



Research on the Attitudes and Preference of Chinese “Generation Z” to Bilibili Video Advertising

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Abstract. In recent years, the rapid development of China’s internet enables generation Z people to explore a broader world. Compared to the former generation, the Z era people are proficient to Internet skills as well as express themselves with the help of the Internet. [8] Therefore, Bilibili, as an mainly online video-sharing platform, became the first option that young people chose to share their life. Based on the large number of users in Bilibili, companies cooperate with “uploaders” to produce videos with respect to certain products in an effort to promote the product. This research was conducted with the aim of better understanding the preference and attitudes of generation Z toward Bilibili advertising in an effort to find an efficient and effective way of advertising on the Bilibili platform. In the research, an online questionnaire and interviews were conducted among the Z-era Bilibili users. This paper aims to investigate the pros and cons of commercially cooperative videos produced by Bilibili “uploaders” as well as provide suggestions to improve the quality commercially cooperative videos, and accurately deliver various advertisements to their targeted users.

Keywords: Bilibili, Digital marketing, Generation Z, Z era, Advertisement

1 Introduction

One of the biggest problems faced by marketers today is to comprehend the reasons behind people’s avoidance of advertisements. Specifically, people might perceive advertisements as interfering with their using experience. Although many types of researches are conducted to explore the project in both traditional and contemporary marketing communication mediums, there is no evidence of studies conducted in the context of the Chinese market and the video-sharing platform Bilibili.

However, the acceptability of advertisements for Bilibili users is quite different from other Chinese video-sharing platforms. It is because the way Bilibili functioned is different from other Chinese video-sharing platforms such as Douyin and Kuaishou, whose average video length is about 1-2 minutes. The average length of the videos on Bilibili is between 5 and 15 minutes, which is much longer than those short video sharing platforms. As a result, with a longer time allowance, “uploaders” are able to post videos with richer content, and therefore their personality charm can be comprehensively exhibited, which greatly improves the relationship between video makers and

their viewers. After the emotional connection was formed, Bilibili users tend to have a higher allowance toward the advertisement. Some users may even congratulate “uploaders” they appreciate when certain “uploaders” post a commercially cooperative video since cooperating with companies means the income of delivering an advertisement in their videos will sustain the “uploader” to produce greater videos. In this way, this research aims to investigate the attitudes and preferences of Chinese generation Z Bilibili users toward advertisements on Bilibili.

This paper selects the Z era as the research object, and analyzes the Z era's preferences and attitudes towards advertising and marketing on the social media platform Bilibili through a questionnaire survey. This article selects Generation Z as the research object to better understand Generation Z's preferences and attitudes toward advertising marketing on the social media platform - Bilibili. Based on the fact that the Z era has gradually become the main consumer, its attitude towards advertising in Bilibili can help people have a more comprehensive and objective understanding of future consumption trends. At the same time, this article also provides development directions for the future plans of social media, and provides corresponding business suggestions for the companies that Bilibili uploaders cooperate with.

2 Overview

2.1 Generation Z

Generation Z refers to those individuals who were born in the decade following the widespread emergence of the world wide web, from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s. Most members of Generation Z are children of generation X. [6] There are several reasons why generation Z was chosen as the target object of this paper. Firstly, As the first social generation to have grown up with access to the Internet and portable digital technology from a young age, members of Generation Z have been dubbed "digital natives". Also, these individuals can consume digital information and stimulation quickly and comfortably through devices and platforms such as computers, mobile phones, and social media, which makes them the prior-considered consumers of social media marketing.[10]

2.2 Digital marketing

“The application of the Internet and related digital technologies in conjunction with traditional communications to achieve marketing objectives. When an enterprise is conducting digital marketing, it is choosing to use digital channels in addition to traditional media channels to promote its products or services. [9] Video-sharing platforms such as Bilibili are regarded as important channels for digital marketing for companies.

Social media marketing is one of the categories of digital marketing. This application increases a company's brand exposure and customer reach. The goal is to create compelling content that social media users will share with their social networks. Over the past few decades, social media marketing has become an indispensable tool in the ar-

senal of brands and business of all kinds, with opportunities to build relationships, engage with consumers, and increase sales. These platforms enable businesses to quickly publicize their products and services to a broad audience. [4]In addition, as communication platforms, social media promotes customer feedback and makes it easy for customers to share their experiences with a company. Businesses can respond quickly to positive and negative feedback, address customer problems and maintain or rebuild customer confidence. Businesses can also use social media to maintain a following and test new markets.[5]

2.3 The concept of “uploaders” and how they make money by making videos

“Uploaders”, also known as content-creator, or “up masters”, usually refer to those people who upload videos produced by themselves on Bilibili.

Recently, “uploaders” on the Bilibili platform have two ways to make money. The first way is to make money by joining the “creative incentive” program. The “Creative incentive” program requires video creators who reach a certain level to join in the program and the platform will assign certain amount of money related to the attention and browsing their videos gain. In this way, the income of “uploaders’ depend on the amount their videos are viewed as well as the frequency of uploading. “Uploaders” whose videos acquire more browsing and attention tend to be assigned more money than those whose videos are rarely seen by people. The second way, which is also the money earning strategy chosen by a number of “uploaders” is making commercial cooperative videos. Usually, the companies will look for “uploaders” whose video theme and style are appropriate to their product. In the video, “uploaders” usually describe their feelings and opinions after using a certain product as well as suggesting viewers to purchase the product. In contrast, most of the “uploaders” on the platform depend on the latter way to make money.

2.4 Bilibili and its marketing

Founded in 2009, Bilibili focuses on the ACG subculture (animation, comic, game). After more than ten years of development, Bilibili now covers more than 7,000 interest circles, which enables users who are interested in various fields to develop their interests on Bilibili[7].

According to official data provided by the developer company of Bilibili, Shanghai Kuanyu Digital Technology Co., Ltd, during the fourth quarter of 2021, the average interaction rate between “uploaders” and their viewers is up to 10,200,000,000 times. [1] The high interaction rate, high user stickiness and the strong willingness of users to comment on the videos they like are unique features of the users of Bilibili. Bilibili has progressively become a highly concentrated cultural community and video sharing platform for the young generation in China. Moreover, with the rapid development of science and technology, both traditional video platform and new integrated video platform have a certain number of loyal and stable user groups. Especially from 2020, because

of the influence of COVID-19, people are increasingly working, studying and entertaining at home, and therefore the number of users of video platforms in China has increased a lot. [3] Since the whole industry is booming, the new integrated video platform can acquire more loyal users compared to the traditional video platform, which makes Bilibili an ideal place for applying social media marketing.

At present, there are four kinds of advertising formats on the platform Bilibili.

The first one is influencer marketing, which can be defined as followed “identifying key communities and opinion leaders who are likely to talk about products and have the ability to influence the opinions of others. [3] Under this circumstance, the companies have chosen to do ‘influencer marketing’ and use these “uploaders” as their brand promoters in their social media strategy. An example of influencer marketing is Bilibili with its “uploaders” as they are often called, who act as influencer and role models for their viewers. Many “uploaders” are doing commercial cooperation with brands by showing certain products in their videos. “Uploaders” are supposed to write a video script based on the requirement of the company. Sometimes when the commercial-cooperated video is being played, there will be a linker of the promoted product appears on the top of the screen, and the linker can directly send the viewer who clicks on it to a certain shopping website, where the product can be purchased.

The second type of advertising on the platform is informative advertising. This kind of advertisement usually appears on the front page and the video playing page of the app. The platform will use the public domain traffic of Bilibili to promote the video with commercial cooperation and achieve accurate delivery through labels.

The third type is the official channels of companies. Certain company will create their own official account, which enables them to send advertising videos to promote their own products. Viewers can easily distinguish the company’s official channel by looking at whether there is a small blue label on the lower right corner of the channel’s image. Companies such as Dior, and Meituan already have more than 100,000 followers, which is an example of the official channels of certain companies.

The last kind of advertising is by sponsoring the annual Bilibili Gala: the Most Beautiful Night. Although sponsoring the gala enables the certain company to acquire a great amount of exposure and attention, this kind of advertising is quite limited since only a few sponsors can be successfully selected.

3 Methodology

3.1 Questionnaire

This article uses a questionnaire to investigate the attitudes of Gen Z users in Bilibili to its advertising and marketing on the platform. The survey was distributed online through social networks and survey exchanging platforms. During 3 days period, 145 responses were collected, and 143 of the responses are effective.

All of the responses were within the age requirement of 13-27, which covers the whole range of Generation Z, and all of the participants are Bilibili users. There are 61

male participants, accounting for 42.07% are male and 84 female participants, accounting for 57.93%. 75 participants had received graduate school education before, accounting for 52.7%, and 35 of them are undergraduate students, accounting for 24.14%.

When it comes to the log-on frequency, the highest portion in the sample is “every-day”, accounting for 35.86%, followed by log-on 2-4 times per week, accounting for 22.76%. The outcome of the questionnaire shows that 90.6% of the participants had seen commercially cooperative videos before. It is also found that that commercially cooperative videos most frequently occur in cooking videos, daily vlogs, animation videos, and film-introduction videos and the sample sizes are 59,49,36,68. Therefore, it is concluded that these four video categories are commercialized the most.

When the participants were asked “do they wish to see advertisements in videos?, the people chose” It does not matter to me”, account for 47.92%. The followed question is “I wish to see the advertisement in uploaders’ videos”, and it account for 21.89%, reflecting the acceptability of commercially cooperative videos is relatively high. Some users may even expect the “uploaders” they appreciate to take part in commercial activities, and post a “bullet hell” of “congratulations” when they see advertisements in videos as well as holding a positive attitude. Only 13 participants hold a negative attitude toward commercial cooperative videos, accounting for 8.97%.

Based on the information gathered from the questionnaire, the primary users of Bilibili are well-educated people aged from 18 to 30. The amount of male and female users is quite equal. It is also revealed from the questionnaire that male users’ acceptability toward advertisement is generally higher than female users’. Generally, generation Z holds a positive and supportive attitude toward commercially cooperative videos. The data collected by the questionnaire also shows that Bilibili users pay more attention to the content of the certain advertisement. Moreover, the user of Bilibili also focuses on the interaction between certain uploaders and their viewers in the advertisement. [1] Therefore, the platform can improve people’s acceptability toward commercially cooperative videos as well as the conversion rate of certain advertisements by raising the quality of commercially cooperative videos and the interaction between uploaders and their viewers.

3.2 Interview

In order to gain a more specific and well-rounded insight about generation Z’s attitude toward influencer marketing on Bilibili, a group interview was conducted. All the interviewees are high school students aged from 15-17. There are totally of 10 participants, 1 of them has become an “uploader” on Bilibili for more than 2 years, and the rest 9 people are Bilibili users. All of the interviewees have become a Bilibili user for more than 1 year. The interview questions were listed below.

- (1) Describe your attitude toward commercial cooperative videos posted on Bilibili?
- (2) Do you think it is necessary for uploaders to produce commercial cooperative videos? Why do you hold this opinion?

4 Discussion

The information gathered by the interview shows that all the interviewees thought that it is necessary for uploaders to produce commercially cooperative videos. It is because cooperating with certain brand or company in order to promote certain product is a great way to earn money, and earning money is essential to video producers since it to some extent boost the uploader to produce more creative and attractive videos. [2] However, “uploaders” also need to pay attention on the quality of commercial cooperative videos.

To be specific, “uploaders” should control the frequency of commercial cooperative videos properly. Commercial cooperative videos are not supposed to occur too frequently since having too many advertisements in videos and lacking factual content is likely to annoy the audience. “Uploaders” are not supposed to be over commercialized, instead they should never forget their original aspiration of being a content creator, and they should hold a balance between the number of advertising videos they make and their original content sharing videos.

Moreover, in order to maintain a high quality of the videos, the “uploaders” should choose a products that suits the video style for sales purpose. For example, beauty “uploaders” work more frequently with cosmetics company; fitness “uploaders” might cooperate with sports brands.

In addition,, interviewees indicated that the “uploaders” should specifically indicate in the description of each video whether the videos is commercial cooperative videos. This is because many “uploaders” will pretend the advertising product as something they use in their daily life, and have the product appear in their daily videos as a means of promotion (especially vlogs). However, most people do not advocate this behavior because they believe that “uploaders” should be honest and sincere to their viewers.

5 Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the information collected from the questionnaires and interviews, this paper draws the following conclusions:

1) The effect of advertisement posted on Bilibili depends on the video style the “uploader” choose and the content design of certain commercially cooperative videos. The content of commercially cooperative videos is supposed to match the characteristic of certain brands and make sure the fans of certain “uploaders” overlap the target consumer of certain brands.

2) With the rapid growth of the amount of users, the amount of advertisement as well as the influence of the platform increased greatly. Under this circumstance, many “uploaders” focused on raising the popularity and favorability of certain products, but the ads conversion rate is relatively low.

3) Certain UGC content posted on Bilibili lack supervising, which leads to an unbalance of the quality of commercial cooperative videos. This illustrates why some promoted product left a negative impression of users.

4) An dense advertisement delivery in a short period of time will not receive a decent outcome on Bilibili. It may even evoke the hateful emotion of users toward certain

brand. Companies can cooperate with uploaders that are relatively lesser-known for long-time advertisement launch. Although it may not make a significant difference in the sales volume of certain promoted products, it can somehow raise the exposure of the brand and the favorability of users toward the brand.

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