



Marketing Strategies of Short Beauty Videos on Douyin

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ABSTRACT. Since the development of the short video industry, many vertical domains have been formed, and short beauty videos are one of the most important fields. Relying on their professional knowledge and approachable expression, many self-media bloggers focusing on creating short beauty videos have achieved success and become opinion leaders in the beauty field. However, in the commercialization process, there are also some undesirable phenomena, such as vulgarization of content and false propaganda. This study uses the method of literature collection, questionnaires, and case studies. It summarizes first-hand data of short beauty video users on Douyin through a survey and selects two representative self-media bloggers for analysis. It argues that the main content marketing methods diversify content production, strengthen fan stickiness through interactive ritual chains, and empower beauty brands with key opinion leader bloggers in reverse. This research proposes to promote the development of the short beauty video industry, in terms of innovating video content and style, building professional teams, and improving the supervision policies of platforms.

Keywords: Short beauty video, Content marketing, Communication strategy, Douyin.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The inevitable trend in the development of the short video industry is the segmentation of content, with short beauty videos being of particular interest. Users not only learn make-up techniques and get information about beauty but also imperceptibly accept the advertisement of the product through the so-called “goods recommendation” and “planting grass”. The precise social media-based marketing has become a new route to further commercialize the beauty industry. Today, beauty brands are blossoming, and in the face of fierce competition, businesses are increasingly focusing on content marketing to promote consumption with emotion, thus increasing brand awareness. The choice of short videos, a short and concise way of communication, better meets individual needs. With a large number of users and resources, Douyin provides a good platform for the promotion of beauty products. Therefore, the short beauty videos on

the Douyin platform were selected as the objects of the study. This paper defines the concepts related to short beauty videos, analyzes their marketing strategies, and tries to give suggestions on the marketing approach of short beauty videos.

1.2 Definition of Relevant Concepts

Short Video Marketing.

Nowadays, short videos are the most popular Internet social media, and as emerging traffic-based communication platforms, they have become marketing partners for various brands to products [1]. Short videos are an important marketing tool, a type of content marketing that delivers the content through exciting images and audio, giving consumers a visual experience. Short video marketing has the characteristic of being highly interactive. By encouraging users to speak in the comment section, like and repost videos, short video marketing enhances intimacy and humanization, promotes users' desire to consume, and converts more consumers, so the key to successful short video marketing is not only high-quality and engaging content but also sensitivity to grasp users' consumption needs and resonate with them, thus implementing accurate marketing.

Short Beauty Video.

Among the short video genres, short beauty videos are slowly making their way into the limelight as they spread. Beauty makeup is a cosmetic method based on cosmetics and make-up tools. Products such as make-up primer, liquid foundation, eye shadow, lipstick, and make-up brush are used to modify facial features [1]. Short beauty videos are mainly about promoting beauty products and sharing beauty skills and knowledge. The broadcast time is generally less than five minutes, and the content of the video is diversified and creative. Among them, beauty bloggers' personal images and professional abilities play very big roles in the communication effect of short beauty videos.

“Plant Grass and Bring the Goods”.

In the era of e-commerce internet, “planting grass” is given new meaning. It means sharing and recommending a product in a short video. It aims to “plant” the products in users' hearts, thus stimulating their desire to shop, while the users will achieve the effect of “planting” goods if they successfully buy the products recommended by the bloggers in short videos.

1.3 Research Methodology

Firstly, this research makes use of previous studies about domestic and foreign short videos, especially about beauty marketing. Further information was collected from industry development reports. Secondly, questionnaires were issued to people who watch short beauty videos on Douyin to collect basic information and data and study their characteristics and the dissemination effect of Douyin short beauty videos. A total of 152 valid questionnaires were collected this time. The questionnaire was designed to

analyse the problems of beauty products in terms of communication and marketing strategies on Douyin and the profile of users is composed of two parts: basic information and core questions. The basic information part includes respondents' gender and ages, and asks whether they use Douyin. The core question part looks into consumers' characteristics and behavior based on short videos about make-up products. Thirdly, representative bloggers in the field of beauty makeup on Douyin were selected to investigate specific video characteristics and their marketing strategies. The numbers of likes, reposts, comments, and other relevant information were collected.

Short beauty videos on Douyin are most popular among relatively young people, namely from 18 to 25 years old. They are generally attracted by exciting video content and bloggers' personal images. In addition, the analysis of questionnaires and case studies of typical bloggers finds that the majority of people believe that the videos on Douyin have several problems including excessive video time, uneven quality, false information, and too many advertisements. Moreover, most people are there to learn beauty tips, rather than to buy products. Consequently, although the short beauty videos on Douyin have a great communication effect and influence, the impact of the above issues has led to a decrease in the purchasing power of beauty users on Douyin.

2 Literature Review

While the development of short beauty videos booming, research is also emerging. However, a literature search using the keyword "Short Beauty Videos on Douyin" yielded only a dozen results, and they focused on the years from 2019 to 2022, indicating that research in this direction has only emerged in recent years, and preliminary conclusions were drawn, but they were not in-depth enough. Regarding the marketing strategies of short videos, existing research focused on the following aspects: the current state of short video marketing strategies, the phenomenon of short video misconduct and its optimal regulation, and the impact on brand building.

In terms of the current state of short video marketing strategies, some scholars pointed out that Douyin's beauty marketing strategy was to create opinion leaders, stimulate audiences' interest with quality content, and use the celebrity effect to boost marketing [2]. Zhang believed that the success of Douyin's short video marketing lies in the openness of the platform, the timeliness of interaction, the massive amount of material, and the personalization of information consumption [3].

Several scholars have pointed out the uneven quality of content and products. Problems like a black industrial chain of counterfeit and fake beauty videos, serious trivialization, and frequent piracy infringement were also noticed [4]. Regarding the measures for improvement, several academics mentioned the quality of video content. Recommendations focused on products, users, channels, creators, platforms, and institutions [1-5].

In terms of the role of the marketing strategies of Douyin's short videos in brand building, some scholars pointed out that short video marketing was conducive to strengthening brand positioning, promoting brand specialization, enhancing brand affinity, and helping brands to realize their marketing [5].

In summary, most of the studies on the beauty videos on Douyin, mainly by domestic scholars, took the user's perspective as the main entry point and used quantitative research methods, and all of them pointed out the current problems while proposing improvement measures, which had strong practical significance. However, the limitations of the existing literature were that the scope of the research was either too large or too limited to a single subject and that the existing literature was small and lacked a more systematic overview. Although some summaries of existing problems have been made, they did not go far enough. For example, they only mentioned improvement of content quality but do not specifically analyze how to do so. By summarizing the marketing advantages of Douyin, the existing literature focused on the characteristics of the platform itself, while this paper focuses on the content creators, as the content of the videos and creators' personalities were also essential factors in attracting audiences.

Therefore, the theoretical significance of this paper is to enrich the existing literature and provide a theoretical basis for optimizing short video content marketing strategies. On the other hand, from a practical point of view, as the second largest cosmetics consumer market in the world, China's beauty industry has huge potential for development and has accumulated some experience in marketing with the help of short videos, but some problems have also emerged. This paper selected representative key opinion leaders' (KOL) self-media from the short beauty videos on the Douyin platform as the research objects, and used case study and comparative analysis methods to uncover users' characteristics, marketing strategies, and communication effects, so as to provide guidance and suggestions for the development of the short beauty video industry.

This paper addresses the following questions: Why are people keen to watch short beauty videos on Douyin? Why are Douyin's short beauty video marketing strategies successful? What are the problems of and solutions to the short beauty video marketing strategies on Douyin?

3 Marketing Strategies for Beauty Short Videos

3.1 Overview of Marketing Strategies

The Development of Douyin's Short Beauty Videos.

According to Beauty Industry Quarterly Insight Report 2021 Quarter Three published in September 2021, the number of beauty videos maintained a high growth rate, 219% year-on-year increase to the previous three quarters, and the streams peaked in the third quarter and still remain steadily growing. Among them, the two most popular categories were videos related to make-up and skincare, which accounted for more than 80% of the total view count. The number of beauty content-based creators fluctuated but maintained a high yearly growth rate. The figure for beauty content and relevant searches also continued to grow. Users' trust and access to Douyin increased, and they were more proactive in obtaining information related to beauty content [6].

The User Profile.

According to Douyin E-Commerce New Beauty Brand White Paper 2022, female users

are the core group of beauty makeup, and their preference for beauty makeup is higher than that of men. They are clearly characterized by their young ages, mostly between 18 and 25 years old. In terms of city scale, the second-tier cities have the largest number of beauty users, followed by the third and fourth-tier cities. In terms of behavior habits, 39.3% of the users who are interested in Douyin beauty will choose to make up on important occasions, followed by 28.2% of beauty interest users who wear makeup almost every day, and only 10.5% of them have never had a habit of making up. Besides, the report also shows that beauty is no longer an exclusive behavior of women. 47.4% of men have makeup experience, of which 23.5% expressed that they would wear makeup when attending important occasions [7].

3.2 Characteristics and Advantages of the Short Beauty Videos' Marketing Strategies

Firstly, the diversification of content production satisfies users' demands. With the development of short videos about beauty, the content covers a wide range of topics, such as skin care guidance, makeup tutorial, cross-dress display, and short movies. According to the "Use-and-Satisfaction" theory, people contact and use media to meet their own needs. Different beauty videos just content users' personalized viewing needs [8]. It includes both knowledge needs such as improving make-up skills, understanding the chemical composition of cosmetics, learning skin care skills, and entertainment needs such as gaining emotional pleasure and visual enjoyment.

Secondly, an interactive ceremony increases user stickiness. Based on the "Interactive Ritual Chain" theory, when users watch short videos about beauty on Douyin, they participate in situational interaction with the presence of virtual bodies and take video content as the common focus of attention. Through the exchange of comments, likes, private messages and other ways, they have a high degree of emotional resonance with other groups to complete the interaction ceremony. After users get emotional energy, they take it as the basis for participating in the next ceremony. Finally, the emotional energy between individuals gathers into the emotional energy of the group, forming the inherent emotion of the group. Beauty bloggers often use words with a strong sense of closeness such as "babies" and "piggies" to address fans in videos, so that fans can have a psychological identification for their status. That makes the whole fan group closely connected. Indulging in watching short beauty videos is essentially an obsession with interactive ceremonies. The formation of an interactive ritual chain increases the stickiness of users. People gradually form viewing habits in the day-to-day ceremony participation, so that bloggers have a stable core group of fans.

Thirdly, as KOLs, beauty bloggers empower the brand in reverse. Today's consumers are increasingly pursuing personalization. Beauty bloggers with a large number of fans and strong influence, sometimes have more commercial cash ability than stars to empower brands in reverse. KOL bloggers, with their friendly expressions and lively and interesting video atmosphere, make the audience trust and buy the products they recommend, so as to achieve the goods delivery. Domestic brands such as Perfect Diary

and Florasis have quickly increased their popularity after being recommended by numerous KOL bloggers. Perfect Diary cooperated with up to 315 KOL bloggers to make the sales of the “velvet liquid lipstick” reach 300000 pieces in a week.

3.3 Users' Consumption Characteristics

The survey results show that young women dominate the short videos on beauty products, and very few of them have not watched beauty products short videos on Douyin. The percentage of users who think that the short beauty video time should be between 30 seconds to 1 minute is 48.03% while 32.24% of users believe that the current short beauty videos on Douyin are too long. The proportion of users who buy beauty products on Douyin is almost the same as that of users who would not buy on the platform. Most people choose to buy beauty products on Douyin because of their own needs and the strength of discounts, but up to 89.47% of users spend no more than 500 RMB per month on beauty products on Douyin. Cheng Shian-an and Luo Wangyu, two of the top five high-volume bloggers in the popularity list of short beauty videos, also received the highest attention in this questionnaire survey. The vast majority of people follow beauty bloggers in order to learn beauty skills, and the survey data of beauty video types illustrate that makeup skills and skin care are more popular. 65.79% of users have a neutral attitude towards implanted beauty product advertisements. However, 76.32% of users believe that Douyin short beauty videos currently contain false information and too many commercial advertisements. Furthermore, videos' quality levels are uneven and bloggers lack creativity and concern about product quality and purchase channels.

3.4 Case Analysis

“The King of Recommending Practical Information” – Cheng Shi'an-an.

Cheng Shi'an created a Douyin account on February 15, 2020. Positioned as a “beauty blogger of content sharing”, she recommends user-friendly and affordable beauty products to users with the sharing of “beauty tips” as a vehicle. In only one month, the number of fans reached 3 million. With her own efforts, she created even more influence and revenue than a listed company every month. As of July 2, 2022, 135 videos have been posted, an average of about 4 to 5 a month, yet they already have 28,437,000 followers and 130 million likes.

In terms of marketing methods, on the one hand, Cheng Shi'an has brought the functionality of content videos to the extreme. Whether it is about useful items recommendation or beauty skills sharing, her straightforward expression caters to the user's consumption needs and inspires their curiosity and trust at the same time. She firmly attracts the users' attention and drives them to watch her videos repeatedly. Some netizens even commented on her that “as long as it is recommended by sister Cheng, you can buy it without thinking about it”. On the other hand, Cheng Shi'an's beauty videos of practical information are not limited to beauty products and makeup skills of different styles. The entire video content is very concise and contains much useful information. For instance, taking into account the user group who wears glasses, she shared a product called “Nose Pad”, which could avoid makeup removal caused by

slipping glasses. The sincerity of the content creates intimacy and valuing users' opinions is one of the biggest reasons for the success of Cheng Shi'an's beauty videos. Friendly comments such as "so practical" and "you really know what we want" often appear in her videos.

"The Aunt of Test Review and Cracking Down on Counterfeits" – Luo Wangyu.

Luo Wangyu is a make-up artist for beauty brand TOM FORD, positioned as a "beauty blogger in the test review category" [9]. He has a unique "roast persona" which means he always evaluates the quality of various beauty products in each video, thus forming a personal video style that serves as a vehicle to recommend tested beauty products to users. He once occupied the top of the "Xingtu" recommending list on Douyin for four consecutive weeks, with the highest single video views, more than 13 million. By July 2, 2022, he has 19.558 million followers and 120 million likes, and sold products over 3.995 million in "Luo Wangyu's net shop" on his Douyin personal page.

In terms of marketing approach, like Cheng Shi'an, the content is sincere and professional. Since the launch of "Douyin Shop Window", his public praise of selling goods has been maintained at a high score of 4.99, far exceeding 99.42% of peers. This responds to his introduction on Douyin's homepage: "the public praise of selling commodities is more important than making money". The phenomenon of "chemical peeling", which was popular on Douyin, is also an innovative term of beauty created by Luo Wangyu. Some netizens call him "the earliest ancestor of chemical peeling". Different from Cheng Shi'an, Luo Wangyu lists the pros and cons of different products by testing and comparing the functionality and effects of diverse products in his short beauty videos and uses his professional knowledge to popularize the composition, efficacy and other relevant information of products, so as to get users' recognition of products and trust in him, achieve the purpose of recommending beauty products, promote consumption, and realize the marketing and sales of related products. Basically, all of Luo Wangyu's videos have a "shopping cart", which is a place where it is convenient for users to purchase products directly on the video page.

4 Problems and Suggestions

4.1 Problems

Homogeneous Video Content Makes Users Feel Bored.

Due to the combined action of the professionalization of content creation in the beauty business and the platform's unified recommendation mechanism, the homogenization of short beauty video content is becoming more and more serious. Problems have appeared in many aspects, such as video duration, display methods, and shooting style. At the same time, people's preferences also change rapidly in today's fast-paced life. When a makeup style is popular, a large number of bloggers keep up with the trend and publish similar tutorials [10]. For the description of products, the terms of beauty bloggers are also identical, using words like "whitening", "drying" and "rubbing mud" frequently. The lack of personalized expression brings the audience audio-visual fatigue.

Some Bloggers Have Low Professional Quality.

Owing to the low threshold of video creating and uploading, a large number of beauty bloggers poured into Douyin. It provides a variety of choices for the audience, but their uneven professionalism also brings irregular video quality. On the one hand, the bloggers' own beauty knowledge reserve is insufficient. There are some deviations when they introduce products, which leads to users' wrong judgment of products. On the other hand, some bloggers disturb the rules with vulgar content by making themselves look awful on purpose, grandstanding, exaggerating appearance anxiety, and copying other people's original content, misleading users' values, which is not conducive to the benign development of the short beauty video industry.

Excessive Marketing Makes the Advertising Effect Greatly Reduced.

On the one hand, although Douyin can make advertisements reach as many potential users as possible, the overwhelming publicity may also cause dissatisfaction. People use Douyin to obtain information and entertainment. Excessive advertising will only make users' experiences worse. On the other hand, the company also cooperates with many bloggers who have a large number of fans for propaganda, which leads to repeated advertisements for the same product within a certain period of time. That makes users inevitably get bored and reduce the advertising effect greatly. At the same time, some false propaganda has also increased the difficulty of users' judgment, damaged consumers' rights, and reduced the reputation of bloggers and brands.

4.2 Suggestions**Bloggers Are Committed to Diversify Video Styles and Innovate Content.**

At present, short beauty videos gradually show a trend of refinement and audience division. Users' requirements for video quality are also constantly improving. On the one hand, bloggers need to make original content diligently, which requires them not only to keep up with hot trends but also to be creative. They have to design scripts and build scenes elaborately and improve their photography and editing skills to gain an advantage in the dissemination. At the same time, they should analyze and satisfy the needs of fans, so that fans can obtain psychological identification [1]. On the other hand, now users are not only content recipients but also content producers and publishers. The user-generated content injects a lot of fresh blood into short beauty videos. Bloggers can make good use of the participation awareness of fans and guide fans to create by organizing theme activities, which makes the second transmission.

Multi-Channel Network Companies Build Professional Teams for Bloggers.

To improve the quality of beauty video content, the first thing is to improve the professionalism of the bloggers. First of all, bloggers need to learn more professional knowledge about beauty. Only with solid knowledge reserves can they convince the audience. Secondly, by introducing professional teams for effective division of labor, the quality of content and stable style can be ensured. Successful bloggers can stand out among many creators because of distinctive personal characteristics, and strengthen

their personal charm through mature video style. A stable video style can help bloggers establish a distinctive personality, so as to strengthen the audience's memory [11]. Finally, the management of fan communities is equally important. Bloggers need to maintain the stability of core fans, explore potential audiences, and constantly perfect their video content according to the feedback and suggestions of fans to increase the stickiness of fans through good interaction.

Douyin Optimizes Supervision Policies and Cracks Down on False Publicity.

In order to cater to users' preferences, the algorithm of recommendation makes some vulgar content. To make the short beauty video industry which is in full swing continue to develop well, Douyin needs to curb the spread of bad content from the source. On the one hand, Douyin should optimize the censorship mechanism. It should not only use technology to promote algorithm innovation but also strengthen manual censorship, and provide users with correct value-oriented content through human-machine collaborative filtering and checking of content. On the other hand, due to the special nature of beauty products, Douyin needs to strengthen the examination of product quality and improve the reporting mechanism to avoid damage to consumers' rights and interests. At the same time, the platform should urge bloggers and companies to strengthen the screening and after-sales mechanism.

5 Conclusion

In summary, the beauty video industry has developed rapidly since its birth, and it has changed the traditional marketing model by promoting consumption through content creation. In response to the emergence of uneven video quality, false advertisements, and misleading values, this study recommends that bloggers and the platform should innovate video content, build professional teams, and improve regulatory policies. The limitation of this study is that the sample size is not large enough and may lack sufficient representation.

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