The Impact of Weibo Splash Advertisements on Brand Favorability

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Abstract: As a quintessential example of social media advertising, Weibo splash ads possess inherent advantages and garner significant attention from enterprises. However, the actual effectiveness of these advertisements, particularly their impact on brand favorability, remains highly uncertain. While there has been some general research on the influence of advertising on brand favorability, in-depth studies focusing specifically on Weibo splash ads are relatively scarce. This paper concentrates on Weibo splash ads, analyzing how factors such as the relevance of ad content to user interests, ad creativity, product appeal, alignment with brand philosophy, and ad frequency affect brand favorability. The analysis reveals that the relevance of ad content to user interests and the alignment with brand philosophy is positively correlated with brand favorability. In contrast, ad frequency shows a significant negative correlation with brand favorability. Based on these findings, this paper proposes the following recommendations: enterprises should optimize the content and creativity of Weibo splash ads, enhance the communication of brand philosophy, and reasonably control the frequency of advertisement (Ad) placements.

1 INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of mobile internet technology, the popularity of smartphones and other mobile terminal devices in people's lives has been increasing. People are increasingly relying on various mobile applications (APPs) for accessing information, social interaction, and entertainment consumption. In this context, the advertising industry has also ushered in a new development landscape, with advertising placements gradually shifting from traditional offline media and web-based platforms to mobile platforms, characterized by ubiquitous and diverse forms (Zhang, 2022).

As an extremely common and representative form of mobile advertising, splash ads appear on the launch interface of almost all popular apps. Leveraging the characteristic of forced exposure, splash ads can capture users' visual attention when they open an APP, offering a high exposure rate advantage that other ad placements can hardly match (Shi, 2023). Weibo, one of the most influential social media platforms in China today, boasts a massive user base. Within Weibo's commercial operation system, splash ads occupy a pivotal position (Xiong, 2021). However, despite the inherent advantages of Weibo splash ads and the high level of attention they receive from enterprises, there remains significant

uncertainty regarding their actual advertising effectiveness, particularly their impact on brand favorability (Shi, 2023). Different ad content, creative expressions, and placement frequencies can lead to vastly different emotional attitudes among consumers toward the brands, thereby affecting the critical metric of brand favorability (Quesenberry, 2020). Although there has been some general research on the impact of advertising on brand favorability, in-depth studies focusing specifically on the relationship between Weibo splash ads and brand favorability in this particular context are relatively scarce. Therefore, to better leverage the marketing value of Weibo splash ads, assist enterprises in formulating more precise and effective brand marketing strategies, and enhance user experience when encountering splash ads, it is particularly necessary to conduct a thorough and systematic study on the intrinsic relationship between Weibo splash ads and brand favorability, as well as the influencing factors. This research focuses on Weibo, a highly influential social media platform in China, and takes its vast user base as the research subject to delve into the intrinsic connection between Weibo splash ads and brand favorability.

2 METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a variety of research methods to ensure its comprehensiveness, scientific rigor, and reliability.

Based on a review of existing literature, this study adopts a questionnaire survey method to collect primary data. The questionnaire covers users' basic information, such as gender, age, and occupation, to understand the exposure of different user groups to Weibo splash ads. The survey focuses on users' perceptions and evaluations of key factors, including the relevance of ad content to their interests, ad creativity, product appeal, alignment with brand philosophy, and ad frequency. It also explores users' awareness of the advertised brands, changes in brand favorability, and purchase intentions. By distributing the questionnaire, rich and representative data were collected to accurately reflect users' views and reactions to Weibo splash ads, providing robust data support for subsequent empirical analysis.

Additionally, this study uses statistical analysis software to rigorously process the data collected from the questionnaire. First, descriptive statistical analysis is conducted to visually present the distribution characteristics of the data and understand the overall profile of the sample. Second, correlation analysis is employed to explore preliminary relationships among variables, identify key influencing factors, test research hypotheses, and reveal the underlying logical connections between Weibo splash ads and brand favorability. This provides strong evidence for drawing research conclusions and offers scientific guidance for formulating practical strategies.

2.2 Variable Selection

After reviewing relevant literature, this study selects five independent variables: the relevance of ad content to user interests, ad creativity, product or service appeal, alignment with brand philosophy, and ad frequency. Brand favorability is chosen as the dependent variable to explore their correlations. The following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: The higher the relevance of ad content to user interests, the higher the brand favorability.

H2: The more creative the ad, the higher the brand favorability.

H3: The stronger the appeal of the advertised product or service, the higher the brand favorability.

H4: The greater the alignment between the brand philosophy conveyed in the ad and user values, the higher the brand favorability.

H5: The higher the ad frequency, the lower the brand favorability.

2.3 Questionnaire Distribution and Collection

Based on a review of relevant literature, the questionnaire was designed and divided into four sections: user demographics, perception of Weibo splash ad frequency, Weibo splash ads and user interests and behaviors, and the impact of Weibo splash ads on brand favorability. After finalizing the design, the questionnaire was distributed via the SoJump platform, and a total of 166 valid responses were collected.

3 RESULT

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

The study used SPSS 26.0 data analysis software to conduct descriptive statistics on the collected data. The results are as follows:

The gender distribution of respondents was relatively balanced, with males accounting for 46.94% and females accounting for 53.06%. The age of respondents was mainly evenly distributed between 18 and 45 years old, and their occupations covered various groups such as students and corporate employees, demonstrating a certain level of representativeness.

The data shows that most respondents noticed splash ads, with 63.27% of users indicating that they "always" notice splash ads, 26.53% stating that they notice them "most of the time," and only 10.2% reporting that they "occasionally" pay attention. This indicates that splash ads have relatively good exposure and attention-grabbing effects. However, there is some divergence in respondents' perceptions of the frequency of splash ads. Specifically, 63.27% of users felt that splash ads appear "somewhat frequently," and 12.24% considered them "too frequent", suggesting that most users have negative feelings about the frequency of splash ads. In contrast, 18.37% of users believed the frequency was "not too frequent," and only 6.12% considered it "moderate." These results indicate that while splash ads can attract significant attention, their high frequency may negatively impact user experience.

Advertisers may need to find a better balance between exposure frequency and user experience.

3.2 Correlation Analysis

Since some data did not meet the assumption of normal distribution, this study chose the Spearman rank correlation coefficient to measure the correlations between variables. This method does not rely on the assumption of normal distribution and can more robustly assess monotonic relationships between variables.

3.2.1 Interest Relevance and Brand Favorability

As shown in Table 1, the data indicates a significant positive correlation between brand favorability and interest relevance (correlation coefficient of 0.577, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that the degree of alignment between ad content and user interests has a substantial impact on enhancing brand favorability, supporting the validity of Hypothesis H1.

Table 1. Correlation results between brand favorability and interest relevance.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Brand Favorability	Interest Relevance of Ad Content
Brand Favorability	3.776	0.872	1	
Interest Relevance of Ad Content	3.653	1.091	0.577**	1

From the mean and standard deviation values, the average brand favorability score is 3.776 with a standard deviation of 0.872, indicating that users generally have a relatively high level of brand favorability, and the data distribution is relatively concentrated. The average score for interest relevance is 3.653 with a standard deviation of 1.091, showing a more dispersed distribution. This reflects significant variability in users' evaluations of the relevance of ads to their interests.

In conclusion, improving the relevance of ad content to user interests can effectively enhance brand favorability. However, when optimizing ad content, it is also essential to consider the diverse interest preferences of different users to mitigate the impact of individual differences on advertising effectiveness.

3.2.2 Novelty of Ad Creativity and Brand Favorability

As shown in Table 2, the data reveals a significant positive correlation between brand favorability and novelty of ad creativity (correlation coefficient of 0.542, $p < 0.01$), indicating that the novelty of ad creativity has a significant impact on enhancing brand favorability, thus supporting Hypothesis H2.

Table 2. Correlation results between brand favorability and novelty of ad creativity.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Brand Favorability	Novelty of Ad Creativity
Brand Favorability	3.776	0.872	1	
Novelty of Ad Creativity	0.653	0.481	0.542**	1

From the mean and standard deviation values, the average brand favorability score is 3.776 with a standard deviation of 0.872, suggesting that users generally have a relatively high level of brand favorability, and the data distribution is relatively concentrated. The average score for creativity novelty is 0.653 with a standard deviation of 0.481, indicating some variability in users' evaluations of creativity. This variability may arise from differences in individuals' understanding and interest in ad creativity.

Overall, enhancing the novelty of ad creativity can effectively increase brand appeal and favorability. However, during the design process, it is essential to balance creative style with the acceptance level of the target audience to achieve optimal communication outcomes.

3.2.3 Product/Service Appeal and Brand Favorability

As shown in Table 3, the data reveals a significant positive correlation between product/service appeal and brand favorability (correlation coefficient of 0.489, $p < 0.01$), indicating that the appeal of products or services plays an important role in enhancing brand favorability, thus supporting Hypothesis H3.

Table 3. Correlation results between product/service appeal and brand favorability.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Product/Service Appeal	Brand Favorability
Product/Service Appeal	0.633	0.487	1	
Brand Favorability	3.776	0.872	0.489**	1

From the mean and standard deviation values, the average brand favorability score is 3.776 with a standard deviation of 0.872, suggesting that users generally have a relatively high level of brand favorability, and the data distribution is relatively concentrated. On the other hand, the average score for product/service appeal is 0.633 with a standard deviation of 0.487, indicating that users' evaluations of product/service appeal are relatively low and more dispersed. This reflects significant variability in how different users perceive the appeal of products or services.

Overall, the improvement of brand favorability is closely related to the appeal of products or services. Optimizing the quality and features of products or services and enhancing their appeal to users are effective ways to further elevate brand image and user favorability. At the same time, differentiated product design and precise marketing strategies tailored to the diverse needs of users are crucial to meet the expectations and demands of different user groups.

3.2.4 Brand Philostrophy Alignment and Brand Favorability

As shown in Table 4, the data reveals a significant positive correlation between brand favorability and philosophy alignment (correlation coefficient of 0.472, p < 0.01), indicating that the alignment of brand philosophy with user values has a substantial impact on enhancing brand favorability, thus supporting Hypothesis H4.

Table 4. Correlation results between brand favorability and philosophy alignment.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Brand Favorability	Philosophy Alignment
Brand Favorability	3.776	0.872	1	
Philosophy Alignment	0.408	0.497	0.472**	1

From the mean and standard deviation values, the average brand favorability score is 3.776 with a

standard deviation of 0.872, suggesting that users generally have a relatively high level of brand favorability, and the data distribution is relatively concentrated. On the other hand, the average score for philosophy alignment is 0.408 with a standard deviation of 0.497, indicating that users' evaluations of brand philosophy alignment are relatively low and more dispersed. This may be attributed to differences in how users perceive and identify with the brand philosophy.

Overall, philosophy alignment plays a positive role in enhancing brand favorability. Brands need to establish resonance with the values of their target user groups through clear value propositions and precise communication strategies. Additionally, further optimizing the way brand philosophy is communicated, so that more users can perceive the brand's values and essence, will help elevate the overall brand image and user loyalty.

3.2.5 Ad Frequency and Brand Favorability

As shown in Table 5, the data reveals a significant negative correlation between brand favorability and ad frequency (correlation coefficient of -0.546, p < 0.01), indicating that the higher the frequency of ad exposure, the lower the users' favorability toward the brand, thus supporting Hypothesis H5.

Table 5. Correlation results between brand favorability and ad frequency.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Brand Favorability	Ad Frequency
Brand Favorability	3.776	0.872	1	
Ad Frequency	2.306	0.918	-0.546**	1

From the mean and standard deviation values, the average brand favorability score is 3.776 with a standard deviation of 0.872, suggesting that users generally have a relatively high level of brand favorability, and the data distribution is relatively concentrated. On the other hand, the average score for ad frequency is 2.306 with a standard deviation of 0.918, indicating that users generally perceive the frequency of ads as relatively high, with some variability in their evaluations.

This result reflects that excessive ad frequency may negatively impact brand favorability, as users may feel annoyed or even develop resistance toward the brand due to frequent ad exposure. Therefore, brands need to reasonably control ad frequency

during advertising campaigns to avoid compromising user experience and brand image caused by overexposure. Additionally, improving the quality of ad content and adopting precise targeting strategies can help mitigate the adverse effects of high-frequency ads on users, thereby more effectively enhancing brand favorability.

4 SUGGESTION

4.1 Optimizing Ad Content and Creativity

Data results indicated that brand favorability has shown significant positive relations with interest relevance, creativity novelty, and appeal of products and services. Therefore, it is very crucial for brands to optimize advertisement content and creativity when launching Weibo splash ads. Brands should go deep into the interest preference of the target audience and leverage technologies like big data analysis and user profiling to accurately identify the focus points of different user groups (Keller & Brexendorf, 2019). For instance, for young fashion and beauty enthusiasts, the brand can design ads featuring seasonal makeup tutorials. As for tech enthusiasts, the brand can create ads for electronic products in the form of new product launches to explain the latest technological highlights, which raise users' curiosity and desire to explore, hence aligning advertisements with audience interests closely (West et al., 2019).

On brand advertisement creativity, they have to abandon the rigid, didactic convention and instead focus on emotional resonance and interactiveness. As exemplified, narrating the stories of ordinary people's struggles and dreams can create an emotional bond with viewers and hence plant important brand values deep into their minds (West et al., 2019). Second, interactive advertisements can be designed by brands, which may ask users to participate in some activities such as lucky draws, coupons, or free trials to enhance the interactive engagement and fun factor for the users (Rosengren et al., 2020). By making advertisements more creative, brands will be able to grasp users' attention, encourage sharing, and ultimately choose their brand.

4.2 Strengthening Brand Philosophy Communication

The results also show a strong positive correlation in the data between brand favorability and philosophy alignment. Therefore, a splash ad should reflect the core value and unique identity of a brand, which can build a deep spiritual connection with its target users (McManus et al., 2022). For brands with an environmental protection philosophy, this ad visual could reveal how a series of eco-friendly processes are involved in the production process, from the sourcing of renewable materials to the use of clean energy and recycling programs for used products, thus resonating strongly with eco-conscious users. Nevertheless, for heritage brands, there should be a showcasing of cultural heritage through narratives of hundred-of-year stories that recall consumers' love towards the traditional culture and reminiscence, thereby transforming this brand into a culturally representative symbol by sharing the value and identity that is attached.

4.3 Rational Control of Ad Frequency

The data results reveal a significant negative correlation between brand favorability and ad frequency. Therefore, brands should scientifically plan their ad placement strategy based on Weibo platform traffic data, user activity periods, and the usage habits of their target audience (Chen., 2023). Brands can leverage Weibo's backend data analysis tools to monitor the frequency and duration of user app openings during different periods, identifying peak, low, and stable traffic periods. During peak traffic, when users are very active and have high browsing intent, brands can increase the frequency of high-quality ad placements. However, they should avoid showing the same ad to the same user repeatedly within a short period to avoid visual fatigue (Pleyers & Vermeulen, 2021). During low traffic, brands should reduce ad placements to maintain moderate brand exposure. Second, it can also be used for personalized ad delivery by brands through intelligent algorithms. Based on the historical browsing and interaction behavior of users, the brand can develop different interest-based user customization in advertising displays. For example, sport-loving people can receive higher frequency brand promotions during a sports season, which would otherwise be reduced in frequency during a nonsports period. By precisely controlling ad frequency, brands can maximize ad effectiveness, enhance brand favorability, and avoid user annoyance caused by overexposure, thus fostering harmonious interactions between the brand and its users (Guitart et al., 2021).

5   CONCLUSION

This study employs questionnaire surveys and data analysis methods to explore the impact mechanisms of various factors in Weibo splash ads on brand favorability. The relevance of ad content to user interests emerges as a critical factor, showing a significant positive correlation with brand favorability. Ad creativity, with its novel and unique designs, easily evokes emotional resonance among users, effectively driving an increase in brand favorability. Product appeal encompasses both perceived utility and quality appearance, with these two aspects complementing each other to strongly contribute to the construction of brand favorability. Brand philosophy alignment involves the recognition of shared values and the matching of brand personality. When a brand's philosophy, such as environmental protection or cultural heritage, deeply resonates with users, or when the brand's personality accurately attracts the target audience--such as eco-friendly brands resonating with environmentally conscious users--it significantly enhances user favorability toward the brand. Ad frequency follows the exposure effect: moderate exposure increases familiarity and boosts favorability, while overexposure can lead to annoyance and damage brand image. Therefore, rationally controlling ad frequency is particularly crucial.

In summary, these factors are interconnected and interact with each other, collectively shaping users' favorability toward the brand. Among them, the relevance of ad content to user interests and brand philosophy alignment occupy central positions in the brand marketing process, serving as key focal points for businesses to win user favor.

While this study sheds light on the mechanisms through which Weibo splash ads influence brand favorability, it has certain limitations. For example, although key factors such as ad content, creativity, product appeal, brand philosophy, and ad frequency were considered in the analysis, real-world factors affecting brand favorability are far more complex.

Future research can be expanded and deepened across multiple dimensions. Firstly, in terms of research methods, studies can move beyond the limitations of single-method questionnaire surveys and empirical analysis by introducing more diversified approaches. Secondly, in terms of research scope, studies can be extended horizontally to include multi-platform comparisons. Thirdly, attention should be given to dynamic factors. Research can explore how splash ads align with emerging consumer trends and new consumption demands.

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