

Analysis of Audiences' Attitudes towards Product Placement in Short Videos Based on Appraisal Theory: A Case Study of the Bilibili Platform

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Abstract

Supported by the systemic functional linguistic theory, this paper analyzes and compares audiences' attitudes toward nine types of product placement in short videos on Bilibili by using the "attitude" subsystem of the appraisal theory. This paper focuses on the distribution of attitude resources and the positive and negative affective directions of audiences' evaluation of different types of product placement. It finds that the distribution of affect resources and appreciation resources varies among different types. In general, the proportion of appreciation resources is much higher than the other two resources. This study tries to analyze the reasons behind the distribution in the context of video characteristics, advertised products, and the contents of comments, to provide a reference for the standardization of product placement in short videos.

Keywords: short video, product placement, audiences' attitude, optimization strategy, appraisal theory

1. Introduction

In today's 5G era, with the refinement of the short video, the importance of product placement in short videos is gradually increasing. According to the 48th *Statistical Reports on Internet Development in China* released by CNNIC, as of June 2021, the size of China's Internet users reached 1.011 billion, and the Internet penetration rate reached 71.6%. Among them, 888 million people watch short videos, which are becoming a new form of national entertainment. Short video development is also maturing, with slower user growth and stronger stickiness; the content of short videos grows more slowly and is more segmented (Yu, 2021). At the same time, short video applications are building live e-commerce platforms, and the commercial scale is expanding significantly. Product placement in short videos is also becoming a new brand marketing windfall and gradually becoming one of the mainstream advertising formats (Bian, 2021).

However, with the gradual maturity of product placement in short videos, some advertising chaos has occurred. The Cyberspace Administration of China has informed that 19 short video applications, including Douyin and Kuaishou, have infringement problems such as an illegal collection of personal information unrelated to the services they provide (CCTV, 2021). The data-grabbing techniques behind the precise marketing of product placement in short videos may infringe on numerous rights and interests of users. At the same time, illegal advertisements with false propaganda and product quality issues are prevalent. Even with legal compliance, product placement in short videos is prone to lose its way by chasing profits, which manifests itself in crude advertisements or uncensored advertised products. Some short videos even hide the nature of advertisements, making it impossible for audiences to discern the truth. For example, in April 2021, a KFC product promotion video was released by a well-known uploader, "Jiu Shi Qi Qi", on Bilibili. It did not indicate the nature of the advertisement, causing widespread dissatisfaction and disappointment among audiences, who expressed negative emotions such as "trust is consumed by the concealment". It can be inferred that audiences have a certain ability to detect and judge product placement in short videos, and the conclusion drawn from such thinking will be reflected in the comments on the video to a considerable extent.

This study analyzes the textual sentiment of the comments on product placement in short videos on Bilibili, one of the most popular short video platforms, by using the "attitude" subsystem of Martin & Rose's (2003) appraisal theory, supplemented with word frequency analysis. After selecting comments related to product placement in short videos, this study categorizes them according to the appraisal theory and judges whether their sentiments are positive or negative.

Then, the researchers combine the comments with specific content and high-frequency words to determine which types of product placement in short videos are more popular and which are more frequently rejected by audiences, and explore the reasons behind it. This study attempts to provide audience-driven analysis and a reference for the standardization of product placement in short videos.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Problems and Optimization Strategies of Product Placement in Film and Television Works

The development of product placement in film and television works in China has been developing for about two decades. The year 1999 saw the first use of film patch advertising in China's film *Sorry Baby*, which opened the precedent of product placement in Chinese films (Chen & Lu, 2009). And television implantation also gained a burgeoning development in 2005 and gradually became the core driver of industrial development (Xue, 2007). The year 2017 saw the rapid popularity of short video applications and explosive growth in the total number of short video plays. With the commercial value of short videos coming to the fore, marketing methods such as product placement in short videos gradually become popular (Wan et al., 2019). Considering that product placement in film and television works has developed for a longer period than that in short videos, its operation mechanism may be more mature. Thus, existing problems and related optimization strategies of product placement in film and television works can provide references for product placement in short videos.

The mature advertising market for film and television works has led to a plethora of product placements in them. Meanwhile, many problems that provoke audience dissatisfaction have been revealed, and previous research has provided possible ways for improvements.

Product placement, based on traditional advertising, embeds products in film and television works, which is also called soft advertising or placement advertising because of its hidden nature. Driven by interests, film and television works may have problems of excessive, rigid, or false implantation, causing resentment among audiences (Fan & Qin, 2021). The advertising chaos appearing in film and television works reflects a deeper problem. The change from "implantation" to "explicit intrusion" is only a superficial phenomenon of the chaotic situation, behind which is the loss of values caused by the rush for success and profit, that is, the loss of aesthetic, economic, and cultural values. This has led to problems such as the lack of emotional expressiveness of product placement, and the content is mostly empty and straightforward, and even tends to be vulgar (Zhang & Li, 2019). Therefore, to fundamentally solve the chaotic phenomenon of product placement in film and television works, it is necessary to establish the correct values of it.

To realize the value reversion of product placement in film and television works, multiple parties need to jointly build a model in which creativity drives text creation, the market drives advertisement placement, values lead advertisement content and policies guide production (Zhang, 2018). For example, the industry should specify the number of implant advertisers, the types of brands, and the length and number of implantations. For creators, product placement should not be too straightforward or rigid, but more innovative to reap better communication effects. In recent years, some creations of product placement in film and television works have put artistic features in the first place and have won many positive comments from audiences. For example, advertisers have more often adopted creative stickers (which appear like a sticker on the screen of the video) and interstitial mini-theater, two innovative forms of product placement in the works. Due to the novel and varied forms, the creative stickers and the plot are highly integrated. Relevant data show that this form is popular among audiences, especially among young groups (Li, 2019). Product placement in short videos should learn from successful product placement in film and television works and explore more innovative forms to make it more natural and attractive to maximize its effect. At the same time, the former should also refer to the optimization strategies of the latter to avoid other possible problems such as loss of value.

2.2 Product Placement in Short Videos

2.2.1 General Overview of Product Placement in Short Videos

The Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary explains "product placement" as the inclusion of a product in a television program or film as a form of paid advertisement. Nowadays, short videos are rapidly emerging, and the nature of their product placement is similar to that of film and television works. Therefore, this study regards paid advertisements for products appearing in short videos as product placement based on this interpretation.

Based on big data algorithms, short videos provide traditional advertising with a new direction. Product placement in short videos has changed in the form and content, and is gradually prevailing due to the prominence of commercial value. There are three main reasons for the prevalence. Firstly, with the support of big data, product placement in short videos has precise matching and a high reach rate relying on a 5G network, so the dissemination efficiency is high. Secondly, product placement in short videos is also committed to creating an immersive experience for consumers with innovative communication forms (Bian, 2021). Meanwhile, product placement in short videos has lower cost, richer

delivery channels, and short video platforms have pop-ups and comments, etc., and thus are more interactive with audiences (Yan, 2021). The addition of big data algorithms plus the advantages of short video platforms themselves make product placement in short videos a new brand marketing windfall and gradually become one of the mainstream advertising forms.

Although product placement in short videos enjoys the convenience brought by big data, they also face the challenges, such as being buried by other numerous videos. Moreover, due to the variability and diversity of the environment short video users live in, the communication rate of product placement in short videos will also fluctuate. Leveraging the popularity of KOLs for promotion is one of the popular techniques in the e-commerce industry to increase the communication rate of advertisements. Research has found that Generation Z is the main consumer of live e-commerce, and the personality traits, professionalism, and interactive activity of KOLs can significantly enhance their impulsive purchase behavior (Li & Zhang, 2022). To realize the sustainable development of product placement in short videos, the platforms can enhance user stickiness and attachment through the leading role of KOLs. They can also judge the reality status of users through their likes, comments, and other behaviors, which can help the platform achieve a comprehensive connection between short video native advertising and user scenarios (Huang, 2021). With these means, advertisements can strengthen the sense of presence, fun, and convenience, and more powerfully attract audiences.

At the same time, the different positioning of each short video platform determines its audiences with different characteristics. For example, Douyin is more entertaining, and Bilibili is more youthful. With the gradual growth of the platform, the user groups of Douyin have expanded from a single category to all regions and age groups. The user groups of the Bilibili are mainly Generation Z, mostly young people who like anime culture (Ou, et al., 2022). However, as the competition of short video platforms heats up, the traffic dividend gradually disappears. Despite the different positioning of each platform, the problem of homogenization of content is serious, and user stickiness is gradually lost (Huang, 2022). Therefore, to minimize audiences' resentment, advertisers have to consider the characteristics of audiences of different platforms for personalized production and placement of short video advertisements. In this way, advertisers can enhance audiences' recognition and improve advertising effectiveness.

2.2.2 Characteristics of Product Placement in Douyin and Bilibili

Douyin and Bilibili are large We Media platforms that enjoy high popularity in the Chinese market, and have developed their product placement to different degrees. Douyin, a rapidly growing short video application, has now become a leader in this industry. The product placement in Douyin, which has been commercialized since its inception, is undoubtedly more mature than that in other applications. Its product placement categories mainly include infomercials, product placement in the five-second opening screen advertisements, customized challenges, and product placement created in cooperation with well-known users. Douyin's product placement makes full use of the characteristics of native communication to market the brand in a way that is more acceptable to the audience (Chen, 2019). Moreover, because Douyin's short videos adopt a vertical screen format that responds to users' cell phone holding habits, users have a stronger sense of experience and higher concentration (Liu, 2020). It is easy to see that, influenced by the length of its videos, Douyin pays more attention to the efficiency of product placement, emphasizing the speed of getting audiences' attention and the wide extent of reaching audiences.

Founded in 2009, Bilibili is favored by Generation Z because of its youthful positioning. As a content-centered community, Bilibili pays more attention to the experience of creators, and its advertising features are somewhat different from that of Douyin. Product placement in Bilibili, which is rich in circle culture, also takes diverse forms, including infomercials, mutual selection advertisements, direct brand promotion, and pop-up advertisements (Zhao, 2019). Product placement in Bilibili is mainly mutual selection advertisements, i.e., video creators choose brands that match their temperament and brands choose creators that match the brand's tone to achieve a mutual selection and win-win publicity effect. Video creators usually post advertising information, purchase links or issue coupons in the comment section. Sometimes, they insert advertisements directly or covertly in the video content and set advertising links under the videos accordingly (Liu & Sun, 2021). Therefore, it can be said that Bilibili pays more attention to the viewing experience of audiences and places more emphasis on the promotional effect of product placement out of the intention to protect the interests of creators.

2.2.3 Existing Problems and Optimization Strategies

As one of the main revenue for short video platforms, advertising has been highly valued. With the rapid development of product placement in short videos, many problems plague short video users. Scholars have summarized and analyzed these problems, and given optimization strategies. Tang & Feng (2019) found that due to the low access threshold, high dissemination rate, and high reach rate of product placement in short videos, problems such as the prevalence of illegal advertisements, ineffective protection of netizens' rights and interests, and ineffective punishment of the violators have emerged. In addition, the problems of "four fakes", i.e., fake numbers, fake goods, fake prices, and fake images, are also

frequently seen in live streaming (Yu, 2021). At the same time, because of the ineffective administrative supervision and the lack of platform autonomy, the audiences lack a sound and smooth mechanism to defend their rights.

Previous studies suggest that optimization of product placement in short videos requires the joint efforts of multiple parties, including the government, short video platforms, and creators, to achieve mutual benefits and sustainable development. According to Liu (2021), the optimization of product placement in short videos requires a comprehensive strengthening of the administrative supervision system. For example, the government should unite the short video industry to establish a unified monitoring system, improve relevant regulations and give guidance to the industry according to the actual situation. Platforms and third parties are also required to improve the review system and strictly control the quality of advertisements. Moreover, a special platform that can handle audience dissatisfaction should be established to ensure that consumers can receive timely and effective feedback. As for improving product placement itself, Yan (2021) believes that its core competitiveness is still high-quality content, and creators should be more innovative in terms of scripts, images, sound, and other elements. In conclusion, the previous studies mainly summarize the notable problems of short video platforms and their causes and then develop optimization strategies concerning various stakeholders of product placement. However, most of these studies have explored the problems from the perspective of product placement itself, short video platforms, and the government, lacking consideration for the audience.

Because of a longer time of development, the problems revealed by the product placement in film and television works are more obvious than that in short videos. With the above analysis, it can be predicted that as product placement in short videos booming, it is not enough to merely solve existing problems. The short video industry needs to develop better optimization strategies to deal with the possible problems in the future by combining its characteristics and the lessons learned from film and television works. However, there have been many studies on product placement in television and film works, but few on product placement in short videos, especially few conducted on audiences' attitudes. Zhou (2019) shows in his article *Effect of Short Video Ads on Product Sales through Social Media: the Role of Advertising Content-Generators* that the number of likes, comments, and retweets on product placement in short videos has a direct impact on product sales, among which the number of comments has the greatest impact. This study analyzes audiences' attitudes toward different types of product placement in short videos on Bilibili, focusing on comments. Then, regarding the optimization strategies of product placement in film and television works, this study proposes a more comprehensive optimization strategy for product placement in short videos.

3. Method

3.1 Appraisal Theory

Linguist James R. Martin developed systemic functional linguistics in the 1990s, creating a theoretical framework for appraisal theory. Then, Martin & Rose (2003) define the theory as “appraisal is concerned with evaluation – the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and how values are sourced and readers aligned”. The center of the appraisal theory is the “system” and the focus is on “appraisal”. Language is the “means” in this system, through which language is analyzed to evaluate the position, opinions, and attitudes of language users toward the state of affairs (Wang, 2001). The appraisal theory consists of three subsystems: attitude, engagement, and graduation. The theoretical framework is shown in Figure 1.

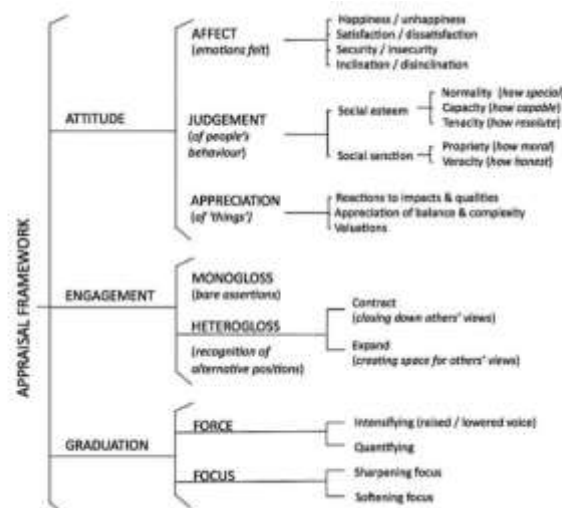


Figure 1. Overview of the appraisal theory (Stewart, 2015)

Since short videos containing product placement are likely to trigger discussions among platform users, their online comments often include rich evaluative language. Appraisal theory provides a systematic and detailed framework for analyzing the comments of such short videos. Attitude is the core of appraisal theory, which focuses on the reaction and evaluation of behavior and the assessment of the value of things. It is subdivided into three subsystems: affect, judgment, and appreciation. Affect, as the center of the attitude subsystem, complements judgment and appreciation (Wu & Zhao, 2022). In this study, the “attitude” subsystem of the appraisal theory is used to evaluate audiences’ attitudes toward different types of product placement in short videos by analyzing the textual sentiment of their comments on Bilibili.

3.2 Corpus and Analysis Methods

The development of product placement in short videos is changing rapidly. Even for the same creator, the technique of inserting advertisements in videos often changes with experience. Therefore, to obtain mature methods of product placement in short videos, this study selects 50 videos containing product placement created by 25 famous uploaders with more than one million followers in the past year (April 2021 to April 2022) on Bilibili. After categorizing the 50 videos into nine categories according to the way the advertisements are inserted, the researchers collect the top 200 comments on each video to see how most audiences feel after watching the videos.

After organizing the comments into several tables, the two researchers filter out comments related to product placement and count the percentage of it among all comments. At the same time, the researchers conduct a word frequency analysis of all comments to observe their overall sentiment tendencies. By this means, the researchers can judge to what extent the product placement influences the content conveyed by the short video itself, and what kind of influence it is. Based on the appraisal theory, the researchers discuss and establish a standardized criterion for classifying the related comments into different subsystems and judging whether their emotional tendencies are positive or negative. Then, the researchers select the same corpus for separate independent analysis, and the overlap rate exceeds 95%. For the parts where the opinions do not coincide, the two researchers reach a consensus through discussion. After that, the remaining corpus is divided into equal parts and the two researchers do the analysis separately. When the analysis is finished, the researchers invite four other people to discuss the questionable parts until everyone agrees. And finally, charts are drawn to make conclusions.

4. Analysis

4.1 Overall Analysis of Different Types of Product Placement

Since there were less than 200 comments on individual videos after eliminating duplicate data, the researchers actually collected a total of 9,832 comments (not including replies below the comments) from the top 200 in terms of clout under 50 short videos. According to the product placement methods, the researchers divided the 50 videos into the following nine types: using the advertised product as an auxiliary appliance, introducing the advertised product through pre-paving, introducing the advertised product through goodies sharing or evaluation, describing the advertised product with one’s own experience, integrating the advertised product into the video in an unintended form, reproducing food-related to the advertised product, introducing the advertised product directly in the video, creating videos with the theme of the advertised product and popularizing knowledge about the advertised product or its surroundings. These nine types are named Type 1-9, and the number of positive and negative comments of affect, judgment, and appreciation under the attitude system of each type of video is counted. The statistical results are shown in Figure 2.

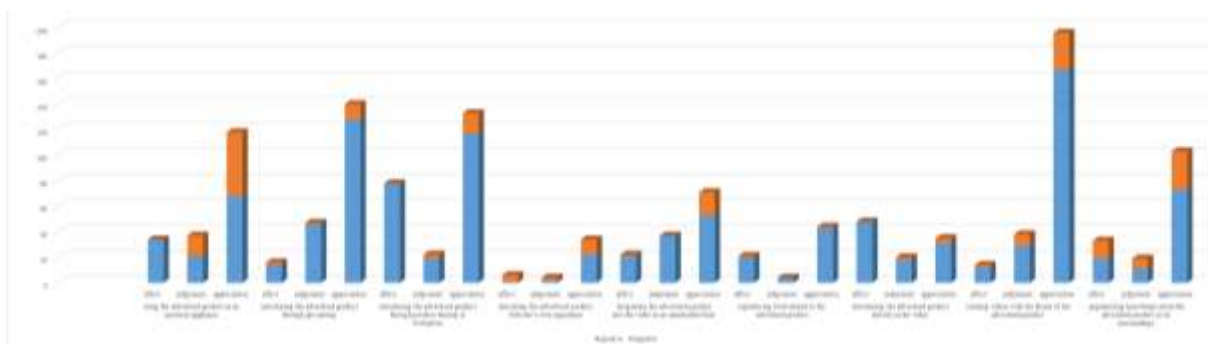


Figure 2. Comparison of various types of product placement methods

In terms of the number of comments related to product placement, short videos of types 2, 3, and 8 have more related comments, which are greater than 200, while that of short videos of types 4 and 6 are less than 100. Therefore, it can be

concluded that the three methods of product placement, namely introducing the advertised product through pre-paving, introducing the advertised product through goodies sharing or evaluation, or creating videos with the theme of the advertised product, can generate a relatively large scope of discussion about the product. While the two methods of product placement, namely describing the advertised product with one's own experience or reproducing food-related to the advertised product, cannot achieve the above results.

In terms of positive and negative sentiment, Types 2, 3, 6, and 7 have more positive comments, exceeding 90% of the total number of comments related to product placement. Short videos *This Game is Too Fun*, *Template for Product Placement*, and *Is It That Silky* are significantly well-received in type 2, with a positive rating of over 98%. The reason for the popularity of *This Game is Too Fun* is that the uploader creates a high-quality fun animated video about game designers. It creates a light-hearted atmosphere, sets the stage for the introduction of the PS5 console, and generates a lot of buzz about it. The reason why *Template for Product Placement* is loved is that the uploader talks about how one can create a good template for product placement before putting the advertised product into that template. Such a creative idea has a surprising effect and positively triggers the audiences' surprise. The reason for the popularity of *Is It That Silky* is that the uploader associates the texture of the skincare product with an ice cream that matches her characteristics, and created a similar flavored ice cream based on the ingredient list of that product. The video is novel and interesting, which triggers the audience to admire the association. *Introduce Products with the Melodramatic Literature* is significantly well-received in type 3, with a 100% positive rating. The reason for its popularity is that the uploader is good at expressing the scent characteristics of the advertised perfume in words, which makes the audience feel like they have used it and triggers their desire to buy. *After a Finger Poke Down I Feel Stunned* is well received in type 6, with a 98% approval rate. The reason for its popularity is that the uploader uses food to highly recreate the props in the implanted product *Crash 3*, hiding the product placement in the replica. It triggers the audiences' admiration for his creativity and cooking skills and the association with the game's related experience. *Eat Meat without Seeing It* is significantly well-received in type 7, with a 100% positive rating. The reason for its popularity is that both the uploader and the advertised product, *Yimengjianghu*, are well known enough to have a significant number of fans. When the uploader advertises this product, the audiences, who are both fans of the uploader and the game, are pleasantly surprised.

Types 1, 4, and 9 receive more negative comments, exceeding 30% of the total number of comments related to product placement. Type 1, *Japanese Ladies*, and *Turn on the Light* receive more negative comments, both exceeding 75% of the total number of related comments. The researchers found that the reasons why *Japanese Ladies* are negatively commented from two aspects: the uploaders and the advertised products. From the point of view of the uploader herself, she had shot videos of playing pranks on her friends many times. And in this video, she also uses the advertised product – non-alcoholic beer as a prop for hoaxing her friends, which is questioned by the audience that too many pranks between friends is easy to lose trust. From the point of view of the advertised product, the audiences question the meaning of non-alcoholic beer. In addition, Japan, where the advertised product originates, also arouses memories and negative discussions among audiences about the malicious referee incident at the Tokyo Olympics. The reason for the negative comments on *Turn on the Light* is that the audiences have criticized the uploader's creativity, who uses the advertised floor sweeper as an auxiliary appliance and spends a long time designing the light-on device. However, the audiences question the meaning of the design and consider it flashy. *Scared to Pee* and *Master Movers and Shakers* in type 4 receive more negative comments, both reaching 50% of the total number of comments related to the product placement. The reason for the negative comments on the former is that the uploader who frequently uploads food-related videos, made a short, unnatural, and uninteresting store visit video to advertise the products Three Squirrels and Fanta. It is criticized by audiences for the quality of the video. The reason for the negative rating of the latter lies in the advertiser Tencent itself, with audiences expressing their dislike for Tencent in large numbers. *The Alchemist* in type 9 receives more negative comments, amounting to 53% of the total number of comments related to the video's product placement, for both the uploader and advertiser. From the uploader himself, he takes a large number of advertisements in a short time, causing audiences to resent and question the authenticity of the advertisement. From the advertiser, Hyundai, audiences expressed a lot of disgust towards the Korean company, while the reliability of hydrogen energy is also questioned by the public.

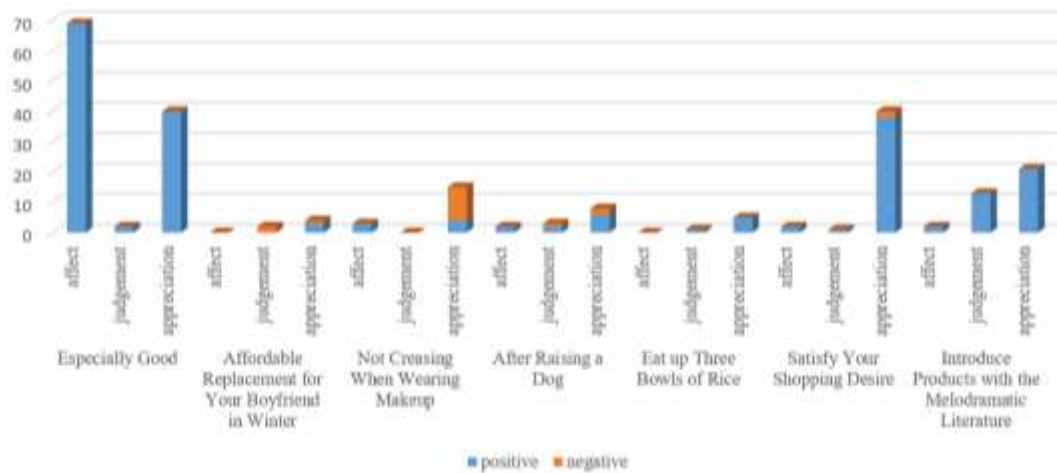


Figure 3. Introducing the advertised product through goodies sharing or evaluation (Type 3)

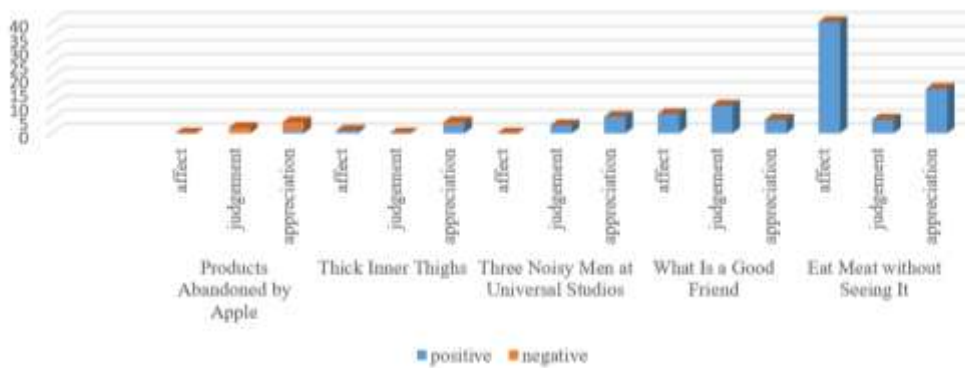


Figure 4. Introducing the advertised product directly in the video (Type 7)

From the classification of attitude subsystem under appraisal theory, except for type 7, all the remaining eight types have appreciation resources accounting for the majority and affect resources accounting for the minority. This indicates that product placement in short videos is more likely to arouse audiences’ rational thinking and recollection of the experience of using the products than to provoke audiences’ emotional expressions. Affect resources account for a relatively large number of type 3 and type 7, both of which account for more than 30% of the total number of comments related. The affect resources of Type 7 account for 47% of the comments related, while the appreciation resources account for only 34%. These two types of implantation are more likely to provoke audiences’ emotional expression. As can be seen from Figure 3, the video with more affect resources in type 3 is represented by *Especially Good*, with affect resources accounting for 62% of the comments related. The product placement in the video appears in the form of goodies sharing and a lottery session, so audiences mostly express their love for the product and desire to win the lottery. As seen in Figure 4, the video with more affect resources in Type 7 is represented by *Eat Meat without Seeing It*, with affect resources accounting for 66% of the comments related. The product placement of this video – *Yimengjianghu*, is presented directly at the end of the video. However, since the uploader is famous for excellent cooking skills, fans sprout the desire to experience the uploader’s cooking skills in the game. It can be seen that the feelings of an audience that the short video can trigger are more obvious if the audience is a fan of both the uploader and the advertised product.

4.2 Specific Analysis of Representative Product Placement Videos

4.2.1 Analysis of the Video *The Fate of 1,000 Cases of Coca-Cola*

Type 8 – creating videos with the theme of the advertised product – is one of the many product placement methods that have the highest degree of integration between the advertised product and the short video itself, while the effect of advertisement is obvious. Therefore, this study selects the video *The Fate of 1,000 Cases of Coca-Cola* (as seen in Figure 5), which has a large number of reviews related to product placement and a 92% positive rating, which is the highest among similar methods of product placement in Type 8. The video’s comments and analysis of them based on

the attitude subsystem of appraisal theory are shown in the table below, with appreciation resources accounting for the largest number of comments, reaching 81% of the total number of advertisement-related comments. An excerpt of the analysis of comments is shown in the following chart.

Table 1. Excerpts from analysis of comments on *The Fate of 1000 Cases of Coca-Cola* (Chinese version)

评论内容	正向	负向	情感	判定	鉴赏
可口可乐yyds	1				1
哈哈，非常荣幸参与了可口可乐冷柜项目	1				1
虽然是很烦琐，但是也很用心	1				1
可口可乐牛逼，它的瓶子也变薄了，气压也变少了，糖也少了。			1		1
偷设计的我，一眼就认出了视频里字体用的是“可口可乐在手体”	1				1
百事的气儿更足，冰镇后口感比可口可乐刺激，可口可乐没那么甜		1			1
坐等百事和可口可乐打架（我是可口党）	1				1
可口可乐其实挺贵的，但是确实比瓶装好喝	1				1
能想到可口可乐的瓶，并不新鲜，能出招，给足了更新《永流传》了	1			1	1
你不去更新水消，却想到可口可乐我的水帝		1			1
在张家口这边的志愿者 视频的超市一瓶可乐五六块一瓶太贵了	1				1
我喜欢可口可乐	1				1
5:57 爱到可口可乐，奥运村志愿者的小哥要小甜甜吃即叫喝的饮料有Costa 和果汁饮料，8:46 提到可持续和环保的话，我看的up主卷一点，这次冬奥会是最	1				1
本也太优秀了！颜值视频质量这么高	1				1
我就是喝可乐开始进的，当时有种上瘾的感觉，不过抛开这些不谈，可口确实好喝，百事只配用来冲马桶	1				1
谢谢可口可乐，我鄙视除了喝以外的一切东西	1				1
我是真的喜欢可口可乐，他颜值超目的白色和简约的白色相衬，而且喝起来冰爽解渴，口感更足，yyds呀我肯定在选可口可乐	1				1
曹智深：给商家来壶快乐水	1				1
这才是一个有底蕴有历史沉淀有企业文化的大公司，而不是那种产品不好吃，饮品甜腻水，还把脚牌民费从自己店门前赶走的那种“有文化底蕴”的公司	1				1
呵呵，干了这个可乐，我们可能接着买水呀！众多兄弟等着呢，咱不能冷落兄弟呀！	1				1
这种有知识传播有意义的视频，必须点！支持你的创作！	1				1
能想到可口可乐很不错了					1
曹深：孩子可口可乐广告	1				1
已给买了，孩子很喜欢吃，会继续下单的	1				1
无限夸yyds!!! 所以水消什么时候更新	1				1
可口可乐也出别家记录那得再搞别站了。一点正派人做广告不好吗	1				1

Table 2. Excerpts from analysis of comments on *The Fate of 1000 Cases of Coca-Cola* (English version)

comments	positive	negative	affect	judgment	appreciation
Coca-Cola yyds(I like Coca-Cola very much)	1				1
Hee hee, very honored to participate in the Coca-Cola hot and cold cabinet project.	1				1
Although the commercial promotion information is implanted in the video, it is also well done with care.	1				1
As awesome as Coca-Cola is, its bottles have gotten thinner, the air pressure has gotten smaller, and there is less sugar.		1			1
As a designer, I immediately recognized that the font used in the video was "Coca-Cola Cases Font".	1				1
Pepsi has more fizz, and its taste is more exciting than that of Coca-Cola after chilling. However, Coca-Cola is not as sweet as Pepsi.		1			1
Waiting for people who prefer Pepsi and people who prefer Coke to argue (I prefer Coke)	1				1
No matter what Coke I actually do not care, but the can is really better than the bottle		1			1
It's great that the uploader received a promotion from Coca-Cola. We fans are very supportive! Remember to update another series of videos!	1			1	1
Instead of updating that previous video series, you want to put Coca-Cola in my water bottle.		1			1
I am volunteering in Zhangjiakou. The supermarket in the camp sells a bottle of Coke for six RMB. So sad for Coke lovers.	1				1
I love Coca-Cola	1				1
5:57 Speaking of Coca-Cola, the volunteers in the Olympic Village drink Costa and Minute Miso when they had meals. 8:46 Speaking of sustainability and environment	1				1
The uploader is so good! High-quality video!	1				1
I started gaining weight after drinking Coke and had a feeling of addiction at the time. But aside from that, Coca-Cola is really good, and Pepsi is only worthwhile to	1				1
Thanks for the sponsor Coca-Cola, I would like to help with everything except drinking	1				1
I really like Coca-Cola, with its striking red packaging set off by simple white. And Coca-Cola tastes better. To be honest, I prefer Coca-Cola.	1				1
Lu Zhiheng: Give me a pot of Coke.	1				1
This is a well-known company with the heritage and corporate culture. Unlike Starbucks, the desserts are not good, the drinks are not good, and the police are driven	1				1
Bro, drink this bowl of Coke, and then we can continue to another series of videos! Many friends are waiting for it, we can not ignore them!	1				1
This kind of knowledgeable and meaningful promotional video be made more often! Support your creation!	1				1
The uploader was able to get a promotional assignment from Coca-Cola and he's already doing great.	1				1
Summary: It's a Coca-Cola promotional ad.	1				1
Already bought. My children like it and we will continue to buy it.	1				1
I really like the sugar-free lime flavored Coca-Cola!!! So when will the other series of videos be updated?	1				1
I hope that Coca-Cola and Pepsi do not always think about inviting Xiao Zhuo and Liu Haocun to endorse. Isn't it good to invite some normal people?	1				1

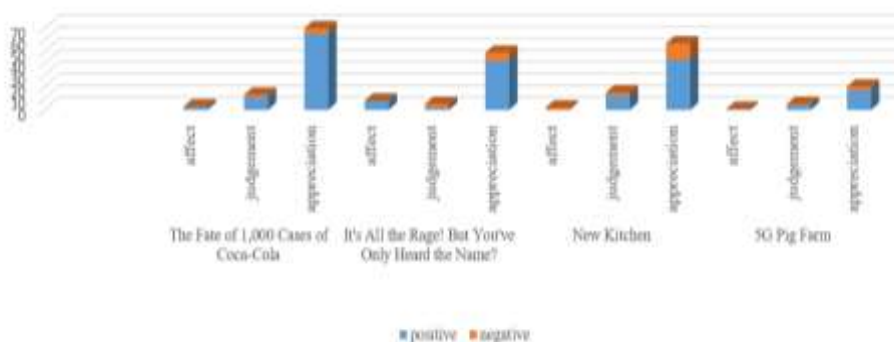


Figure 5. Creating videos with the theme of the advertised product (Type 8)

The following is a netizen’s comment, “This is a well-known company with the heritage and corporate culture. Unlike Starbucks, its desserts and drinks are not good, and its employee even drives the police away from the front of its stores.” The contrast between Coca-Cola and Starbucks shows the audience’s praise of Coca-Cola, which belongs to the positive evaluation of the appreciation resource. “God! Let the sponsor give more money to the Uploader!!! I don’t know why I was moved to tears.” This comment reflects the audience’s love for the uploader’s video, which belongs to the positive

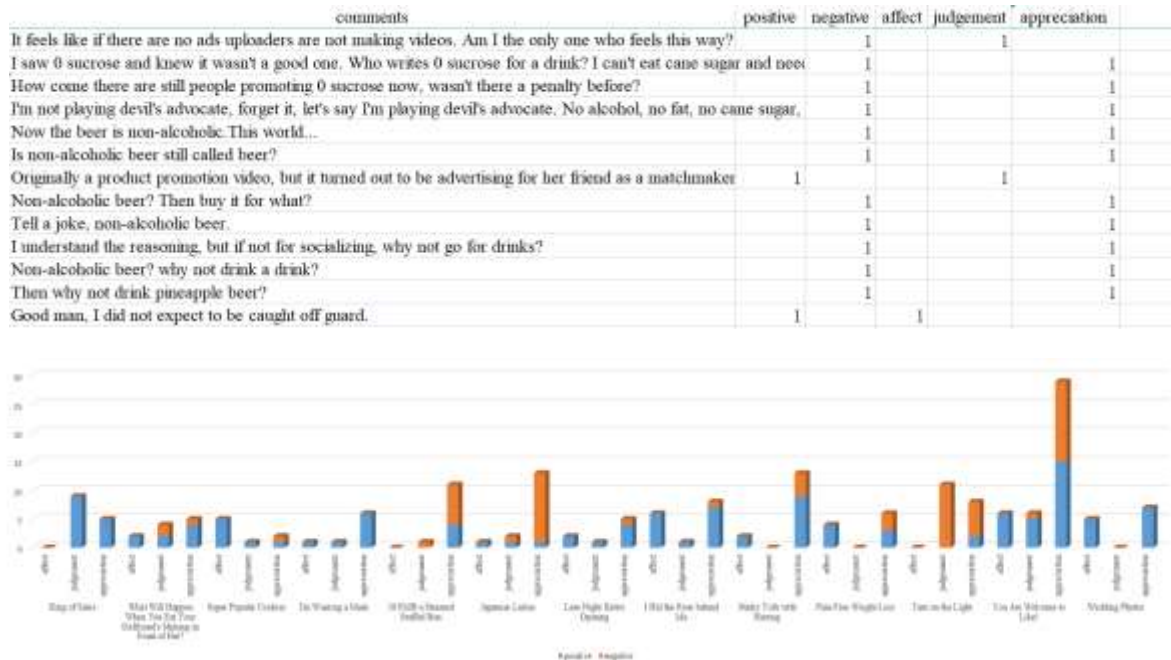


Figure 7. Using the advertised product as an auxiliary appliance (Type 1)

The comment “It feels like that this uploader would not make videos without advertisement. Am I the only one who feels this way?” shows that this audience questions the motivation of the uploader for shooting videos, and believes that the uploader only shoots videos for advertisement. It is a negative evaluation of the judgment resource. The comment “Is non-alcoholic beer still called beer?” shows that this audience questions that non-alcoholic beer cannot be considered beer, which is a negative evaluation of the appreciation resource.

The word frequency chart for all comments on this video is as follows.



Figure 8. Word frequency chart for comments on *Japanese Ladies*

The word frequency chart shows that words such as Japan, Olympic Games, Huangyigaigai, cute girl, referee, netherworld count, alcohol, and cane sugar appear most frequently. Among them, Japan, Olympic Games, referee, and netherworld count are words related to the Tokyo Olympic Games carried out shortly before the release of the video. The audiences express great sarcasm toward the Olympic Games referee. The Huangyigaigai and cute girl refer to the uploader’s friend, that is, the lady who is tricked in the video. The audiences express their love for her and dissatisfaction with the uploader to play pranks on her with this action. Alcohol and cane sugar are discussed around the

qualities of the advertised product, with doubts about the zero alcohol and zero cane sugar in beer.

The uploader's video has received many questions from audiences for two reasons: the uploader, and the advertisement product. On one hand, the uploader's videos are mostly made to make fun of her friends, which is contrary to the Chinese public's value of friendliness. It causes audiences to worry about the friendship between the uploader and her friends and be dissatisfied with the uploader's actions. On the other hand, the advertised product is a non-alcoholic beer, which also boasts zero cane sugar and zero fat, causing audiences to question its significance as a beer. The audiences' goodwill toward zero-sugar drinks has already been worn out by the false propaganda about it that broke out some time ago. In addition, the video was released when the malicious referee incident at the Tokyo Olympics was generating a lot of internet buzz. Moreover, the location where the video is filmed, Japan, has triggered a series of dissatisfaction and questions from audiences, including the Olympics and epidemic prevention and control.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Audience's Acceptance of Various Types of Product Placement Methods in Short Videos

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that the two types of product placement methods in short videos, introducing the advertised products through pre-paving or introducing the advertised product through goodies sharing or evaluation, can generate more comments related to product placement and most of them are positive. Introducing the advertised product through pre-paving is loved by the audience mainly because of the novelty and creativity of the uploaders. In the three videos listed in the above analysis, the uploaders all use unique ideas that fit their characteristics and personalities, such as an uploader who frequently upload food-related videos promoting skincare products by making ice cream. Introducing the advertised product through goodies sharing or evaluation gains the audience's love through the uploaders' apt and accurate descriptions of the advertised products. Good descriptions can trigger audiences' desire to buy the products. However, it is not always a good way if the uploader describes the advertised product directly from his or her own experience. This type of video tends to be uninteresting, especially when the advertised product does not match the consistent tone of the short video, and will easily cause strong resentment among audiences.

As Yan (2021) says, product placements in short videos need to improve the core competitiveness through high-quality content. No matter what kind of methods of product placement, when the advertiser itself is controversial or the advertised product has false propaganda and quality problems, audiences will not accept it. If uploaders act like playing pranks on their friends which is contrary to audiences' values, or if they make videos with commercial promotion too often, they can easily lose audiences' trust and can also lead to strong dissatisfaction. From the perspective of appraisal theory, appreciation resources account for most of the comments made by audiences, which reflects that audiences are more likely to think, compare and evaluate products when watching short videos. Therefore, short videos that are falsely exaggerated or muddled are difficult to win the favor of audiences.

5.2 Comparison between Product Placement in Short Videos and Film and Television Works

The biggest difference between product placement in short videos and film and television works is that short videos can be created with the advertised product as the main body, thus making the content of the video revolve around the advertised product and achieving a high degree of integration between the product and the video. Previous studies have summarized product placement in film and television works into two main types. One type of it is represented by creative stickers. The advertised product appears in the work more obviously, but does not cut off from the plot (Li, 2019); the other type is represented by the camera showing the advertised product (Li, 2011), which is implicit and does not hinder the development of the plot. Although product placement in film and television works can also be integrated with the plot to a certain extent, the effect is not as significant as that in short videos. Researchers believe that high integration in film and television works refers to the fact that the product placement is not cut off from the plot and is integrated into the plot in a less overbearing form. It is the subordination of advertising to the plot. The high integration in the short video refers to the fact that the content of the short video is dominated by advertised products, and the content of the short video cannot be separated from them. It is the subordination of content to advertising. This kind of implantation with advertised products as the main body of creation can vigorously promote the products without affecting the audience's viewing experience of the video itself, which is difficult to achieve with plot-driven film and television works.

For example, the four types of product placement in short videos, namely introducing the advertised product through goodies sharing or evaluation, reproducing food-related to the advertised product, creating videos with the theme of the advertised product, and popularizing knowledge about the advertised product or its surroundings, can make the content of the videos revolve around advertised products and make advertisements and videos highly integrated. Among them, the effect achieved by creating videos with the theme of the advertised products is the most in-depth. For example, the video *The Fate of 1000 Cases of Coca-Cola* shapes the lofty corporate image of Coca-Cola by introducing its origin and relation with the Olympic Games, which has a deep promotional effect.

The product placement in short videos also reflects some of the problems of that in film and television works. For example, the advertisements are unnaturally placed, do not fit the consistent tone of the work, and are contrary to public values. From the experience of product placement in film and television works, when creating videos, uploaders should not only explore creative forms in line with their tone but also lead the content of advertisements with correct mainstream values to avoid the emergence of chaotic advertisements caused by the loss of values. The standardization and governance of product placement in short videos have shown its profound necessity.

5.3 Optimization Strategies of Product Placement in Short Videos

Referring to the optimization strategies of film and television works and the above-mentioned research results, to further optimize product placement in short videos based on the existing optimization strategies, the government, platforms, and uploaders can meet the needs of audiences from the following four points.

First, the joint supervision of the government and the short video industry is still an aspect that needs to be constantly adhered to. The government and the short video industry should work together to develop effective regulations for product placement in short videos and crackdown on illegal and inferior product placements. For example, a beverage product that boasts “zero sugar and zero fat” is suspected to constitute false propaganda. It misleads audiences into wrong choices and violates audiences’ rights to information, choice, and safety. The government should continue to improve relevant laws and regulations and urge short video platforms to practice them to protect audiences’ rights and interests.

Second, the regulation of the short video platforms is still the crucial direction of optimization. The platforms should keep improving the supervision and feedback mechanism to ensure that audiences have open channels to report poor quality product placement. For example, according to the audience of the video *Japanese Ladies*, the uploader often creates videos by playing pranks on her friends, causing antipathy from the audience. For this situation, the short video platform can strengthen the advocacy of the core values of Chinese socialism. On the one hand, the platform should strictly examine and verify the videos before they are released according to the core values. On the other hand, it should promptly deal with the feedback from audiences and impose appropriate punishment on the problematic short videos.

Third, the encouragement of innovation and creativity should be insisted on by the short video platforms. The platforms should guide uploaders to create innovative works, and incentivize them to try methods of product placement that promote better and integrate better with short videos. For example, the platforms can give financial rewards to uploaders of product placement in short videos that receive a certain number of plays and likes to encourage uploaders to create more videos that audiences like.

Fourth, the insistence on quality should always be the pursuit of the uploaders. When advertising products, uploaders should keep industry ethics in mind, carefully select the advertised products and pay enough attention to the suitability of advertised products with their characteristics. They need to fully consider the quality of the videos and the audiences’ viewing experience. The uploaders can also watch more short videos with outstanding product placement effects, learn from others’ placement techniques and improve their skills.

6. Conclusion

This paper analyzes the comments of 50 popular short videos containing product placement on Bilibili based on appraisal theory. It also uses word frequency charts to comprehensively assess the audiences’ attitudes toward nine types of product placement. The study finds that: when watching product placement in short videos, audiences think and compare more often than simply feeling. Therefore, audiences are mostly able to identify false propaganda or quality problems in product placement. Under this premise, product placement in short videos which are creative, meaningful, fit the characteristics of the uploaders, or have a high degree of integration with the short video is more effective. Based on the above findings, and regarding the optimization strategies of product placement in film and television works, the government and the short video industry need to cooperate to further optimize product placement in short videos. Limited by the sample size and research method, the accuracy of this study still needs to be improved. Therefore, in terms of the sample size, future research can improve the time span in sample selection, increase the number of short video platforms and the number of videos, and also try to focus on a certain topic of short videos for analysis. In terms of research methods, future research can enrich the theoretical system and combine natural language processing and machine deep learning in order to improve the accuracy and persuasiveness of the results.

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