes a ranking search function, and the Fashion and Beauty list on the Video Number Popularity Ranking ranks influencers in this field based on their comprehensive communication influence. This list combines the calculation of influencers' video influence and fan influence, which meets the need for rapid screening of influencers. Secondly, Weibo's powerful recommendation algorithm can recommend active influencers of the same genre through similar recommendation links, effectively improving screening efficiency.

3.2. Sample Selection

This study selected 43 influencers in the field of fashion and beauty. Their number of followers ranges from 750,000 to over 10 million, covering influencers with various levels of followers. Most influencers (over half) have between 500,000 to 4 million followers, as shown in Table 1.

Due to variations in the number of videos posted by each influencer, the number of selected videos differed accordingly, with a reference of approximately 12 videos per influencer. In total, 501 short video samples were obtained. Some samples were deemed invalid after coding due to deletion or hiding by the influencers themselves, mixed content in the videos, and other reasons. After removing invalid samples, the final analysis was conducted on 465 valid video samples, numbered from 1 to 465, and then subjected to coding analysis.

Table 1 Influencer fan scale distribution

Influencer fan scale distribution		
Influencer fan scale	quantity	scale
500,000 to 2 million	14	32.6%
2 to 4 million	12	27.9%
4 to 6 million	9	20.9%
6 to 8 million	3	7.0%
More than 8 million	5	11.6%

3.3. Category Construction

(a) Establishment of Classification Indicators for Short Video Advertisement Formats

Previous studies have proposed classification criteria with dispersion. To avoid subjectivity in indicator establishment, this study extensively searched and summarized relevant discussions on the concepts and classifications of short video advertisements. In their research, Wang et al. classified short video advertisements from non-enterprise accounts into direct display, conflict creation, and participation induction categories. They described the characteristics of the direct display category as showcasing products or services intuitively through the account's own creative style [9]. Liang further divided short video embedded advertisements into scene-based embedding, narrative embedding, knowledge embedding, product evaluation embedding, and creative editing embedding [10]. Chen classified short video advertisements into influencer recommendations, evaluations, and display categories. The evaluation category refers to influencers in various fields arranging advertisement products in videos in forms such as red and black lists, thunderous reviews, or recent favorite items, recommending users to purchase while sharing their own usage experiences. Some internet celebrities collaborate with brands to evaluate and showcase products before providing assessments [11]. The studies and classification perspectives of these scholars have laid the foundation for the classification in this research. Building upon this foundation, this study further explored the characteristics of short video advertisements by initially coding 10% of the samples. As a result, the advertisement formats were classified into four categories: Unboxing review, Product placement, Item recommendation, and Brand customization, as shown in Table 2.

(b) Establishment of Indicators for Short Video Advertisement Samples

This study adopts content analysis method as the basis for coding the samples. The analysis framework is divided into four dimensions: Product information, Video information, Advertisement design, and Appeal strategy, consisting of eight sub-categories in total.

Product information. Product information includes two indicators: the Number of products and Product categories. The Number of products refers to the actual number of products appearing in a short video advertisement sample. Due to significant differences in the number of products among different samples, this study categorizes them into two types: Single and Multiple. Product categories refer to the actual product categories appearing in a sample. For skincare and makeup products, they are categorized as Beauty and Skincare; for affordable accessories and clothing, they are categorized as Accessories and Clothing; for luxury items such as jewelry and designer bags, they are categorized as High-end Luxury; for medical beauty products such as hyaluronic acid injection, they are categorized as Medical Beauty; for samples featuring two or more of the above categories, they are categorized as Product Composite.

Video information. Video information includes two indicators: Video duration and Opening style. Video duration refers to the actual duration of the short video sample, categorized into four types based on the actual situation of the sample: Under two minutes, Two to four minutes, Four to six minutes, and Six to ten minutes. Based on the specific form of the video opening, the Opening style is classified into four types: Direct Display, Suspense Setup, Scene Setup, and Conventional Scene.

Advertisement design. Advertisement design includes two indicators: Insertion position and Presentation style. Insertion position refers to the actual position where the advertisement appears in the short video. In addition to the variables Video beginning, Video middle, and Video end, a variable Throughout Video is introduced for samples where the advertisement appears at multiple time points or the advertisement content constitutes over 70% of the video. Presentation style refers to the methods used by influencers to showcase the products and includes four indicators: Functionality and Effects, Experiential Feelings, Aesthetic Appearance, and Close-up Display.

Appeal strategy. Appeal strategy includes two indicators: Appeal method and Audio-Visual Relationship. In addition to Emotional Appeal and Rational Appeal, a new appeal method called Mentioning Drawbacks is introduced as a characteristic of short video advertisements. The Audio-Visual Relationship includes three categories: Synchronized Audio-Visual, Separated Audio-Visual, and No Voiceover.

(c) Video Coding and Reliability

Table 2 classification indicator

Ads type	Judgment criteria
Unboxing review	(1) The video content presents product trial evaluations, comparisons of product usage, etc. (2) Brand products are unboxed to introduce product features in an unboxing format. (3) The video content is relatively objective.
Product placement	(1) The video sets up topics or scenes related to the product to create an atmosphere for product introduction. (2) The topic content is relatively independent and doesn't rely on specific brands. (3) The product features are thoroughly detailed within the topic.
Item recommendation	(1) The video will mention recommended favorite items of this issue. (2) There are often multiple products, typically concentrated within a particular category. (3) The video content is relatively direct, lacking scene transition design and atmosphere design.
Brand customization	(1) Brand information is prominently featured in the video, and the video revolves around the brand or product information. (2) The topics in the video are closely related to the brand, with many topics revolving around brand building. (3) The video content is refined, with careful emotional setup and scene display.

This study was independently coded by two trained coders with a background in journalism. The two coders jointly coded the first 10% of the samples in the sample pool. Based on the coding results, the reliability was tested using the Holsti's Coefficient Reliability, yielding an inter-coder reliability of 0.85, indicating good coding reliability.

4. Results And Discussion

4.1. Results Analysis

(a) Product Information

Overall, among the 465 samples in this study, the Beauty and Skincare category accounted for the largest portion with 328 samples, followed by Accessories and Clothing and High-end Luxury with 73 and 42 samples, respectively. Product Composite and Medical Beauty categories were relatively scarce, with 26 and 22 samples, respectively. Samples were distributed across various product categories, and the experimental conclusions can be applied to common fashion and beauty products. For specific Product category distribution, please refer to Fig 1.

In the experimental samples, there exist differences in the commonly used advertising formats across different product categories. The category of Accessories and Clothing exhibited the most significant variation in this study, with over two-thirds of the samples adopting the Item recommendation format. On the one hand, in the promotion of Accessories and Clothing, leveraging the thematic integrity of Item recommendation and interweaving it with hot topics such as keeping warm in winter with stylish coats avoids the abruptness of embedded advertising, while integrating the product tone into the narrative, thus reducing consumers' resistance to advertisements. On the other hand, for visually appealing and practical products like Accessories and Clothing, it is challenging to present the selling points through Unboxing review, making it difficult to achieve effective promotion. Therefore, there were fewer samples of Unboxing review and Product placement, as shown in Fig 2(a).

In the Beauty and Skincare category, Brand customization emerged as the most prevalent advertising format, accounting for 36.4% of the total, followed by Item recommendation at 32.8%. When collaborating with brands, there is often a preference for pursuing a comprehensive effect through customized videos. For instance, in the 146th sample, Lancôme customized an advertisement for its certain gift set, showcasing the appearance and makeup effect of the product in detail. In the

comments section of this sample, several comments expressed consumers' longing for the promoted brand, such as "Wow, this lipstick color with gold foil! So luxurious" and "Lancôme's design this time is insane".

Medical Beauty, as a service product characterized by high professional barriers and a refined target audience, can benefit from using customized brand advertising to achieve precision marketing. Advertising formats such as Item recommendation and Unboxing review have significant promotional barriers when applied to the medical beauty category. In this study, all samples of Unboxing review style advertisements were for light medical beauty products, which differ significantly from medical beauty products that rely on equipment.

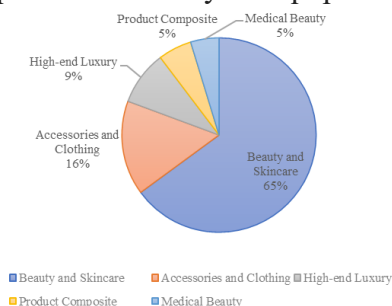


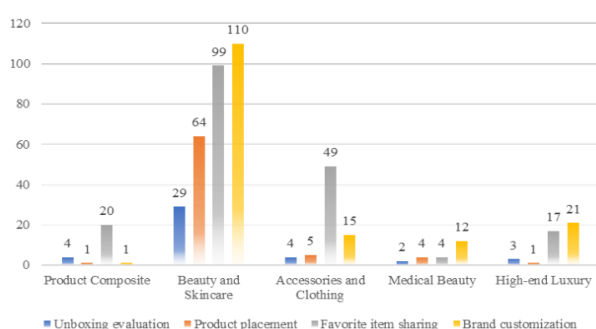
Fig. 1 Product category distribution

In the High-end Luxury category, Brand customization and Item recommendation advertising formats accounted for over ninety percent. This can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, High-end Luxury products have specific target audiences, often requiring brands to collaborate with influencers whose themes and styles align with theirs. Secondly, compared to marketing in other product categories, the likelihood of impulse purchases among consumers of luxury goods is lower. Therefore, systematic and comprehensive product introductions through Item recommendation are more persuasive than other forms of promotion that solely showcase the appearance of the product.

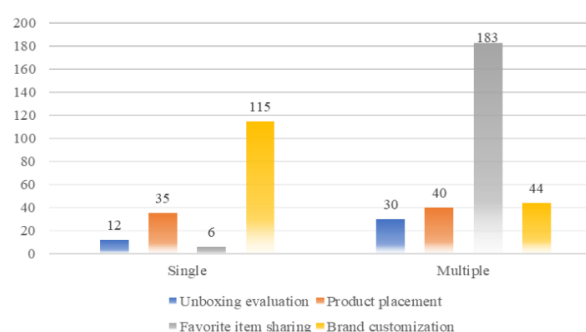
A data analysis of the advertising formats for products of different categories is presented in Fig 2(b).

In Single product samples, Brand customization is the most commonly used advertising format, accounting for 68.5% of the total, while other advertising formats are utilized less frequently. When promoting a Single product through Brand customization advertisements, it often involves conveying the brand's ideology. This approach not only leaves a deep impression on consumers about the product but also enhances their affinity towards the brand.

Unlike Single products, Item recommendation is the most commonly used advertising format in samples featuring Multiple products, accounting for 61.6% of the total, while other advertising formats are evenly distributed, each accounting for 10% to 15%. In advertisements featuring Multiple products, due to the limited duration of short videos, influencers find it challenging to provide detailed elaboration on any single product.



(a) The relationship between Product categories and Advertising formats



(b) The relationship between the Number of products and Advertising formats

Fig. 2 Variables of Product Information

(b) Video Information

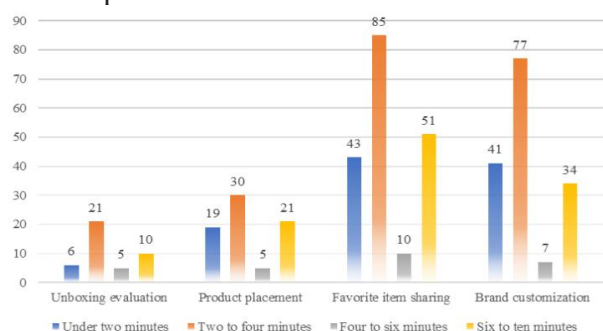
A data analysis of the advertising formats for different Video durations is presented in Fig 3(a).

Different forms of short video advertisements primarily concentrate on durations ranging from Two to four minutes and four to six minutes. Analysis suggests that the control of video duration reflects influencers' considerations regarding audience visual aesthetics and attention span. Furthermore, controlling video duration aims to achieve better advertising effects. Relevant research indicates that within a certain range, video duration significantly affects cognition. Longer video durations result in better cognitive effects, potentially leading to broader dissemination of the advertisement [12] Therefore, durations ranging from Two to four minutes and Four to six minutes demonstrate significant advantages in terms of dissemination and effectiveness compared to durations Under two minutes.

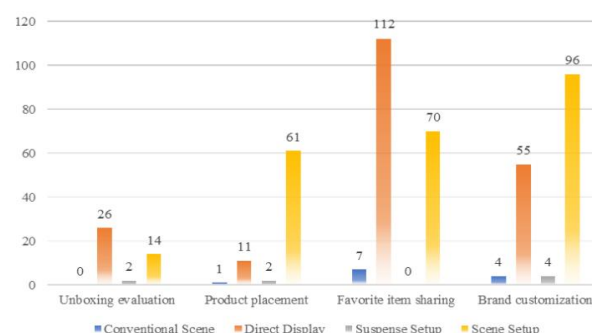
A data analysis of the advertising formats for different Opening styles is presented in Fig 3(b).

Direct Display is the most commonly used opening approach for Unboxing review and Item recommendation advertisements, while Scene Setup is the preferred opening style for Product placement and Brand customization. Unboxing review and Item recommendation advertisements often opt for Direct Display opening style because their predetermined themes require no additional setup. This format, which involves transitioning directly into the presentation of Multiple products, is highly favored in such advertisements.

The opening styles of Suspense Setup and Conventional Scene are used less frequently in various types of short videos, often correlating with the personal style of the influencer. Samples 442 and 443 both employ the Suspense Setup opening style, both from the same influencer, introducing different medical beauty products. Similarly, samples 147 and 148 use the Conventional Scene, reflecting the distinct personal characteristics of the influencer.



(a)The relationship between Video duration and Advertising format



(b)The relationship between Opening style and Advertising form

Fig. 3 Variables of Video Information

(c) Advertisement Design

A data analysis of the advertising formats for different Insertion position is presented in Fig 4(a).

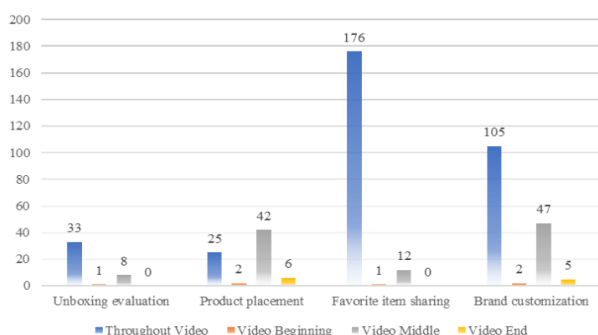
In Product placement advertisements, inserting advertisements in the middle of the video is the most common advertising method, accounting for over half of the total. Product placement advertisements require extensive preparation from influencers in terms of emotions, dialogues, etc., imposing high demands on the timing of advertisement insertion. The form of inserting advertisements at the beginning or end often fails to provide a good setup.

Among the other three advertising methods, Throughout Video is unanimously the most commonly used approach, reaching 78.6%, 93.1%, and 66.0% in Unboxing review, Item recommendation, and Brand customization advertisements, respectively. Unboxing review and Item recommendation advertisements often introduce multiple products, making Throughout Video more suitable for these two types of short videos.

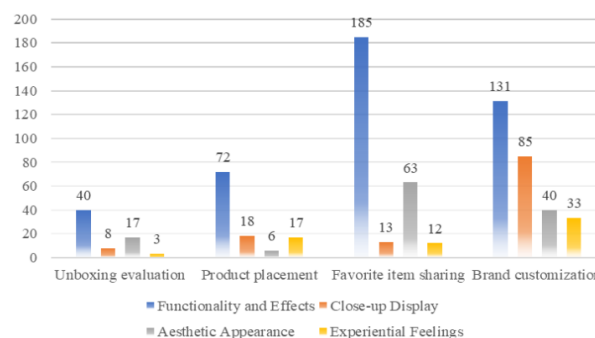
A data analysis of the advertising formats for different Presentation style is presented in Fig 4(b). The vertical axis here represents the number of encoded case nodes.

In general, among the four advertising formats, Functionality and Effects are the most widely used display method. It is undeniable that any product should focus on describing its Functionality and Effects, as this not only explains the basic information of the product but also provides an opportunity to quickly and comprehensively explain the product's features to the audience. Conversely, Experiential Feelings is a less commonly applied display method, accounting for only 8.8% on average among the four advertising formats. On one hand, the short duration of short videos and the characteristics of fashion and beauty products limit the demonstration of the actual usage effects of the products. On the other hand, a single sharing may convey a false or empty feeling to consumers.

In Product placement and Brand customization advertisements, Close-up Display are the second most commonly used display method after Functionality and Effects, accounting for 15.9% and 29.4% respectively. Both of these advertising formats require a certain level of showcasing product details. In Unboxing review and Item recommendation advertisements, Aesthetic Appearance are the second most commonly used display method after Functionality and Effects, accounting for 25.0% and 23.0% respectively. Whether it's a review or sharing, the audience's first impression of the product is crucial. The presentation style of Aesthetic Appearance emphasizes highlighting the overall appearance of the product, which can quickly attract the audience's attention and create an opportunity to introduce product functionality.



(a) The relationship between Insertion position and Advertising form



(b) The relationship between Presentation style and Advertising form

Fig. 4 Variables Advertisement Design

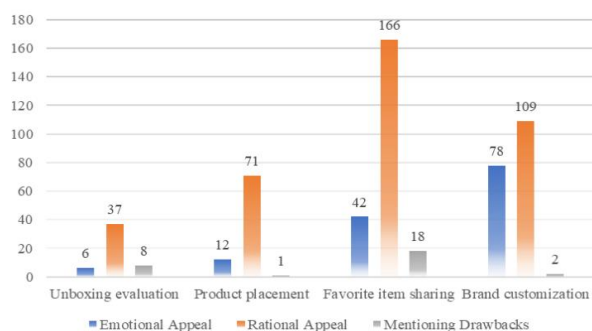
(d) Appeal Strategy

A data analysis was conducted on different Appeals methods of advertising formats, and the results are shown in Fig 5(a). The vertical axis here represents the number of encoded case nodes.

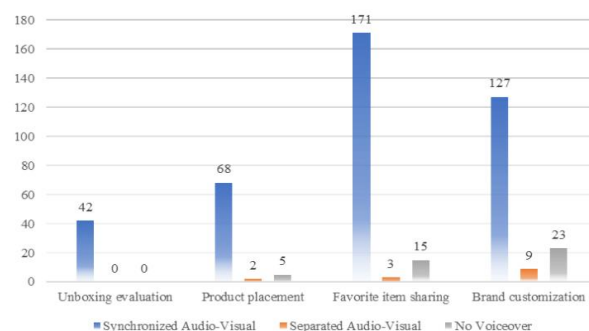
Rational Appeal are the most commonly used appeal method among the four types of advertisements, accounting for a total of 69.6%. This is closely related to the display methods mentioned earlier. The most common verbiage for Rational Appeal is to introduce the efficacy of the product, while Emotional Appeal tend to focus more on sharing usage experiences and insights.

It is worth noting that Mentioning Drawbacks is a less commonly used method overall, mainly applied in advertisements of the Item recommendation type. Firstly, Item recommendation often serves as covert advertising, making it difficult to distinguish from purely sharing forms of short videos with or without advertising content. Secondly, using the products' drawbacks to create selling points and personalizing the product's original drawbacks is a novel marketing approach that sometimes yields better marketing results.

Synchronized Audio-Visual is the most common audio-visual relationship in the samples, accounting for a high proportion of 87.7%. The proportion of No Voiceover and Separated Audio-Visual is extremely low, at 9.3% and 3.0% respectively. Specific data can be found in Fig 5(b).



(a)The relationship between Appeals method and Advertising form



(b)The relationship between Audio-Visual Relationship and Advertising form.

Fig. 5 Variables of Appeal Strategy

4.2. Discussion and Outlook

Overall, Weibo short video advertisements exhibit characteristics of diversified product types, personalized advertising creation, and refined script writing. Due to the diversity in product types, quantity, and individual video styles of influencers, influencers often need to consider multiple factors to select the appropriate advertising creation format. Analyzing the experimental results and the creative tendencies they reveal, this study attempts to provide creative suggestions for short video advertisements.

(a) Mining brand concepts and product characteristics to craft comprehensive short video advertisements

By integrating attributes such as product categories and quantities, tailored short video advertisements can be created to construct three-dimensional advertisements. Although the characteristic short duration of short videos limits the creativity of influencers, its ability to capture audience attention and achieve high completion rates still provides influencers with opportunities to captivate viewers. In sample 11, the influencer utilized a branded customized advertising format to explore the fashionable and luxurious appearance of lola rose women's watches, as well as the brand's characteristic of exuding confidence and security. Through close-up shots combined with emotional appeals, the advertisement successfully portrayed a three-dimensional image of the product, showcasing both its exquisite appearance and inner confidence. Furthermore, it created a short video advertisement that is not only commercially valuable but also aesthetically valuable. Therefore, when creating advertisements, influencers can fully explore brand concepts and product personalities, starting from various aspects such as brand history, brand tone, and brand stories, and combining them with product appearance, features, etc.

(b) Creating innovative short video advertisements through refined narrative strategies.

Advertising narrative is a way of storytelling that constructs a narrative situation most suitable for conveying messages to consumers, smoothly guiding the audience into the time and space created by the advertising narrative[13]. Conducting a macro analysis of products and brands and designing fine narrative strategies can guide the direction of the video, evoke audience resonance, and thereby contribute to the "innovation" of short video advertisements. In sample 117, the storyline revolves around the deadline for proposal submission approaching, while the protagonist continues to work late into the night, affecting the effectiveness of the proposal. This narrative leads to the slogan cunning makeup, hiding anxiety and unease. The latter part of the short video showcases the protagonist's exquisite state in the actual proposal scene, attracting the audience through a narrative approach grounded in prototypes and complemented by the arrangement of situations and plots[9]. Even in fragmented short video advertisements, narrative theories commonly used in television advertisements can be combined with their own characteristics to achieve the creation of "innovative" short video advertisements.

5. Limitations Of The Study

This study selected Weibo short video advertisements from different influencers as samples, dividing them into four forms and encoding them using eight indicators. While this approach can roughly reflect the usage characteristics of different display methods in short video advertisements, the wide variety of sample sources cannot ignore the influence of individual influencer's creative styles on short video advertisements, thereby hindering the extraction of systematic creative patterns. Subsequent research could select the same type of influencer or product for systematic study.

Acknowledgments

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