# Analyzing GrandInfluencers on Douyin: Thematic Trends and Communication Tactics in Online Discourse

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**Abstract.** For a long time, the elderly population may have been relatively overlooked in the development of technology. Nowadays, they express themselves through short video platforms, demonstrating acceptance and use of new technologies, leading to the rise of GrandInfluencers. This study addresses two research questions: firstly, what are the thematic categories of short videos featuring GrandInfluencers? Secondly, what are the communication strategies employed by GrandInfluencers? Ultimately, our research identifies three thematic categories for short videos featuring GrandInfluencers and six communication strategies used by them. The results of this study contribute to defining and delineating the concept of GrandInfluencers for the academic community. Additionally, it provides practical guidance for the industry in creating various types of GrandInfluencers and developing effective communication strategies.

**Keywords:** DOUYIN Platforms; GrandInfluencers; Thematic Categories; Communication Strategies.

## 1      Introduction

Firstly, the integration of the elderly into short video platforms demonstrates their adaptability to technology and digital socialization. For a long time, the elderly population has been relatively overlooked in technological development. Nowadays, they express themselves through short video platforms, showcasing their acceptance and utilization of new technologies [1]. This is not only a manifestation of individual technological adaptation but also the collective participation and integration of the elderly population in the digital era. Through the creation, editing, and sharing of short videos, the elderly actively express their views, attitudes toward life, and opinions on current affairs, contributing positively to the diversity and inclusiveness of social media. Secondly, the emergence of a large number of *GrandInfluencers* has not only transformed the landscape of social media but also endowed the elderly population with new social roles [2]. Traditionally, the elderly might be perceived as a group with rich experience but relatively conservative views. However, on short video platforms, they successfully break this inherent stereotype through active expressions [3]. The personalities, humor,

and wisdom of *GrandInfluencers* are showcased on digital platforms, allowing the younger generation to see the diversity among the elderly and empowering the elderly to play significant roles in the digital society. The construction of the image of *GrandInfluencers* through short video platforms is gradually becoming a dynamic representation of the elderly in society, leading trends. Simultaneously, the rise of *GrandInfluencers* injects new vitality into the influencer economy market [4]. As the number and influence of *GrandInfluencers* grow, they not only accumulate a substantial fan base on digital platforms but also attract the attention of brands and advertisers. This attention transforms into business opportunities, providing a source of income for *GrandInfluencers*. Various brands collaborate with *GrandInfluencers*, introducing products and services tailored for the elderly, creating a new market segment [5]. The elderly are no longer just consumers but creators and leaders in the market, contributing to economic development to a certain extent. On the other hand, the active participation of the elderly on short video platforms provides a new channel for intergenerational communication and understanding. Through short videos, people of different age groups can intuitively and vividly understand each other's lives, values, and hobbies [6]. This intergenerational communication helps break down generational barriers and promotes harmonious social development. Young people can draw wisdom from the experiences of the elderly, while the elderly can better understand and adapt to the development of contemporary society through interaction with the younger generation. In this process, short video platforms act as bridges connecting different age groups, allowing information and culture to flow more freely. This not only contributes to the overall progress of society but also provides the elderly with a broader social space, enriching their lives. By participating in short video platforms, the elderly can feel the attention and respect of society, enhancing their social identity and happiness [7]. As one of the target groups in the long-tail market on short video platforms, the elderly have unique value. In the deepening aging society, the elderly seek breakthroughs, entering short video platforms to showcase themselves, resulting in the emergence of a large number of *GrandInfluencers* [8]. Meanwhile, with the rapid growth of the *GrandInfluencers* population, the influencer economy market is experiencing new developments.

## 2      Research Questions and Research Methods

However, it is worth noting that the participation of the elderly in short video platforms has brought about new issues and challenges. Firstly, the classification of *GrandInfluencers* is not clearly defined. Secondly, there is a lack of research on the communication strategies of *GrandInfluencers*. Therefore, our research has two research objectives: firstly, to study the types of *GrandInfluencers*, and secondly, to explore the communication strategies employed by them. As our research questions are also two-fold: firstly, what are the thematic types of short videos created by *GrandInfluencers*? Secondly, what are the communication strategies adopted by *GrandInfluencers*? To address these research questions, we will utilize qualitative content analysis. This involves categorizing the content of short videos created by *GrandInfluencers* on Douyin, ultimately determining thematic types and communication strategies. To ensure the reliability and

validity of our research, we will engage experts for multiple reviews of the analysis results, ensuring the effectiveness and consistency of the findings.

# 3     Research Significance

In the past, there has been scarce scholarly attention devoted to the detailed classification of thematic content produced by *GrandInfluencers* on Douyin, as scholars have generally treated them similarly to their younger counterparts. This study serves to address and fill this gap in existing research. Additionally, there has been a paucity of academic investigations into the communication strategies employed by *GrandInfluencers*. Consequently, the outcomes of this research contribute to the establishment of a clear definition and boundary for *GrandInfluencers* within academic discourse. Furthermore, the study provides practical guidance for industry professionals, offering recommendations for the cultivation of diverse categories of GrandInfluencers and the implementation of effective communication strategies.

# 4     Thematic Categories of Short Videos Featuring GrandInfluencers

## 4.1     Comedy

Comedy-themed videos exhibit greater diversity in both thematic selection and expressive methods. The succinct nature of short videos aligns well with the characteristics of comedic content, given its low-context nature[9]. Therefore, judiciously leveraging the brief duration of short videos can significantly enhance their impact. In the production of comedic short videos featuring *GrandInfluencers*, situational expressions are commonly employed. This involves the use of pranks, humorous anecdotes, and amusing language to achieve a comedic effect. The central subjects of comedic short videos featuring *GrandInfluencers* are typically elderly individuals, showcasing strong personal characteristics in expressions, appearance, actions, and language.These videos predominantly depict everyday life scenarios, characterized by natural color tones and an absence of conspicuous filter effects. The aim is to immerse viewers in an authentic experience, conveying a simple and genuine attitude towards life. Techniques such as cinematography, background music, and subtitles are employed to intensify the comedic elements, eliciting laughter from the audience. For instance, the distinctive tagline of *'I am Grandma Tian'* is characterized by fragmented speech. Creators often use special symbols in subtitles to replace Grandma's words, enhancing the audience's entertainment experience sensorially. In summary, within the genre of comedic videos, elderly individuals typically employ expressions of contrast to heighten dramatic effects. This not only induces hearty laughter but also allows viewers to perceive the lovable aspects of elderly individuals, thereby attracting more attention to their daily lives.

## 4.2    Culinary

Culinary-themed short videos featuring *GrandInfluencers* typically fall into the category of cooking tutorials. These videos demonstrate the cooking process of various dishes, guiding viewers on how to prepare a specific culinary delight[10]. The dishes created are usually home-cooked meals, crafted from readily available and simple ingredients. The choice of settings often includes kitchens in domestic households and rural landscapes. For example, *'Grandma Pan'* opts to showcase the preparation of delicious meals amidst the picturesque scenery of the Dabie Mountains, portraying a rich pastoral style. *Grandma Pan* not only prepares traditional dishes but also introduces innovations to classic recipes. She explores inventive culinary approaches that surprise many young people. Additionally, *Grandma Pan* engages in planting and harvesting her own produce, using spring water from the mountains for cleaning. This showcases a lifestyle and environment distinctly different from modern urban living, satisfying viewers' yearning for a free and pastoral existence.

## 4.3    Fashion

Fashion-themed short videos featuring *GrandInfluencers* showcase their youthful and trendy side through aspects such as stylish dressing, street fashion, and refined living. *Tang Zhang Li*, a 67-year-old grandfather, for example. Despite his full head of white hair, he possesses an extremely youthful mindset. His Douyin profile bio states, *'Age is just a number.'* Adorned in chic sunglasses, elegant suits, and engaging in extreme sports, he is affectionately referred to as "Fashionable Uncle" by his followers. In these videos, elderly individuals project a rejuvenated mindset and trendy attire, allowing viewers to overlook any age-related anxieties. Simultaneously, it highlights the unique charm of elderly individuals, correcting preconceived stereotypes about this age group.

# 5    GrandInfluencers Short Video Dissemination Strategies

## 5.1    Clear Positioning of Personalized Marketing

In the marketing realm of Douyin, *GrandInfluencers* employ distinctive personal image features, effectively showcasing their individual characteristics to enhance their reach[11]. The emphasis on highlighting personal traits and unique qualities serves as the foundation for shaping the personal brand of *GrandInfluencers*. Through personalized marketing, these individuals' images become more multifaceted and engaging. Typically, the main subjects of personal marketing for *GrandInfluencers* are their family members[12]. Filming primarily features the elderly individual in their natural environment, capturing genuine moments from daily interactions. For instance, the creator behind '*I am Grandma Tian*' is her grandson, who often captures videos of playful pranks on *Grandma Tian*, such as pretending to be a dinosaur, hiding fake gold bars, or assisting her in blind dates. Users witnessing *Grandma Tian's* reactions are charmed by her adorable and amiable image, leading to an expanding fan base as viewers become loyal followers of *Grandma Tian*.

## 5.2     Relying on Team for Specialized Marketing

Team-based marketing is more precise and professional in content production, contributing to the stable output of the personal image of *GrandInfluencers*. Compared to individual marketing, team-based marketing leverages professional filming equipment and high-quality production methods, resulting in more advanced and exquisite special effects, thereby enhancing content quality[12]. Additionally, there is a professional content creation team that produces content with stronger storytelling and situational elements. For instance, the *GrandInfluencers 'Detective Grandma,'* affiliated with the *Star Media* agency, uses dramatic performances to expose scams, achieving the effect of alerting potential victims. The content also addresses modern women's issues, such as women being forced to support younger men (referred to as *'Fudimo'*), surveillance of women living alone, and instances of women facing campus violence. *Detective Grandma*, through dramatized expressions, reenacts scenes of deception or victimization, ultimately revealing the truth and promoting correct values. Professional performances and actor portrayals deepen user awareness of these issues. Moreover, *GrandInfluencers* employing a team-based marketing approach, due to their reliance on capital, prioritize capitalization and the dissemination of marketing effects[13]. In terms of content creation, they are more sensitive to trending topics, using them to create popular videos and increase the exposure of *GrandInfluencers*. For example, *'Grandma Wang who only wears high heels'* participates in the #*WhatToWearWhenWatchingFashionShow* campaign, sharing transformation videos to showcase a fashionable and youthful side, conveying the personal value of *'age is just a number,'* and enhancing their personal brand image.

## 5.3     Harnessing Uniqueness to Establish Stable Personal Brand Image

In shaping their personal image, *GrandInfluencers* should thoroughly explore their distinctive characteristics, possessing a unique trait that resonates with the audience[14]. Therefore, only by building a long-term accumulation of personal brand image can they effectively support marketing efforts. Similarly, these *'top-tier' GrandInfluencers*, while maintaining their foundational image, should explore more possibilities to make their image more three-dimensional and diverse. Senior creators can identify their unique strengths in daily life or hobbies. For example, centenarian Jiang Zheqin is known for her optimism despite her advanced age, and *Xiafeng Lao Qiao* incorporates the characteristics of his hometown into his culinary creations, showcasing a rich Northwestern flavor. It is evident that senior creators can stand out in fierce competition only by accurately positioning their strengths.

## 5.4     Comprehensive Presentation and Promotion for Expanding Reach

After cultivating a distinctive personal image, *GrandInfluencers* should adequately showcase and promote themselves to become well-known and accepted by the public[15]. The personalized image and engaging content of senior creators are key factors in attracting audiences. Furthermore, the formation of memories is fostered through the

cultivation of desire. Therefore, senior creators can establish positive viewing habits among users by consistently delivering content at a regular pace. Leveraging the promotional opportunities provided by the Douyin platform is crucial. For instance, highlighting unique aspects of the elderly in the video title area or enriching the profile information on the homepage can effectively utilize both public and private domain traffic positions on the Douyin platform, thereby expanding the scope of promotion and enhancing dissemination effectiveness.

## 5.5    Avoiding Homogeneity for Enhancing Originality Protection Mechanisms

With the dramatic increase in user volume on the Douyin short video platform, the innovativeness of creators' content has become a crucial factor in attracting more audience attention. Therefore, unique content is a focal point for senior content creators, with novelty in form ultimately serving high-quality content. Senior content creators should base their work on their own characteristics, producing high-quality videos that align with the senior image. In terms of content creation, creators should eliminate plagiarism. Simultaneously, creators should raise awareness about copyright protection, applying for originality for their works, leaving a personal mark, and emphasizing the consequences of infringement. This approach helps reduce the harm caused by infringement and lowers the likelihood of being plagiarized.The principle of individualization emphasizes exclusive characteristics, precise personal positioning, unique content, and innovative abilities. Guided by the principle of individualization, creators can have more creative and imaginative space, gaining a clearer understanding of themselves from their own perspective. Furthermore, personalized creation is not about copying or imitating; creators should respect the works of others while safeguarding their own labor achievements.

## 5.6    Enhancing Interaction with the Audience for Collaborative Content Creation

Senior short video creators face challenges of high content homogeneity and low quality, leading to numerous incidents of content plagiarism and copyright infringement. Faced with a vast amount of content and a lack of creative drive among creators, it becomes crucial to reasonably involve the audience in the creative process. In narrative-focused short videos featuring *GrandInfluencers*, both the content and form have gradually become more uniform, causing audiences to feel fatigue and, in some cases, a backlash. Some *GrandInfluencers* experience a loss of followers. Therefore, innovation in content creation can be achieved by actively seeking stories from the audience and inviting their participation[16]. Utilizing various platforms, creators can gather topics related to seniors' unique characteristics from the public. Subsequently, by selecting and refining these topics, the content creation process can be completed. This approach enhances interaction with the audience to some extent and promotes the diversification of creative work.

## 6     Conclusion

As we know, building a solid persona on social media could be beneficial in expanding the connection with a younger user base[17]. The marketing strategies for senior internet celebrities in short videos still require innovation and transformation. Currently, there are relatively few popular accounts among *GrandInfluencers* that can clearly define their advantages, shape diverse images, and engage in content innovation. This is a challenge that more senior creators and other short video creators should address. In summary, the active presence of the elderly on short video platforms not only reflects the diversity of the digital era's society but also endows seniors with new social roles, fostering economic development and promoting inter-generational communication and understanding. However, to harness this potential more effectively, society needs to collaborate in areas such as technology, law, and culture. This collaborative effort aims to create a more inclusive and secure digital social environment, allowing seniors to better express themselves and collectively share in the prosperity of the digital era.

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