

A Study on Product Placement in DeWu App's Social Media Advertising: Types, Forms, and Influence Mechanisms

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Abstract:

With the development of social media, advertising placement has gradually become a crucial method in brand marketing. Traditional hard advertisements, due to their rigid format, are increasingly likely to be ignored or even met with aversion by users. In contrast, feed-based ads and soft placements, valued for their natural integration and non-intrusive browsing experience, are gaining greater favor among users. This paper examines the DeWu App, focusing on its advertising placement methods and dissemination effects across social media platforms like Xiaohongshu and Douyin. The research combines case analysis with literature review, comparing Nike's film placements and Heytea's Xiaohongshu promotions while integrating studies on user acceptance. Findings reveal that the DeWu App predominantly employs storytelling and short-video formats for its advertisements. This approach reduces user resistance to ads while enhancing brand identification and emotional resonance. Such advertising not only boosts user trust but also significantly increases purchase intent and conversion rates. Overall, these insights hold valuable reference and promotional significance for future digital advertising strategy development, user relationship management, and new media marketing practices.

Keywords: DeWu App; social media advertising; ad placement; user trust; digital marketing

1. Introduction

In recent years, social media has become a primary channel for young people to access information and communicate, its influence far surpassing traditional mass media. This shift has brought rapid changes in advertising dissemination methods. Traditional TV

commercials and hard-sell ads, characterized by rigid formats and poor alignment with user needs, are experiencing declining effectiveness as audience acceptance and attention wane. In contrast, soft advertising integrated into content, feed ads, and product placements has gained prominence [1]. These formats em-

bed themselves more naturally into users' daily life scenarios and interest communities, reducing intrusiveness and resistance while enhancing communication effectiveness and user acceptance. Against this backdrop, DeWu App—a rising domestic fashion e-commerce platform—targets primarily young consumers, especially Gen Z users who prioritize personalization and social interaction. To align with this demographic's media consumption habits, DeWu heavily relies on social media ad placements for promotion. Specifically, it leverages influencer shares and short video displays on platforms like Xiaohongshu and Douyin to attract users [2]. These ad formats often appear as ordinary content, seamlessly integrating into users' daily browsing and social interactions. This subtly influences their consumption choices and brand perceptions. Based on this context, this paper will examine DeWu App's advertising placements, focusing on answering the following questions: First, what types and characteristics do DeWu App's social media advertising placements exhibit? Second, how do these formats reduce user resistance through storytelling and short durations? Third, how does this advertising approach ultimately influence user trust and purchase intent? By analyzing these questions, this research not only deepens understanding of soft advertising mechanisms but also offers insights for future brand digital marketing [3].

2. Types of Social Media Advertising and Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Types and Characteristics of Product Placement

Within the digital media landscape, advertising integration has become increasingly diverse. Broadly, these formats can be categorized into soft placements, hard advertisements, interactive ads, and short-form video ads.

First, feed ads and soft placements have become mainstream formats on social media in recent years. Feed ads typically blend seamlessly with users' browsing content, appearing within their news feeds and being difficult to skip [4]. Soft placements emphasize subtle influence, achieving promotion through content sharing or contextual display rather than forced playback. Characterized by natural storytelling, these ads reduce user resistance and align with social media's "content-as-communication" logic.

In contrast, hard-sell ads and interactive ads exist. Hard-sell ads, such as splash screen ads and pre-roll video ads, represent forced exposure marketing that often provokes user resentment. Interactive ads, however, enhance user engagement through mini-games, task check-ins, or challenge topics, better aligning with the preferences of younger user demographics [5]. These ads leverage social mechanisms to establish two-way connections between users and brands, thereby generating organic spread with-

in communities.

Furthermore, short-form video ads have emerged as a significant communication format on platforms like Douyin and Kuaishou. Characterized by brevity and conciseness, these ads often integrate with entertainment content, allowing users to absorb advertising messages in a relaxed atmosphere [6]. Their core feature is "entertainment-based integration," achieving brand recall and consumption guidance through audiovisual enjoyment.

2.2 Types and Implementation Mechanisms of Social Media Advertising

Taking the DeWu App as an example, its advertisements primarily encompass three types: content-based ads, interactive ads, and algorithm-recommended ads. These types do not exist in isolation within the social media context but are interwoven through technological logic and user psychological mechanisms.

First, content-based ads embody the "advertising as content" philosophy. DeWu App blends UGC (user-generated content) with PGC (professionally generated content), seamlessly integrating brand messages into posts, reviews, and outfit videos, thereby merging advertisements with the community's organic flow. For instance, brands invite KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders) to post outfit videos or sneaker reviews within the DeWu community. While appearing as personal shares, these posts serve brand promotion functions. This "soft advertising" aligns with social media's dissemination characteristics, reducing user resistance.

Second, interactive ads leverage social features to boost user engagement through comment interactions, task check-ins, and event giveaways. At its core, interactive advertising is relationship-based communication, harnessing social network effects to create two-way connections between brands and users. For instance, when promoting collaborative sneaker releases, the DeWu app encourages users to share photos, participate in hashtag challenges, and generate organic viral chains within the community.

Third, algorithmic recommendation ads represent the technological core of social media advertising. DeWu employs big data and interest tags to precisely deliver ads to potential users, achieving personalized content distribution. Algorithms not only infer interests based on behavioral data like browsing history and dwell time but also predict latent needs through associated purchase records. This precision matching boosts ad click-through and conversion rates, though it simultaneously sparks debates about user privacy and information silos.

2.3 Theoretical Foundation Analysis

Theoretically, social media advertising embodies the convergence of the "attention economy" and "participatory culture." The attention economy theory emphasizes the scarcity of user attention, requiring advertisers to capture and sustain it through content innovation and algorithmic

optimization. Participatory culture theory posits that users are no longer passive recipients but active participants in the advertising chain.

DeWu App's advertising practices exemplify this dual approach: brands capture attention through soft content, stimulate user engagement via interactive mechanisms, and achieve precise dissemination through algorithmic recommendations. Ultimately, advertisements become integrated into social conversations, enabling users to unconsciously complete information dissemination and emotional identification.

3. Practices and Characteristics of DeWu App's Advertising Integration

DeWu App's advertising on social media platforms primarily exhibits diversified and integrated dissemination methods. Its main advertising formats include three categories:

- (1) Influencer Notes: Showcase DeWu products on Xiaohongshu through fashion influencers' outfit notes.
- (2) Short Video Recommendations: On Douyin, showcase the DeWu app experience through short, story-driven videos.
- (3) Hashtag Challenges: Encourage users to create original content through trending topics or challenges, fostering secondary dissemination.

DeWu's ad placements are seamlessly integrated into content, avoiding disruption to the viewing experience. Users often perceive them not as advertisements but as actively sought information [7]. Forced ad playback leads to skipping or aversion, whereas DeWu's content-embedded approach lowers psychological barriers and mitigates ad resistance [8].

A comprehensive analysis reveals three key characteristics of DeWu's ad integration: content fusion, social contextualization, and cultural symbolism. Regarding content integration, DeWu's ads frequently appear as product reviews, unboxing videos, or personal stories, minimizing commercial overtones. For instance, a fashion influencer might post a "Top 3 Sneaker Collection" video featuring a brand's new shoe models. Without explicit advertising labels, users naturally absorb brand exposure through organic content, merging "content consumption" with "advertising consumption."

Social contextualization is a key feature distinguishing Dewu from traditional e-commerce platforms. When ads are presented within authentic scenarios, users more readily identify with them, fostering brand trust. For instance, influencers' genuine experience-sharing is perceived as more credible. Within Dewu's community, topics like "#Today's Outfit Challenge#" and "# Blind Box Unboxing" become vital carriers for brand advertising. Users participate in discussions, like and share posts, and amplifying advertising messages through social interactions. Advertising is no longer a one-way information channel but an integral part of user engagement, achieving deep

integration between marketing and community culture.

Cultural symbolism manifests as brands deeply aligning with trend-driven culture and identity. Elements like limited editions, collaborations, and streetwear brands frequently featured in DeWu ads transcend mere consumer goods, becoming expressions of symbolic meaning. These ads not only help users remember products but also foster a "trend-driven sense of belonging" among young audiences, driving purchases. Research indicates such ads convert to actual consumption more effectively than hard-sell ads. For example, in the NIKE x DeWu collaboration promotion, the platform invited multiple sneaker collectors to film short videos sharing "the story of their first pair of sneakers." By using emotional storytelling, the ad strengthened brand identification, enabling consumers to make purchase decisions through "story resonance."

4. Comparative Case Analysis: Dewu vs. Xiaohongshu Advertising Strategies

Compared to Dewu, Xiaohongshu focuses more on lifestyle-oriented soft marketing. Their differences mainly appear in content positioning, interaction models, and algorithmic logic.

In terms of content positioning, Xiaohongshu emphasizes "authentic sharing" in areas such as beauty and fashion, while Dewu focuses on street culture, rarity, and authenticity. Dewu's ads highlight limited editions and professional authentication, creating urgency and differentiation to stimulate purchase intent. Regarding interaction models, Xiaohongshu relies on reviews and "planting notes" to drive word-of-mouth communication. In contrast, Dewu integrates shopping links and product verification functions directly into the ads—bridging content engagement with instant transaction conversion. In algorithmic logic, Dewu's algorithm prioritizes "purchase potential," whereas Xiaohongshu emphasizes "content quality" and "interest relevance." As a result, Dewu's advertisements are more commercially oriented, while Xiaohongshu's prioritize community trust.

Overall, Dewu's advertising model is more business-driven and precise but also more likely to face skepticism about excessive commercialization. Balancing commercial goals with community authenticity remains a key challenge for Dewu's sustainable growth.

5. User Psychology and Trust Mechanisms

The ultimate goal of advertising is to influence user psychology and drive purchasing behavior. Dewu's advertising effectiveness relies heavily on its "trust mechanism," which stems from platform trust, content trust, and social trust.

First, platform trust is built upon Dewu's "authenticity verification system." By emphasizing anti-counterfeit

tracing and third-party authentication, Dewu establishes a structural foundation of trust that underpins its advertising credibility. Second, content trust arises from the perceived authenticity between users and influencers. When ads appear as genuine experience sharing—such as real outfit effects or product details—users are more receptive and emotionally engaged. Third, social trust develops through community interaction. Likes, comments, and shares act as both social validation and algorithmic reinforcement. Highly interactive posts gain more visibility, creating a cycle of “trust → dissemination → conversion.”

This model reveals that modern advertising effectiveness relies less on persuasion and more on empathy. Users are no longer passive recipients but active participants in meaning-making through cultural and social identification.

6. The Social Impact and Potential Problems of Advertising

Although Dewu’s advertising strategy has achieved remarkable commercial success, several social concerns arise. First, consumerism intensification. Through algorithms and community trends, Dewu constantly creates feelings of scarcity and novelty, prompting repeated consumption. This can lead young people into symbolic consumption cycles—equating identity with brands. Second, privacy and data security. Algorithmic recommendation depends on deep data collection. Users are often unaware that personal preferences, behaviors, and even locations are monetized for targeted advertising. Third, commercialization of community culture. The growing number of ads risks diluting genuine sharing, leading some users to perceive the platform as overly commercialized. This “de-contenting” effect may weaken user loyalty and community authenticity. Moreover, Dewu’s ad culture subtly reshapes youth values. By reinforcing the notion that consumption equals self-expression, it risks promoting materialistic tendencies while neglecting rational and sustainable consumption awareness. Thus, Dewu must balance commercialization with community ecology, strengthen privacy protection, and integrate sustainable consumption concepts to ensure that its advertising development remains socially responsible.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of Dewu App’s advertising placement reveals that social media advertising is evolving from “information delivery” to “relationship building.” Through the integration of content, social interaction, and algorithmic precision, Dewu transforms advertising into a medium of cultural expression and identity formation. Its success depends not only on technology but also on the authenticity and resonance it creates among users. From a communication mechanism perspective, Dewu combines “technologi-

cal logic” with “cultural logic.” While algorithms and data analytics ensure accuracy, storytelling and community participation generate emotional engagement. This dual structure forms the foundation of Dewu’s strong conversion efficiency and exemplifies the direction of future social media advertising. From a psychological perspective, trust remains the central factor. Dewu’s multi-layered trust system—comprising institutional, emotional, and social dimensions—reduces consumer skepticism and merges advertising seamlessly with user experience.

Nevertheless, Dewu’s model exposes certain risks. Overreliance on algorithms may trap users within information cocoons, while excessive commercialization could erode community authenticity. Maintaining transparency and ethical responsibility is essential for sustainable growth. Looking forward, Dewu’s experience provides valuable lessons for digital marketing. Future social media advertising should balance precision and warmth—leveraging data for targeting while upholding human values and cultural depth. Encouraging user participation and co-creation will transform consumers from passive viewers into active contributors, shifting advertising from “exposure” to “engagement.”

In conclusion, Dewu App’s advertising practice demonstrates that the digital era’s advertising paradigm is shifting toward user-centered, empathetic communication. Sustainable, transparent, and socially responsible strategies will define the future of digital advertising—achieving harmony between commercial value and social well-being.

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