

A Research on the Negative Attitude of Bilibili Users to the Product Placement in Videos of Content Creators

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ABSTRACT

As a social media popular in Chinese young people, Bilibili's average daily active users in China has reached 51 million. However, Bilibili users often express their negative attitude towards product placement in videos of content creators, which may cause number of followers to drop for content creators and lead expected marketing effect to be unattainable for brand marketers. Therefore, the main purpose of the study is to investigate the reasons why users of Bilibili have negative attitudes towards the product placement in videos by content creators and propose three potential factors—content authenticity, content congruity and product involvement, which can influence Bilibili users' negative attitude towards product placement. After sending questionnaires to Bilibili users and doing data analysis, the study gets the results that content authenticity, content congruity and product placement are all negatively correlated with Bilibili users' negative attitude towards product placement, and product involvement is positively correlated with content authenticity and content congruity. This gives practical implications for both Bilibili content creators and brand marketers who want to seek Bilibili content creators for commercial cooperation.

KEYWORDS

social media influencer, product placement, content authenticity, content congruity, product involvement

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1 INTRODUCTION

Social Media Influencers (SMI) influence the consumption patterns of contemporary consumers, especially young consumers. A large

number of content creators with a lot of followers have emerged on the Bilibili, and they have their own private domain traffic pool. Because the private domain traffic pool has the advantages of high conversion rate, many brands seek for content creators to cooperate and promote, the strategy is called influencer marketing. However, based on observations in the comment area under videos with product placement and related research, Bilibili users show their negative attitude towards the videos with advertisements. Therefore, this will not only cause the number of followers to drop for SMIs, but also cause the expected marketing effect to be unattainable for brand marketers.

The research aims to investigate the specific reasons why users of Bilibili have negative attitudes and even resent the product placement in videos by content creators and solve the following problems:

- (1) How should Bilibili content creators implant products in their videos to reduce followers' negative emotions and prevent the number of followers from dropping?
- (2) How should the brand marketers cooperate with the Bilibili content creators to implant advertisements to achieve the expected marketing effects?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Influencer marketing is defined as promoting brands through use of specific key individuals who exert influence over potential buyers [1]. In the context of social media, such as YouTube, Instagram and Bilibili, more and more companies try to cooperate with social media influencers (SMI), to promote their products or/and services. Because consumers typically judge the information provided by other individuals to be trustworthy and credible, user-generated social media communications have a greater effect on consumers' overall perception of brands than firm-created social media communication.

Product placement is a marketing technique where specific products and brands are incorporated into another work, like TV shows, movies, web series or any digital content [2]. Traditionally, product placement is mostly used in film, television, games fields. Film and television plays usually use lines, plots and scenes to implant. With the increasing impact of social media on consumers, product placement is also widely used in social media. Aforementioned influencer marketing can be considered a form of product placement.

In view of consumers' negative attitude towards product placement in different fields, many scholars conducted research about consumer acceptance of product placement. Generally speaking,

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the study of consumer acceptance of product placement mainly focuses on traditional fields such as movies, games and variety shows, but there is relatively little research in the field of social media. Lv Jiaqi conducted two experiments to investigate the influence of product placement on consumers' attitude towards different games and emphasized the influence of brand and game matching degree and advertising implantation form [3]. Zhao explored potential factors that can affect audience attitude towards product placement in films and television shows, finding out that audience show their preference to product placement with low prominence, and the audience likeability towards the films and shows can transfer to the products implanted in them [4]. Wang Yaqian conducted in-depth interviews with 15 users who have purchased the recommended products of Bilibili by sampling and proposed that users' trust in bloggers largely depends on their honesty [5]. What's more, the introduction marketing based on the life scene can effectively alleviate the tension caused by commercial content, which makes the vlogger avoid the user's aversion to the direct advertising while completing the brand cooperation, so as to obtain the trust and recognition of the users, and finally effectively transform the relevant users into actual consumers. With examples of product placement in WeChat, Ivan Ka Wai Lai and Yide Liu did researches studying how three aspects—social media engagement, content likeability and content credibility—affect the acceptance of social media users towards product placement [6]. Bruno Schivinski and Dariusz Dabrowski investigated Facebook users in order to observe the impact of firm-created and user-generated social media communication on brand equity, brand attitude and purchase intention [7].

3 RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Hypothesis Development

This paper explained content authenticity from two aspects: SMIs' intrinsic motivation and integrity. For one thing, if SMIs' message expressed in product placement show their intrinsic motivation, followers may have a stronger desire to buy the products and have a good feeling for product placement. For the other thing, if SMIs maintain a low integrity in the product placement, then followers, based on their trust in SMIs, may buy the products. However, when some followers find out that actually there is business cooperation between the SMIs and the products, their trust towards the SMIs will drop sharply. At the same time, SMIs' behavior of non-disclosure of business cooperation are considered as their insincere and untrue performance to the followers.

H1: Content authenticity of the product placement has a negative impact on Bilibili users' negative attitude toward product placement.

Yan proposes that in terms of product placement in game, the congruity between the game and the brand will significantly influence consumers' brand perception [8]. This is similar in product placement in social media. In the mode of user generation, Bilibili allows every user to upload videos to attract followers and get traffic. When the number of followers accumulates to a certain degree, these uploaders become social media influencers. In this process, followers' likeability for the video is crucial. If SMIs' way of implanting products into the video is too rigid, and the implanted content cannot be well integrated into the video, the

audience viewing perception towards the video will decline, and what is worse, followers may choose to unfollow the SMI. In this case, their negative attitude towards the product placement will also increase.

H2: Content congruity of the product placement has a negative impact on Bilibili users' negative attitude towards product placement.

Product involvement in this paper refers to SMIs' understanding and perception of implanted products. When SMIs have a very high understanding of the implanted product, and demonstrate that before they implant products in their video, they have had strict screening and determined the quality of the product, the followers' trust in SMIs will be improved. Such that, their positive attitude towards product placement will increase.

H3a: SMIs' product involvement has a negative impact on Bilibili users' negative attitude toward product placement.

When SMIs have a high degree of product involvement, they will have a higher understanding of the product, which includes usage scenarios, functions, and targeted customers of the products. Then, in order to achieve a better video perception for audience, SMIs will try to combine the features of the product with the overall tone of the video when designing the video content, thus increasing the content congruity of the product placement. However, if SMIs have a low degree of product involvement, they know little about the features of the product placement, let alone to combine the features of the product with the tone of the video.

H3b: SMIs' product involvement has a positive impact on content congruity.

Furthermore, the high product involvement of SMIs is also reflected in the situation that SMI really needs the products and they think the product is very important to themselves. Therefore, SMIs' personal appreciation for the product may increase, so does the SMIs' intrinsic motivation towards the products, which belongs to content authenticity.

H3c: SMIs' product involvement has a positive impact on content authenticity.

3.2 Questionnaire Design

Based on the research model and hypotheses proposed above, this study designed the corresponding questionnaire to obtain relevant data, and tested the hypotheses through data analysis. The questionnaire is mainly composed of two parts. As the research object is locked in Bilibili users, the first part of the question is mainly used to collect the basic personal information of the respondents, and screen out the valid data that have ever used Bilibili, and regard the data that have not used Bilibili as invalid data. The second part is the main content of the questionnaire. According to the four variances proposed above, the paper uses Likert item (very inconsistent, consistent, uncertain, inconsistent, very inconsistent) to set the corresponding options, a total of 14 questions. The following tells how the questions are set in the questionnaire in order to measure four dimensions in the research model:

Firstly, the content authenticity is measured by two dimensions: SMIs' intrinsic motivation and SMI's integrity. Secondly, content congruity means product placement is consistent with the overall tone of the video, and the way of product placement is consistent

with the characteristics of SMIs. Thirdly, Referring to Revised Personal Involvement Inventory scale [9], the measurement of SMIs' product involvement in this paper is simplified into three items: important, needed, and involving. Fourthly, "attitudes are evaluative statements—either favorable or unfavorable—about objects, people, or events" [10]. Generally, researchers consider that attitudes have three components: cognition, affect, and behavior. Cognition refers to "a description of or belief in the way things are; affect is the emotional or feeling segment of an attitude; The behavioral component of an attitude describes an intention to behave in a certain way toward someone or something" [11]. When SMI followers express their negative attitude, they may feel "the product placement is not reasonable"(cognitive component); "I dislike product placement" (affective component); or "I will never buy the product implanted in the video"(behavior component).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The questionnaire takes Bilibili users as the survey object, and is distributed online with the help of Wenjuanxing. A total of 204 questionnaires were randomly distributed to potential Bilibili users. After eliminating the invalid questionnaires whose filling time is less than 50 seconds, whose answers in the scale were not distinguishable thus not be identified as careless filling in and whose respondents are non-Bilibili users, there are 200 valid questionnaires, a total valid rate of 98.04%.

In this survey, most of the respondents are female, accounting for 71%. In addition, almost all of the respondents are 18-25 years old and most of them are undergraduates. Because of the large number of students, most of the respondents' disposable income is between 1000-3000 RMB per month. On top of that, 56% of the respondents said that they used Bilibili more than five times a week, showing that as a gathering place of young people, Bilibili has a wide influence among young people and becomes a mobile social media indispensable for most young people.

4.2 Validity and Reliability Test

Before hypothesis verification, the paper uses SPSSAU to test the validity and reliability of the data collected from the questionnaire.

4.2.1 Validity Analysis. The results of the validity analysis are shown in table 1. Firstly, if the KMO value is higher than 0.8, the validity of the data is high; if the KMO value is between 0.7 and 0.8, the validity of the data is relatively good; if the KMO value is between 0.6 and 0.7, the validity of the data is acceptable; if the KMO value is less than 0.6, the validity of the data is poor. According to table3, the KMO value is 0.823, greater than 0.6, which suggests that the data collected from the questionnaire has validity. Secondly, it can be seen from the table 1 that the commonalities of each item is higher than 0.4, indicating that the information of research items can be effectively extracted. Thirdly, the variance explanation rates of the four factors are 19.888%, 15.069%, 24.237% and 7.845% respectively, and the cumulative variance explanation rate after rotation is 67.039%, which is higher than 50%, a result implying that the information amount can be extracted efficaciously. Finally, the corresponding relationship between items and factors

is analyzed. According to table 1, the factor loading coefficients of items NA1-NA5 in Negative Attitude(NA) dimension are greater than 0.6, indicating that items NA1-NA5 can be used to measure variable-Negative Attitude; the factor loading coefficients of items CA1-CA3 in Content Authenticity(CA) dimension are greater than 0.5, indicating that items CA1-CA3 can be used to measure variable "Content Authenticity"; the factor loading coefficients of items CC1-CC3 in Content Congruity(CC) dimension are greater than 0.5, indicating that items CC1-CC3 can be used to measure the variable "Content Congruity"; the factor load coefficients of items PI1-PI3 in the Product Involvement(PI) dimension are greater than 0.7, indicating that items PI1-PI3 can be used to measure the variable "Product Involvement". Therefore, the corresponding relationship between the four factors and the research items conforms to expectations, and the questionnaire design is reasonable and valid. In conclusion, the questionnaire data meets the requirements of validity test.

4.2.2 Reliability Analysis. The results of the reliability analysis are shown in table 2. It can be seen from the table 2 that the reliability coefficient values of each dimension are 0.801, 0.725, 0.783 and 0.74 respectively, which are all greater than 0.7, indicating that the reliability of the research data is very good. In terms of "Cronbach alpha if item deleted", because after each item is deleted, the reliability coefficient don't increase substantially, the item is not supposed to be deleted; as for "CITC value", the CITC values of the analyzed items are all greater than 0.4, which suggests that there is a good correlation between the items. In summary, the reliability coefficient of the research data is higher than 0.7, which indicates that the reliability quality of the data collected is high and can be used for further analysis.

4.3 Hypothesis Verification

After ensuring the questionnaire data collected is valid and reliable, we put questionnaire data to SPSSAU to do the correlation and regression analysis to determine the relationships between variables, thus testing whether the model hypotheses are true. The results are shown from table 3 to table 6

4.3.1 Correlation Analysis. According to table 3, there is a significant correlation between product involvement and content congruity as well as Content Authenticity, with the correlation coefficient values being 0.693 and 0.584 respectively. In addition, these values are all greater than 0, meaning that there is a positive correlation between Product Involvement and Content Congruity as well as content authenticity. At the same time, there is a significant correlation between Negative Attitude and Content Authenticity, Content Congruity and Product Involvement, with the correlation coefficients being -0.011, -0.839, and -0.293 respectively. These values are all less than 0, so there is a negative correlation between Negative Attitude and Content Authenticity, Content Congruity as well as Product Involvement. After determining the correlation relationship between variables, further regression analysis can be carried out.

4.3.2 Regression Analysis. After determining the correlation relationships between variables, we use SPSSAU software to do the regression analysis to determine the specific form of relationships

Table 1: Indicators of Validity Analysis

Factors/Items	Negative Attitude	Content Authenticity	Content Congruity	Product Involvement	Communalities
NA1	0.799	-0.085	0.038	0.101	0.657
NA2	0.86	-0.024	0.036	-0.006	0.742
NA3	0.677	0.203	-0.086	0.251	0.571
NA4	0.799	-0.016	0.153	0.02	0.662
NA5	0.778	-0.014	0.01	0.407	0.772
CA1	0.113	0.677	0.389	-0.37	0.759
CA2	0.115	0.719	0.357	-0.198	0.697
CA3	-0.059	0.749	0.194	0.32	0.705
CC1	-0.248	0.517	0.54	0.082	0.627
CC2	0.023	0.171	0.789	0.063	0.657
CC3	-0.078	0.34	0.734	-0.033	0.661
PI1	0.188	0.057	-0.07	0.732	0.579
PI2	0.025	0.219	0.129	0.723	0.589
PI3	0.103	0.248	-0.326	0.729	0.709
% of Variance (Initial)	20.58%	7.33%	32.89%	6.23%	-
% of Cum. Variance (Initial)	53.47%	60.81%	32.89%	67.04%	-
Eigenvalues (Rotated)	2.784	2.11	3.393	1.098	-
% of Variance (Rotated)	19.89%	15.07%	24.24%	7.85%	-
% of Cum. Variance (Rotated)	44.13%	59.19%	24.24%	67.04%	-
KMO	0.823				-
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Chi-Square)	1138.402				-
df	91				-
p value	0.000				-

Note. Bold font indicates that the absolute value of loading is greater than 0.4, which means the items belongs to that dimension.

Table 2: Indicators of Reliability Analysis

Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC)	Cronbach Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
NA1	0.403	0.804	0.801
NA2	0.458	0.798	
NA3	0.496	0.805	
NA4	0.41	0.794	
NA5	0.475	0.813	
CA1	0.518	0.785	0.725
CA2	0.54	0.785	
CA3	0.487	0.796	
CC1	0.498	0.795	0.783
CC2	0.549	0.784	
CC3	0.533	0.785	
PI1	0.527	0.786	0.74
PI2	0.531	0.785	
PI3	0.551	0.783	

between variables to further test the hypotheses and the results are shown in table 4, table 5 and table 6.

Firstly, as is seen in table 4, all of the VIF values in the model are less than 5, a result signifying that there is no multicollinearity between variables. Because the D-W value is close to 2, a result indicating that there is no autocorrelation in the model, and there is no correlation between the sample data, so the model is relatively good.

In addition, the regression coefficient of Content Authenticity(CA) is -0.075 ($t=-0.759$, $P=0.049<0.05$), so Content Authenticity had a significant negative effect on Negative Attitude; the regression coefficient of Content Congruity(CC) is -0.268 ($t=-2.469$, $P=0.014<0.05$), which means that Content Congruity has a significant negative effect on Negative Attitude; the regression coefficient of Product Involvement is -0.269 ($t=-2.492$, $P=0.014<0.05$), which means that

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Table

	Mean	Std. Deviation	PI	CC	CA	NA
PI	3.042	0.746	1			
CC	3.232	0.776	0.693**	1		
CA	3.028	0.759	0.584**	0.628**	1	
NA	2.725	0.803	-0.293**	-0.839**	-0.011**	1

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

Note. PI=product involvement, CC=content congruity, CA=content authenticity, NA=negative attitude

Table 4: Regression coefficients of CC, CA, PI as independent variables to NA

Parameter Estimates (n=200)						
	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	t	p	VIF	F
Constant	2.544	0.269	9.465	0.000**	-	F (3,196)=2.910, p=0.036
CA	-0.075	0.099	-0.759	0.049*	1.777	
CC	-0.268	0.108	-2.469	0.014*	2.249	
PI	-0.269	0.108	2.492	0.014*	2.069	

Dependent Variable: Negative Attitude(NA)

D-W: 1.842

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

Table 5: Regression coefficients of PI as independent variables to CC

Parameter Estimates (n=200)						
	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	t	p	VIF	F
Constant	1.041	0.167	6.241	0.000**	0.477	F(1,198)=182.696,p=0.000
PI	0.72	0.053	13.517	0.000**		

Dependent Variable: CC

D-W: 1.862

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

Product Involvement has a significant negative effect on Negative Attitude.

Secondly, Product Involvement(PI) is taken as the independent variable and Content Congruity(CC) is taken as the dependent variable for linear regression analysis. It can be seen from table 5 that the R square value of the model is 0.480, which means that Product Involvement can explain 48.0% of the change of CC. When F-test is carried out on the model, it is found that the model passed F-test (F=182.696, P=0.000<0.05), which means that Product Involvement must have an impact on Content Congruity, and the model formula was: $CC=1.041+0.720*PI$. The final analysis shows that the regression coefficient of Product Involvement is 0.720 (t=13.517, P=0.000<0.01), which means that Product Involvement has a significant positive effect on Content Congruity.

Thirdly, Product Involvement(PI) is taken as the independent variable and Content Authenticity(CA) is taken as the dependent variable for linear regression analysis. It can be seen from table 9 that the R square value of the model is 0.341, which means that

Product Involvement(PI) can explain 34.1% of the change of Content Authenticity(CA). When F-test is carried out on the model, it is found that the model passed F-test (F=102.672, p=0.000<0.05), which means that Product Involvement must have an impact on Content Authenticity, and the model formula is: $CA=1.221 + 0.594*PI$. The final analysis shows that the regression coefficient of Product Involvement(PI) is 0.594(t=10.133, p=0.000<0.01), which means that Product Involvement(PI) has a significant positive effect on Content Congruity(CC).

4.3.3 Test Results. According to the correlation and regression analysis, CA, CC, and PI are significantly negatively correlated with NA, and PI is significantly positively correlated with the CC, and CA. Therefore, the results of the hypothesis verification are shown in Table 7

Table 6: Regression coefficients of PI as independent variables to CA

Parameter Estimates (n=200)						
	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	p	VIF	F
	B	Std. Error				
Constant	1.221	0.184	6.651	0.000**	-	F (1,198)=102.672, p=0.000
PI	0.594	0.059	10.133	0.000**	1	
Dependent Variable: CA						
D-W: 1.847						
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01						

Table 7: Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Results
H1: Content authenticity of the product placement has a negative impact on Bilibili users' negative attitude toward product placement.	True
H2: Content congruity of the product placement has a negative impact on Bilibili users' negative attitude towards product placement.	True
H3a: SMIs' product involvement has a negative impact on Bilibili users' negative attitude toward product placement.	True
H3b: SMIs' product involvement has a positive impact on content congruity.	True
H3c: SMIs' product involvement has a positive impact on content authenticity.	True

5 SUGGESTIONS

5.1 For Bilibili Content Creators

Firstly, it is suggested that the content creators clearly inform the audience that the product mentioned in the video is an advertisement and creators can reach a small agreement with the audience, so that the audience can quickly identify whether it is a video with product placement. In addition, it is also suggested that the content creators' description of the products in the video should be based on facts, so that audience who buy the products can feel the sincerity and reliability of the content creators. Although some brand marketers may require content creators to exaggerate the efficacy of the products in the video and to some degree, slight exaggeration is acceptable, content creators cannot ignore their moral obligation and clearly inform the brand marketers about their criteria of partnership. Otherwise, it will lead to the decline of followers' trust in the creator, and even a large number of followers to drop.

Secondly, it is suggested that the implanted advertisements should be consistent with the video content, which can greatly reduce the decline in the attraction of videos to audience caused by product placement. In addition, it is suggested that Bilibili content creators reduce the partnership with brands whose products don't conform to channels to which they belongs in Bilibili. For example, it is not recommended that content creators in beauty zone implant game related products.

Thirdly, before implanting products, it is suggested that creators try and use the products, thus having a deep understanding of the products. Because showing how creators understand the products in the videos helps demonstrating their sincerity and rigorousness, thus increasing audience trust in them. For example, Shinyin, Bilibili

content creator with 1.34 million followers, stated that once an online shopping platform seeks for commercial cooperation with her, she privately bought a product on this platform and compared it with the sample sent by the brand to see whether the logistics speed and product quality are consistent. Furthermore, content creators can actively interact with audience who buy the products in the comment area below the video, for instance, actively answering audience questions about the products.

5.2 For Brand Marketers

Firstly, guaranteeing content creators' creative control of the video is very significant. Under the condition that the creators' introduction to the products is complete and accurate, brands' marketers are suggested to give content creators as much as freedom as possible to select their own language to introduce the products so as to maintain their styles in the video and ensure audience's good impressions after of watching. Therefore, the audience's likeability to the videos and thus, the products will increase.

Secondly, when seeking for content creators for cooperation, it is recommended that brands' marketers should select creators whose features and channels matches with the products they want to promote. If budget permits, marketers can choose multi-channel networks (MCNs), entities that works with multiple channels and content creators, consulting or assisting towards success on streaming video platforms such as YouTube, to help them find the content creators who are the most suitable for their products.

Thirdly, if possible, brand marketers' can also seek commercial cooperation with content creators who have ever used the products in their videos like "good things sharing". Since the content creators have ever recommended the products in their past videos, it seems

more credible and reliable for them to recommend these products again. In general, since content creators have used the products, they learn more about the products. For example, Baojiansao, a Bilibili content creator in beauty channel with 3.38 million followers, once recommended a lipstick of a certain brand in previous videos, and then the brand marketer seek her for cooperation.

6 CONCLUSION

This study examines whether content authenticity, content congruity, and SMIs' product involvement are negatively correlated with Bilibili users' negative attitude towards product placement, and whether SMIs' product involvement are positively correlated with content authenticity and content congruity. We conclude that increasing Bilibili content creators' content authenticity, congruity and product involvement can increase the users' acceptance of the product placement, and increasing SMIs' product involvement help improve content authenticity and content congruity. We also explores the concept of content congruity of videos with product placement in social media and contributes a measurement scale for measuring the content congruity of videos with product placement in social media. Researchers can apply this measurement scale for their further research in studying content congruity of Bilibili and even other social networks. However, this study only investigate Bilibili users' attitude towards product placement, so further studies are recommended to investigate in different mobile social media in

order generalize the results which can be used for all social media influencers.

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