

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SOFT-SELL AND HARD-SELL ADVERTISING FORMATS ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR ON DOUYIN: A STUDY OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR MARKETERS



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Abstract

This study aims to explore the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior on the Douyin platform and propose effective communication strategies. The research focuses on Douyin users and employs a quantitative research method, collecting feedback data from 400 active users through online questionnaires. Statistical methods such as regression analysis, correlation analysis, and paired sample tests are used to validate the hypotheses. The scope of the study covers consumer engagement with advertisements, purchase decisions, acceptance, and preferences, while incorporating theoretical models (e.g., the Elaboration Likelihood Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior) to analyze the differential effects of advertising strategies.

The findings reveal that soft-sell advertising significantly enhances consumer engagement through emotional storytelling and brand value transmission (β =0.952, p<0.01), particularly excelling in building long-term brand trust and fostering social interactions. In contrast, hard-sell advertising is more effective in driving immediate purchase decisions by providing direct product information and time-limited offers (β =0.859, p<0.01). However, consumer acceptance of hard-sell advertising is relatively low, as its intrusive nature often leads to ad-skipping behavior (mean=3.33). It is recommended that marketers flexibly utilize both advertising formats based on product characteristics and consumption scenarios: establishing emotional connections through soft-sell advertising in the initial stages and promoting conversions with hard-sell advertising in later stages, while leveraging Douyin's interactive features to enhance user participation. Future research could expand to cross-platform and cross-cultural analyses to optimize the universality and precision of advertising strategies.

(Total 104 pages)

Keywords: Soft-sell Advertising, Hard-sell Advertising, Consumer Behavior, Douyin, Social Media Marketing

Student's SignatureThesis Advisor's Signature

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The global business landscape is increasingly shifting towards digital marketing as technological advancements drive change. Digital marketing involves promoting products or services through digital technologies, primarily the internet, but also mobile devices, display ads, and other digital media. As digital platforms become more embedded in everyday life and marketing strategies, their effectiveness grows, with more consumers using digital devices over physical stores (Dašić, Vučić, Turčinović, & Tošić, 2023). The scope of digital marketing has expanded from early forms like MMS and website banner ads to more sophisticated formats such as short video ads. This evolution has allowed major companies and brands to realize significant benefits, including improved marketing efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Compared to traditional methods, digital marketing is more economical and offers precise targeting of customer demographics (Homburg & Wielgos, 2022). The emergence of diverse social media platforms has accelerated the speed and variety of information dissemination, allowing businesses to engage directly with consumers. Social media's increasing use as a marketing platform has led organizations to invest heavily in social media advertising (Alalwan, 2018). The digital age has transformed consumer behavior, enabling businesses to better understand and meet consumer needs through interactive and content-driven marketing on social media platforms (Abashidze, 2023; Liu, 2024). Social media also influences consumer choices and market trends through information and public opinion (Ausat & Abu, 2023).

Douyin, or Chinese TikTok, is a highly influential social media platform developed by ByteDance. Launched in September 2016, Douyin's user base in China rapidly surpassed 600 million daily active users by August 2020 (ByteDance, 2023),

and its influence continues to grow. Initially popular among young people, Douyin now attracts users across all age groups. Older users are increasingly engaging with content related to health care, travel, and traditional culture. The international version of Douyin, TikTok, has further amplified its global reach, fostering cross-cultural exchanges and diversifying its user base. Douyin offers unique features that make it a valuable marketing tool for businesses. The "Hashtag challenge function," for example, encourages user-generated content and brand engagement by inviting users to create content around specific hashtags. For instance, a brand might launch a hashtag challenge like "#climbing with XX together," prompting users to upload climbing videos, thereby increasing the brand's visibility and engagement. Douyin's creator marketing platform, Doustar, allows businesses to collaborate with key opinion leaders and multi-channel network institutions, facilitating effective partnerships and content creation. Additionally, Douyin's live broadcast function integrates e-commerce by allowing viewers to purchase products directly during live streams, enhancing product promotion (Verot, 2023).

Advertising theory does not clearly differentiate between hard-sell and soft-sell advertising, though these terms have been used in the industry since the early 20th century (Bendinger, 2002). Soft-sell advertising focuses on creating an emotional connection through appealing visuals and stories, emphasizing brand image over direct product appeals. In contrast, hard-sell advertising is more direct, highlighting product features and benefits and often comparing with competitors. The effectiveness of these approaches can vary based on cultural and economic contexts. During economic downturns, hard-sell tactics may be preferred for their direct impact on sales, while in prosperous times, soft-sell methods might be more effective for brand building (Okazaki, Mueller, & Taylor, 2010).

Douyin's diverse short video content spans various genres such as food, travel, beauty, and technology, catering to different user interests. This diversity allows for precise targeting in marketing efforts. Douyin provides creators with various tools and monetization options, which has led to a wealth of high-quality content that enhances the platform's vitality and offers more marketing opportunities. The platform's

advanced recommendation algorithm ensures relevant content reaches users based on their interests and behavior, improving brand engagement. Additionally, Douyin's video capture and editing features are continually refined, lowering the barrier to content creation and increasing user participation (Li, 2018). Evaluating different advertising formats on Douyin can reveal which methods best meet specific marketing goals and audience needs. By analyzing ad performance, advertisers can optimize their strategies for better click-through rates, conversion rates, and sales. Misalignment with user preferences can lead to negative brand impressions, so understanding user feedback is crucial for tailoring ad content (Chen, 2022). Soft-sell ads on Douyin engage users with compelling content that subtly promotes products, fostering a deeper emotional connection and expanding brand reach. Conversely, hard-sell ads are more direct, potentially facing user resistance and platform restrictions but offering immediate sales opportunities (Ren, 2019; Wei, 2019).

The significance of studying advertising formats lies in understanding their impact on consumer engagement and brand perception. Soft-sell ads, with their focus on creative and emotional content, can shape a positive brand image and influence consumer attitudes. Hard-sell ads, while potentially generating immediate sales, may need to balance directness with consumer acceptance. The increasing homogeneity of brands and the rapid dissemination of information across platforms heighten the need for effective advertising strategies on platforms like Douyin (Tao & Ge, 2022). Marketers must tailor their approaches to align with consumer preferences, employing a mix of soft-sell and hard-sell techniques to enhance brand positioning and consumer satisfaction.

In conclusion, digital marketing, particularly on platforms like Douyin, is reshaping brand-consumer interactions by offering new, interactive, and personalized experiences. Research on soft-sell and hard-sell advertising techniques provides insights into optimizing marketing strategies and enhancing consumer engagement. Understanding the unique advantages of Douyin and integrating multi-platform strategies can strengthen brand communication and improve marketing effectiveness. This study focuses on exploring the impact of advertising formats on consumer behavior

on Douyin, offering valuable insights for refining brand positioning and marketing success.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The significance of studying the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior, particularly on platforms like Douyin, is substantial. In an age where digital marketing has become the cornerstone of business strategies, understanding how different advertising approaches influence consumer behavior can provide marketers with the tools needed to craft more effective communication strategies. Douyin, as one of the most popular social media platforms in China, offers a unique environment where both soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats thrive. Given the platform's vast user base and the diversity of its content, it is crucial for marketers to determine which strategies are most effective in engaging consumers and driving conversions.

Digital marketing has transformed over the years, moving from traditional forms of advertising, such as banner ads and email marketing, to more dynamic approaches, including short videos and interactive content (Dašić et al., 2023). This evolution has resulted in greater marketing efficiency and cost- effectiveness, with businesses able to reach their target demographics more precisely than ever before (Homburg & Wielgos, 2022). As platforms like Douyin continue to grow in popularity, companies are investing heavily in digital advertising to engage with consumers more effectively. Research into advertising formats on Douyin can help companies better understand how to tailor their marketing efforts to appeal to specific consumer preferences.

One key element of digital marketing is the ability to deliver personalized content to users. Douyin's advanced recommendation algorithm ensures that users are shown content that aligns with their interests, making it easier for businesses to reach their intended audience (Li, 2018). By studying how consumers respond to different types of advertising on Douyin, businesses can optimize their content to improve

engagement and drive sales. The soft-sell approach, which focuses on building an emotional connection with the audience, has the potential to shape consumer attitudes toward a brand in a positive way (Okazaki et al., 2010). This method, which often emphasizes storytelling and appealing visuals, encourages consumers to develop a deeper connection with the brand over time. As a result, soft-sell advertising can be particularly effective in building long-term brand loyalty.

Conversely, the hard-sell approach is more direct and often focuses on the features and benefits of a product or service (Bendinger, 2002). While this method can generate immediate sales, it is important for marketers to strike a balance between promoting the product and maintaining consumer trust. In some cases, overly aggressive advertising can lead to resistance from consumers, who may perceive the brand as pushy or insincere (Ren, 2019). Understanding how consumers on Douyin react to these different approaches is essential for developing strategies that can drive conversions while maintaining a positive brand image.

Douyin, as a platform, provides marketers with a range of tools and features that make it easier to implement both soft-sell and hard-sell advertising strategies. For instance, Douyin's hashtag challenge feature allows brands to engage users through creative, user-generated content, which is often more aligned with soft-sell advertising. This type of engagement encourages consumers to interact with the brand in a more organic way, fostering a sense of community and participation (Verot, 2023). At the same time, Douyin's live broadcast function offers opportunities for more direct, hard-sell promotions, where users can purchase products in real-time during live streams. This integration of e-commerce with advertising allows for immediate sales opportunities, making it an effective tool for driving revenue.

The importance of understanding the impact of advertising formats on Douyin cannot be overstated. As the platform continues to grow and evolve, marketers need to stay ahead of trends and consumer preferences to remain competitive. Studying the effectiveness of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising on Douyin can provide valuable insights into what works best for different target audiences. For example, younger users

may respond more positively to soft-sell approaches that emphasize creativity and entertainment, while older users may prefer the straightforwardness of hard-sell tactics that focus on product features and benefits (Chen, 2022).

Moreover, the study of advertising formats on Douyin has broader implications for digital marketing as a whole. As more businesses shift their marketing efforts toward digital platforms, understanding how consumers engage with different types of advertising is critical. This research can help marketers develop more effective communication strategies that resonate with their audience and drive meaningful engagement. By analyzing consumer behavior on Douyin, businesses can identify trends and preferences that can inform their marketing decisions on other platforms as well.

In addition to the practical implications for businesses, the study of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on Douyin also contributes to the academic understanding of digital marketing. Advertising theory has long debated the effectiveness of different advertising strategies, with some arguing that soft-sell approaches are more effective in building long-term brand loyalty, while others believe that hard-sell tactics are better suited for generating immediate sales (Okazaki et al., 2010). By focusing on a platform like Douyin, this research can provide new insights into how these strategies work in the context of short-form video content and social media.

Furthermore, this study has the potential to inform future marketing strategies by identifying best practices for engaging with consumers on Douyin. As the platform continues to introduce new features and expand its user base, marketers will need to adapt their strategies to keep up with the changes. By understanding which advertising formats are most effective in different contexts, businesses can develop more targeted and personalized marketing campaigns that are better suited to the needs and preferences of their audience.

The significance of this study also extends to the broader digital marketing landscape. As social media platforms like Douyin become more central to marketing

efforts, businesses must understand how to navigate the complexities of digital advertising to remain competitive. The rapid dissemination of information on platforms like Douyin presents both opportunities and challenges for marketers. On the one hand, businesses can reach a large audience quickly and efficiently. On the other hand, the increased competition for consumer attention means that marketers must be more strategic in their approach. By studying the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising on consumer behavior, this research can provide valuable insights into how businesses can differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace.

In conclusion, the significance of studying the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior on Douyin lies in its potential to inform marketing strategies and improve business outcomes. As digital marketing continues to evolve, platforms like Douyin offer new opportunities for businesses to engage with consumers in creative and meaningful ways. By understanding how different advertising formats influence consumer behavior, businesses can optimize their marketing efforts to drive engagement, build brand loyalty, and increase sales. This research not only contributes to the academic understanding of digital marketing but also provides practical insights that can help businesses succeed in an increasingly competitive landscape.

The findings of this study will be especially valuable for marketers looking to refine their strategies on Douyin and other social media platforms, helping them to create more effective and engaging advertising campaigns. Ultimately, this research has the potential to shape the future of digital marketing by providing a deeper understanding of how consumers engage with advertising in the digital age (Ausat & Abu, 2023). By exploring the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior, this study offers a roadmap for marketers seeking to navigate the complexities of the digital marketing landscape and achieve long-term success in a rapidly changing world.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research is aimed to seek the answers to the following research questions.

- 1.3.1 How do soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on Douyin influence consumer behavior and engagement?
- 1.3.2 What are the differences between soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats in their impact on consumers' purchase decisions on the Douyin?
- 1.3.3 What are the differences in consumers' acceptance and preference for soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on the Douyin?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

In order to achieve the research questions of this study, the research objectives are listed as follows.

- 1.4.1 In order to achieve the research questions of this study, the research objectives are listed as follows.
- 1.4.2 To compare the difference between soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats in the impact on consumers' purchase decisions on the Douyin.
- 1.4.3 To explore the consumer's acceptance and preference differences between soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on the Douyin.

1.5 SCOPE OF STUDY

This study focused on analyzing the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior and engagement on Douyin, a popular short-

video platform in China. The research explored how these two advertising strategies influenced consumer actions, such as viewing, liking, sharing, and ultimately, purchasing products. Specifically, the study sought to understand the differences in how soft-sell and hard-sell approaches affected consumer engagement and decision-making.

In addition, the study compared how consumers responded to these formats by examining their preferences and acceptance levels. By analyzing these responses, the research aimed to highlight the most effective communication strategies that marketers could use to influence Douyin users. The research was limited to the Douyin platform and focused on consumers within its user base.

Therefore, this scope covered three key aspects: the overall influence of soft-sell and hard-sell formats on consumer behavior, the differences in their impact on purchase decisions, and the varying levels of consumer acceptance and preference for each format. The findings provided valuable insights for marketers looking to develop effective advertising strategies tailored to Douyin's unique audience.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Soft-sell Advertising refers to a subtle and indirect advertising approach that focuses on building an emotional connection with the audience. Instead of emphasizing immediate sales, soft-sell advertising highlights the product's or brand's qualities, fostering long-term customer relationships. On Douyin, soft-sell ads may appear as entertaining or educational content, blending with the platform's social and creative environment.

Hard-sell Advertising refers to a direct and persuasive approach, urging consumers to take immediate action, such as making a purchase. This format is more aggressive in promoting products, often highlighting special offers or time-limited

deals. On Douyin, hard-sell ads may include clear calls to action and emphasize urgency to drive quick decision-making.

Douyin is a short-video sharing platform developed by ByteDance in China, allowing users to interact through the creation and viewing of short videos. With its algorithm-based recommendation system and diverse creative tools, Douyin has become an essential digital marketing channel for brands and businesses. Its international version, TikTok, has a global user base.

Consumer Behavior refers to the actions and decision-making processes of individuals when they interact with advertising content. In this study, consumer behavior on Douyin includes how users respond to ads, such as engaging by liking, sharing, commenting, or following through with a purchase after viewing soft-sell or hard-sell advertisements.

Consumer Engagement refers to the interaction between users and advertising content on Douyin. This includes actions such as viewing, sharing, commenting, and liking the ads. Engagement is a key indicator of how much the audience is interested in or connected to the content they encounter.

Purchase Decision refers to the consumer's process of deciding whether to buy a product or service after being exposed to advertisements. In the context of Douyin, purchase decisions can be influenced by how effectively soft-sell or hard-sell ads communicate value and motivate consumers to act.

Consumer Acceptance refers to the extent to which consumers are open to and satisfied with different advertising formats. It measures how well audiences receive and perceive soft-sell and hard-sell ads on Douyin, including their willingness to engage with or act upon the messages conveyed.

Consumer Preference refers to the inclination of users toward one type of advertising format over another. In this study, it explores whether consumers on Douyin

prefer soft-sell or hard-sell advertisements based on their experiences, needs, and expectations.

Online Marketing refers to the use of digital channels, primarily the internet, to promote and advertise products, services, or brands to a targeted audience. It involves a variety of strategies that leverage online platforms, such as social media, search engines, websites, email, and content creation, to engage with consumers, build brand awareness, and drive conversions. Online marketing enables businesses to reach a global audience and create personalized, interactive, and measurable campaigns that cater to the needs and behaviors of their target market. On platforms like Douyin, online marketing is particularly effective due to its social nature, visual content, and user engagement features, which allow marketers to directly interact with consumers in a compelling and innovative manner.

1.7 ADVANTAGES OF STUDY

- 1.7.1 This study provided marketers with a deeper understanding of how different advertising formats, specifically soft-sell and hard-sell approaches, influenced consumer behavior on Douyin. By gaining insights into how these formats impacted consumer engagement and decision-making, businesses were able to tailor their marketing strategies to create more effective and targeted campaigns that resonated with the platform's users.
- 1.7.2 The findings from this research helped marketers identify the advertising formats that were most likely to capture users' attention and encourage active engagement on Douyin. Understanding consumer preferences and behaviors toward soft-sell and hard-sell advertising led to the development of content that drove higher interaction rates, such as likes, shares, and comments, ultimately leading to better brand visibility.
- 1.7.3 By comparing the influence of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising on purchase decisions, this study enabled marketers to choose the most suitable approach

for their target audience. With this knowledge, businesses optimized their advertising efforts to increase conversion rates, ensuring that their promotional strategies were not only engaging but also resulted in tangible outcomes, such as product purchases or service inquiries.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, this study explored the theoretical frameworks that underpinned the analysis of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats and their impact on consumer behavior on Douyin. The literature review examined key models, including the Elaboration Likelihood Model, which addressed how individuals process persuasive information; the Theory of Planned Behavior, which explained the influence of attitudes on behavioral intentions; the AIDA Model, which outlined the stages of consumer engagement; and the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which focused on the motivations behind media consumption, including related research studies. Additionally, this study presented and established a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms that drive consumer responses to different advertising strategies in the context of Douyin, ultimately providing insights into effective communication strategies for marketers. The information was presented in detail as follows.

- 2.1 Elaboration Likelihood Model
- 2.2 Theory of Planned Behavior
- 2.4 Uses and Gratifications Theory

 2.5 Concept of Online Management
- 2.6 Related Research Studies
- 2.7 Conceptual framework

2.1 ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is a significant framework in the study of persuasion and attitude change, providing deep insights into how individuals process information differently based on their motivation and ability. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), the concept of 'elaboration likelihood' refers to the extent to which an individual carefully considers relevant information when evaluating an issue. People's motivation, cognitive ability, and the context in which they encounter persuasive messages all influence how they interpret and react to information. The ELM presents two primary routes of information processing: the central route and the peripheral route. Each plays a pivotal role in shaping the persuasiveness of messages and how attitudes change as a result.

In the central route, individuals are highly motivated and possess strong analytical skills, leading them to carefully scrutinize the message's content. These individuals focus on the logical arguments, reasoning, and evidence presented in the message. They evaluate the information in-depth and weigh its merits before deciding whether to adopt or reject the message's conclusions. In essence, when an individual takes the central route, they engage in an elaborate process of analysis, considering all aspects of the message and how it aligns with their preexisting beliefs and values (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). On Douyin, soft-sell advertisements often aim to stimulate this central route processing by fostering emotional connections and building a narrative around the brand. Soft-sell ads are typically less direct and focus on subtle cues such as storytelling, emotional appeals, or long-term brand values.

For instance, a soft-sell advertisement on Douyin promoting a company's environmental sustainability initiatives might appeal to individuals who are already conscious of environmental issues. These consumers are likely to engage with the ad more deeply, analyzing how the brand's values align with their own personal beliefs about sustainability. In this case, the soft-sell ad encourages the central route of processing, wherein the consumer reflects on the values conveyed by the advertisement, which in turn influences their attitude towards the brand. As such, the soft-sell approach can effectively influence those individuals who are predisposed to think deeply about the content and the implications of the advertisement (Shao, Zhang, Pan, & Benitez, 2023).

On the other hand, the peripheral route involves less cognitive effort. This route is more likely to be adopted when an individual has lower motivation or lacks the ability

to process the information thoroughly. Instead of focusing on the content of the message, individuals rely on superficial cues to guide their decisions. These cues might include the attractiveness of the spokesperson, the length of the message, or how appealing the ad appears visually (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In the case of Douyin, hard-sell advertisements tend to activate this peripheral processing route by focusing on direct calls to action and emphasizing product features. Hard-sell advertisements are designed to be quick, assertive, and to the point. They often promote time-sensitive offers, discounts, or urgent calls to action that appeal to consumers looking for immediate benefits rather than long-term considerations.

For example, a hard-sell advertisement on Douyin might emphasize a limited-time discount on a product. Consumers who are driven by the desire for immediate savings may be more likely to process the advertisement peripherally. These consumers are not necessarily concerned with the long-term benefits of the product or its overall quality. Instead, their focus is on the potential for short-term savings or the urgency of the offer (Cho, 1999). This peripheral processing can be advantageous for marketers looking to capture the attention of consumers who are more responsive to these types of immediate incentives. However, it is important to note that attitudes formed through peripheral processing are often less stable and more susceptible to change, as they are based on shallow or temporary cues rather than a deep engagement with the message.

The ELM serves as a crucial theoretical framework for understanding how these different advertising strategies—soft-sell and hard-sell—affect consumer behavior on Douyin. By analyzing which route consumers are more likely to engage with, marketers can better design their campaigns to persuade different segments of their audience. For example, soft-sell ads may be more effective for consumers who are already interested in the brand's values and are likely to engage in central route processing. In contrast, hard-sell ads may be better suited for consumers who are primarily focused on short-term benefits and are more inclined to process messages peripherally.

In applying the ELM to Douyin's advertising formats, it becomes clear that marketers need to carefully consider the context in which their advertisements are viewed. Douyin, as a platform, provides a unique environment for both soft-sell and hard-sell advertisements. The platform's algorithm-driven nature allows for personalized content delivery, meaning that advertisements can be tailored to specific consumer behaviors, preferences, and patterns of content consumption. For example, a user who frequently engages with content related to environmental sustainability may be more likely to encounter soft-sell advertisements promoting environmentally conscious brands. Meanwhile, a user who shows a preference for quick, deal-based content may be targeted with hard-sell ads promoting flash sales or limited-time discounts.

Furthermore, the nature of user engagement on Douyin also impacts how the ELM applies. Douyin users typically consume content in short bursts, scrolling quickly through videos and often making snap judgments about the content they see. This format lends itself well to peripheral route processing, as users are less likely to spend significant time analyzing the content deeply. As a result, hard-sell advertisements that emphasize immediate benefits, such as discounts or promotions, may be more effective in this context. However, for users who do choose to engage more deeply with certain types of content—such as longer-form videos, user testimonials, or brand storytelling—there is potential for central route processing to take place. In these cases, soft-sell advertisements may resonate more strongly, as users take the time to consider the values and narratives being presented.

The effectiveness of these advertising strategies is also influenced by individual differences among consumers. Not all consumers are equally likely to engage in central or peripheral processing. Factors such as personal relevance, prior knowledge, and the level of involvement with the product or brand can all impact how a consumer processes an advertisement. For instance, a consumer who has a personal interest in the product category being advertised is more likely to engage in central route processing, while a consumer who has little interest or involvement may rely on peripheral cues to make their decision.

Moreover, cultural factors can also play a role in determining which processing route a consumer might take. In the context of Douyin, cultural differences between consumers in China and those in other markets may influence how they respond to soft-sell versus hard-sell advertisements. For example, consumers in collectivist cultures may be more responsive to soft-sell advertisements that emphasize social values, community, and long-term relationships, while consumers in individualist cultures may be more responsive to hard-sell advertisements that emphasize personal benefits and immediate rewards.

Marketers on Douyin must also consider the importance of integrating both soft-sell and hard-sell approaches into a comprehensive advertising strategy. By understanding how different consumers process information through the ELM, marketers can create campaigns that effectively engage a wide range of audience segments. For example, a campaign might begin with a soft-sell advertisement that builds an emotional connection with the audience, followed by a hard-sell advertisement that prompts immediate action. This approach allows marketers to leverage both the central and peripheral routes of processing, ensuring that their message reaches consumers at different levels of involvement and motivation.

In conclusion, the Elaboration Likelihood Model provides a valuable framework for understanding the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior on Douyin. By recognizing that consumers process information differently based on their motivation, ability, and the context in which they encounter advertisements, marketers can tailor their strategies to more effectively engage their target audience. Whether through the deep, reflective engagement of the central route or the quick, surface-level processing of the peripheral route, both soft-sell and hard-sell advertisements have the potential to influence consumer attitudes and behaviors. Ultimately, the success of these strategies depends on marketers' ability to understand and leverage the ELM to create persuasive, effective communication that resonates with their audience on Douyin.

2.2 THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a significant theoretical framework in the field of social psychology that aims to explain and predict the motivations and decision-making processes behind individual behavior. At the core of the TPB is the concept that behavioral intention is a critical determinant of actual behavior. Behavioral intention, in turn, is influenced by three primary factors: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1985). This model holds substantial relevance in understanding how consumers make purchase decisions, particularly under the influence of various advertising formats on platforms such as Douyin. By examining these influences, marketers can develop more effective communication strategies tailored to consumer behavior.

Attitude, as defined by the TPB, refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of this research, the attitudes of consumers toward the products or services being advertised play a crucial role. For instance, if consumers possess a positive attitude toward the emotional value conveyed through soft-sell advertisements, they may be more inclined to seek further information about the product. This inclination can lead to a higher likelihood of purchase intentions. Conversely, attitudes shaped by hard-sell advertisements, which emphasize product features and direct calls to action, may influence consumers' acceptance and willingness to engage with the product (Koufaris, Kambil, & Labarbera, 2001). Thus, understanding how different advertising formats evoke varied consumer attitudes is vital for marketers aiming to enhance their messaging and drive sales.

Subjective norms encompass the social pressures that individuals perceive regarding whether to engage in a specific behavior. In the context of Douyin, these subjective norms can manifest through the social interactions that occur on the platform. User-generated content (UGC) and interactive advertising features, such as hashtag challenges, can significantly enhance consumers' acceptance and participation in advertising campaigns (Davcik, Langaro, Jevons, & Nascimento, 2022). For example, when a user observes someone, they follow expressing interest in a product through

likes, comments, or shares in response to a soft-sell or hard-sell advertisement, they may feel inclined to modify their own attitudes and behavioral intentions toward that product. This influence stems from the community effect prevalent on Douyin, where the social dynamics encourage users to engage with advertisements that are deemed popular or socially acceptable (Li, 2023). Thus, leveraging social influence to foster positive subjective norms can be a powerful tool for enhancing advertising effectiveness on Douyin.

Perceived behavioral control pertains to an individual's perception of their ability and available resources to perform specific behaviors (Ajzen, 2020). Within the Douyin shopping environment, several factors can affect consumers' perceived behavioral control. If consumers believe that the purchasing process on Douyin is straightforward and user-friendly, they are more likely to respond positively to soft-sell or hard-sell advertisements, ultimately leading to actual purchase behaviors. This phenomenon is referred to as high perceived behavioral control (Kim, Song, & Lee, 2019). The integration of e-commerce features on Douyin, such as the ability to embed purchase links directly within advertising videos, simplifies the transition from viewing an advertisement to making a purchase. This seamless integration significantly enhances consumers' perceived behavioral control, shortens the path from advertisement exposure to purchase decision, and ultimately improves conversion rates. Therefore, strategies aimed at enhancing consumers' perceived behavioral control are crucial for optimizing the effectiveness of advertising and marketing initiatives (Hu & Wise, 2021).

The TPB offers a holistic perspective for understanding consumer behavior by analyzing the interrelations among attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. By applying this theoretical framework to the examination of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on Douyin, marketers can gain deeper insights into the psychological and behavioral mechanisms that influence consumers when encountering different forms of advertising. This understanding enables marketers to craft more effective advertising strategies that resonate with their target audience and align with consumer motivations.

As consumers navigate a saturated advertising landscape on Douyin, the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell formats becomes increasingly significant. The choice between these two advertising styles can elicit different cognitive and emotional responses from consumers, ultimately influencing their attitudes and purchasing intentions. Soft-sell advertisements, characterized by their storytelling and emotional appeal, often foster a deeper connection between the brand and the consumer. This connection may prompt consumers to reflect on their personal values and how the advertised product aligns with those values. Conversely, hard-sell advertisements may appeal more directly to consumers' desires for immediate gratification or savings, relying on persuasive tactics that prioritize urgency and tangible benefits. Understanding how these contrasting approaches engage consumers' attitudes and subjective norms is vital for marketers seeking to optimize their communication strategies.

In conclusion, the Theory of Planned Behavior provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing consumer behavior in response to different advertising formats on Douyin. This theory also examine the interplay between attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, marketers can uncover valuable insights into the motivations driving consumer decision-making. This understanding is particularly pertinent in the context of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising strategies, as these formats can distinctly influence consumers' cognitive and emotional processes. Ultimately, by harnessing the principles of the TPB, marketers can develop targeted advertising campaigns that resonate with consumers, enhance engagement, and drive purchasing behaviors in the dynamic environment of Douyin.

2.3 AIDA MODEL

The AIDA model is a foundational marketing theory that delineates the process through which advertising captures consumers' attention, fosters interest, generates desire, and ultimately spurs action. The acronym AIDA stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action, representing four critical stages in consumer engagement with advertising (Pramita & Manafe, 2022). This model remains highly relevant in the realm of social media advertising, particularly regarding the differing impacts of soft-sell and

hard-sell advertising formats on platforms like Douyin. Understanding how the AIDA framework operates within these advertising styles can provide marketers with valuable insights into consumer behavior, enabling them to design more effective communication strategies.

In an increasingly complex market environment laden with information, the foremost challenge for advertisers is to attract consumers' attention. This initial step is vital for successful advertising campaigns (Abdelkader & Rabie, 2019). On the Douyin platform, where users are inundated with content, both soft-sell and hard-sell advertisements must distinguish themselves from the plethora of competing messages. Soft-sell advertising often employs unique creative elements to capture attention, utilizing emotional storytelling, visually striking imagery, or innovative soundtracks to engage viewers (Simmonds, Bogomolova, Kennedy, Nenycz-Thiel, & Bellman, 2020). For example, many brands utilize microfilm- style soft-sell ads on Douyin, captivating audiences with compelling narratives that resonate emotionally and stimulate curiosity. In contrast, hard-sell advertising takes a more direct approach, focusing on the unique selling propositions of products, such as highlighting innovative features, attractive pricing, or limited-time promotions to draw consumer attention (Xiao, Wang, L., & Wang, P., 2019). By understanding the distinct tactics employed by each advertising format, marketers can optimize their content to capture the elusive first impression that ultimately leads to further consumer engagement. รังสิต Rangs

Once a brand has successfully attracted the attention of consumers, the next phase of the AIDA model involves stimulating interest. Soft-sell advertising nurtures interest by creating emotional resonance and enhancing brand image. This often involves sharing the narrative behind the brand, articulating its core values, and fostering a sense of connection and familiarity among consumers (Bian, 2021). By positioning the brand within a broader lifestyle context, soft-sell ads can effectively cultivate an environment where consumers feel a personal stake in the brand's success. On the other hand, hard-sell advertising seeks to bolster interest by presenting detailed information about product functionalities and advantages, demonstrating explicitly how the product can fulfill consumer needs and desires. This detailed exposition helps

maintain consumer interest by delivering targeted content that addresses their specific pain points or aspirations.

The AIDA model emphasizes that the subsequent step involves stimulating the consumer's desire to purchase. Soft-sell advertising typically fosters a sense of aspiration by showcasing the lifestyle associated with the brand, effectively making consumers yearn for the experiences and values represented (Deng, 2021). This emotional appeal can be instrumental in creating a deep-seated desire for the brand, encouraging consumers to imagine themselves as part of that narrative. Conversely, hard-sell advertising appeals to consumers' practical motivations, emphasizing how the product can alleviate everyday problems, enhance efficiency, or enrich the quality of life. This pragmatic approach can be particularly effective in industries where consumers prioritize functionality and immediate benefits. Therefore, marketers must meticulously analyze consumers' consumption motivations and needs, tailoring their advertising formats accordingly to enhance consumer satisfaction and drive purchase intentions. By skillfully blending product characteristics with relevant advertising themes, marketers can significantly stimulate consumer desire and increase the likelihood of conversion.

The final stage of the AIDA model requires that advertising motivates consumers to take action. In the realm of hard-sell advertising on Douyin, it is common to encounter direct calls to action, such as "buy now" or "click the link to purchase." These explicit phrases are designed to streamline the decision-making process, encouraging users to make immediate purchases by reducing the time needed to deliberate (Wang, 2018). Conversely, soft-sell advertising typically employs a more gradual approach, aiming to cultivate emotional connections and enhance brand loyalty over time. While this method may not yield immediate results, it often leads to sustained engagement and long-term consumer loyalty. By understanding the nuances of how each advertising format drives consumer action, marketers can effectively navigate the complexities of consumer decision-making processes.

In this study, the AIDA model serves as a valuable framework for analyzing the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior on Douyin. By examining the unique attributes and roles of these two advertising styles at each stage of the AIDA process, marketers can gain a more nuanced understanding of how to optimize their advertising strategies. This understanding is vital for enhancing advertising effectiveness, influencing consumer behavior, and ultimately guiding purchase decisions. Furthermore, as the digital landscape continues to evolve, incorporating the principles of the AIDA model can help marketers adapt to changing consumer preferences and behaviors, ensuring their advertising remains relevant and impactful.

As advertising on Douyin continues to evolve, understanding the implications of the AIDA model becomes increasingly crucial for marketers seeking to optimize their strategies. By leveraging insights from the AIDA framework, marketers can develop targeted campaigns that resonate with their audiences, effectively capturing attention, generating interest, fostering desire, and driving action. The interplay between soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats provides a rich landscape for exploration, as each approach offers distinct advantages and challenges within the context of consumer engagement. Marketers must remain agile and responsive to the preferences of their target audience, utilizing data-driven insights to refine their messaging and maximize advertising effectiveness.

The interplay between the AIDA model and the advertising formats employed on Douyin highlights the importance of a well-rounded approach to marketing strategy. Marketers must consider not only the immediate objectives of capturing attention and driving action but also the long-term implications of building brand loyalty and emotional connections with consumers. Soft-sell advertisements that create emotional narratives and foster community engagement can complement hard-sell tactics that emphasize product benefits and urgency. By integrating these approaches, marketers can create holistic campaigns that address the diverse motivations and preferences of consumers, ultimately enhancing their overall effectiveness.

Moreover, as Douyin continues to grow in popularity, it is essential for marketers to stay abreast of emerging trends and shifts in consumer behavior. The rapid evolution of social media platforms necessitates that marketers continually assess the effectiveness of their advertising strategies, adapting to changes in audience preferences and technological advancements. This adaptability is particularly relevant in the context of the AIDA model, where the dynamics of consumer engagement are influenced by factors such as platform features, content trends, and user behaviors.

The integration of data analytics and consumer feedback into marketing strategies can also play a pivotal role in optimizing advertising effectiveness. By analyzing metrics related to attention, interest, desire, and action, marketers can gain valuable insights into the performance of their campaigns, allowing for data-informed adjustments and refinements. This iterative approach to marketing not only enhances the immediate impact of advertising efforts but also contributes to the long-term success of brands on platforms like Douyin.

In conclusion, the AIDA model serves as a critical framework for understanding consumer behavior in the context of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on Douyin. By systematically examining how these formats engage consumers at each stage of the AIDA process, marketers can develop more effective communication strategies that resonate with their target audiences. The model emphasizes the importance of capturing attention, stimulating interest, fostering desire, and motivating action, providing a comprehensive roadmap for marketers navigating the complexities of the digital advertising landscape. As consumer preferences continue to evolve, the principles of the AIDA model will remain essential for guiding marketing efforts, enabling brands to build meaningful connections and drive successful outcomes in the competitive realm of social media advertising.

2.4 USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) serves as a pivotal framework in understanding the active role individuals play in selecting media to fulfill specific needs

and desires, emphasizing that they are not mere passive recipients of media influences (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). This theory becomes especially relevant in the context of Douyin, a platform where consumers are inundated with a variety of advertising formats, particularly soft-sell and hard-sell ads. By exploring the motivations that drive users to engage with Douyin, researchers can better grasp how these advertising formats resonate with consumers and influence their behavior (Mutiara & Putri, 2023).

On Douyin, users exhibit diverse motivations that guide their engagement with the platform, each serving distinct needs. Some users are drawn by the entertainment factor, seeking humorous or engaging short videos that provide an enjoyable distraction from daily stressors. Others may turn to the platform for educational content, aiming to acquire new skills or knowledge across various disciplines. Additionally, there are users who leverage Douyin for social interactions, connecting with friends, following popular influencers, or engaging in online communities centered around shared interests (Zhou, Lee, & Liu, 2021). These varied motivations highlight the multifaceted nature of user engagement on Douyin and underscore the importance of advertising strategies that align with these different consumer needs.

Soft-sell advertising on Douyin has the unique ability to cater to these diverse user motivations. For those in search of entertainment, soft-sell ads can captivate attention through compelling narratives or innovative creative approaches, offering an enjoyable viewing experience akin to other entertainment content on the platform. For example, a soft-sell advertisement might weave an engaging story that resonates with viewers on an emotional level, thereby enhancing the overall appeal of the brand without overtly pushing a sales agenda (Ko & Yu, 2019). Such creative storytelling can create a memorable impression that lingers long after the ad is viewed, allowing the brand to establish a deeper connection with its audience.

Moreover, soft-sell ads can effectively address educational needs by integrating informative content that offers value beyond mere product promotion. For instance, a mooncake brand may leverage the cultural significance of the Mid-Autumn

Festival in its advertising, educating consumers about traditions while subtly promoting its products. This not only fulfills the educational needs of users but also enriches their experience on the platform, fostering a sense of cultural appreciation (Ko & Yu, 2019). In this way, soft-sell advertising transcends the typical transactional approach, positioning brands as sources of valuable content that align with user interests and motivations.

In contrast, hard-sell advertising primarily focuses on addressing practical needs, especially for users actively seeking specific products. For these consumers, hard-sell ads provide a straightforward and informative approach, detailing product specifications, unique features, and benefits in a direct manner. Such ads cater to users who prioritize efficiency and clarity when making purchasing decisions, helping them navigate the often overwhelming landscape of options available online (Ye, 2023). By effectively communicating product advantages, hard-sell ads can guide consumers toward informed choices, ultimately enhancing their shopping experience.

The crux of UGT lies in its assertion that understanding how advertising formats, both soft-sell and hard-sell, meet user needs is essential for evaluating their effectiveness on Douyin. When advertisements resonate with users' motivations and desires, they are more likely to capture attention, maintain engagement, and drive purchasing behavior. Research supports this notion, revealing that advertisements aligned with users' primary motivations on social media platforms tend to yield higher click-through and conversion rates (Zhang & Mao, 2016). This suggests that a nuanced understanding of user motivations can significantly enhance advertising effectiveness.

Furthermore, the implications of UGT extend beyond mere content alignment. The theory emphasizes the importance of tailoring advertising strategies to fit the specific contexts and preferences of Douyin users. For instance, brands seeking to implement soft-sell strategies should focus on creating authentic, relatable narratives that foster emotional connections. This approach not only meets users' entertainment and social interaction needs but also establishes brand loyalty over time. Conversely, marketers opting for hard-sell tactics must ensure that their messages are clear and

informative, catering to the practical needs of users who prioritize detailed product information (Zhou et al., 2021).

In this digital age, where consumer attention is a precious commodity, the effectiveness of advertising hinges on the ability to engage users meaningfully. The convergence of entertainment, education, and social interaction on Douyin creates a fertile ground for innovative advertising strategies that leverage the principles of UGT. Brands must consider the diverse motivations of their audience and strategically design advertisements that fulfill those needs, thereby enhancing user experiences and fostering positive associations with their products.

Additionally, the dynamic nature of social media platforms like Douyin necessitates an ongoing assessment of advertising strategies. Marketers must remain agile and responsive to shifts in user preferences, adapting their approaches to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness. By employing A/B testing, gathering user feedback, and monitoring engagement metrics, brands can refine their advertising tactics over time. This iterative process enables marketers to understand better how their ads resonate with different audience segments, allowing them to optimize their campaigns for maximum impact.

Ultimately, the intersection of the Uses and Gratifications Theory with advertising practices on Douyin underscores the need for a consumer-centric approach. By recognizing that users actively seek content that satisfies their needs, marketers can tailor their strategies to create meaningful connections. In doing so, they not only enhance the effectiveness of their advertising efforts but also contribute to a more enriching experience for consumers on the platform. As the landscape of digital marketing continues to evolve, leveraging theoretical frameworks like UGT will be crucial for brands aiming to navigate the complexities of consumer behavior and drive successful outcomes in their advertising campaigns.

2.5 CONCEPT OF ONLINE MARKETING

The rapid evolution of online marketing, driven by advancements in internet and digital technologies, has significantly transformed the way businesses connect with consumers. This subsection explores key aspects of online marketing, with a particular focus on platforms like Douyin, which has become a central space for innovative advertising strategies.

Online marketing is fundamentally about utilizing digital platforms to engage with consumers and promote products or services. Unlike traditional marketing, online marketing enables two-way communication, allowing brands to interact directly with their audience and tailor strategies based on specific consumer behaviors and preferences. One of the defining characteristics of online marketing is its ability to reach a global audience with ease. The internet has erased geographical limitations, enabling businesses to reach potential customers from diverse regions. For platforms like Douyin, which has a massive user base within China and an international audience through its counterpart TikTok, online marketing opens up new opportunities for businesses to expand their market share and enhance brand visibility on a global scale (Quelch & Klein, 1996).

A critical aspect of online marketing is the use of data analytics to understand consumer behavior and optimize marketing efforts. Marketers can gather and analyze vast amounts of data, allowing them to deliver more personalized and relevant content to individual consumers (Jackson, 2009). On Douyin, this data-driven approach is particularly beneficial, as the platform's analytics tools enable businesses to identify which types of videos resonate most with different user segments, ensuring that marketing strategies are more targeted and effective.

Another vital concept within online marketing is creating a seamless and consistent user experience across various digital touchpoints. This includes a brand's website, social media presence, and advertising campaigns. A consistent message across these platforms helps establish a cohesive brand identity, which is crucial for building

customer trust and loyalty (Castañeda-García, Frías-Jamilena, Del Barrio-García, & Rodríguez- Molina, 2020). For businesses on Douyin, aligning short-video content, live broadcasts, and other forms of engagement with the brand's overall image and marketing objectives is essential for fostering stronger relationships with users.

In the context of social media platforms like Douyin, user-generated content (UGC) plays a significant role in shaping marketing strategies. UGC refers to content created by users, not the brand itself, and it adds credibility and authenticity to a brand's image by showcasing real user experiences (Jain, 2024). Douyin's hashtag challenge feature often encourages users to create content related to a brand or product, which can be leveraged by the brand to enhance visibility and build a sense of community among consumers. This approach not only increases brand exposure but also strengthens user engagement and trust.

Furthermore, the integration of various marketing strategies is a key element of successful online marketing. For example, social media marketing can be effectively combined with email marketing, creating a more cohesive and comprehensive marketing strategy. Integrated marketing communications (IMC) strategies allow businesses to engage with consumers across multiple channels, providing a more holistic approach to customer interaction (Manser, Peltier, & Barger, 2017). On Douyin, businesses can leverage the platform's features to drive traffic to other online platforms, where they can continue engaging with customers through different channels.

To conclude, online marketing is a dynamic and multifaceted concept, especially when applied to platforms like Douyin. It involves leveraging global reach, data-driven insights, seamless user experiences, user-generated content, and integrated marketing strategies to develop effective communication tactics. For businesses and marketers aiming to succeed in the competitive online space, understanding these concepts is essential for creating successful marketing campaigns on platforms like Douyin.

2.6 RELATED RESEARCH STUDIES

- 2.6.1 Some studies have emphasized the importance of soft-sell advertising in influencing consumers by establishing emotional resonance and shaping brand image. For instance, a study on story marketing strategies by Xu and Wu (2022) discovered that brand story marketing significantly increases consumers' interest in brands. Their research highlights that soft-sell advertisements often convey brand values through storytelling, fostering a sense of identity and connection among consumers. This aligns with the view of the current study, which posits that soft-sell advertising attracts consumers and nurtures their interests through emotional narratives on the Douyin platform.
- 2.6.2 Relevant research indicates that soft-sell advertising effectively addresses various user needs. In their study, Salim and Sofri (2022) pointed out that soft-sell ads on social media platforms fulfill the satisfaction needs of users seeking entertainment, education, and social interaction. For users looking for entertainment, advertisements featuring captivating stories or creative concepts provide an enjoyable viewing experience. In terms of educational value, advertisements that incorporate relevant knowledge offer users additional insights. Furthermore, for social interaction, ads that encourage user participation help strengthen the bond between consumers and brands. This research provides a foundational basis for analyzing how soft-sell ads on Douyin cater to the diverse needs of its users.
- 2.6.3 Multiple studies have focused on the significance of hard-sell advertising, particularly regarding its emphasis on product features and its impact on sales performance. For example, Beard (2004) found that, in certain market environments, such as economic downturns, the directness of hard-sell advertising can significantly enhance sales. By highlighting unique selling points—such as innovative features, attractive pricing, or limited-time offers—hard-sell advertisements effectively capture consumer attention and encourage prompt purchasing decisions. This finding aligns with the research direction of this study, which examines how hard-sell advertising on Douyin influences consumer behavior by emphasizing product advantages.

2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

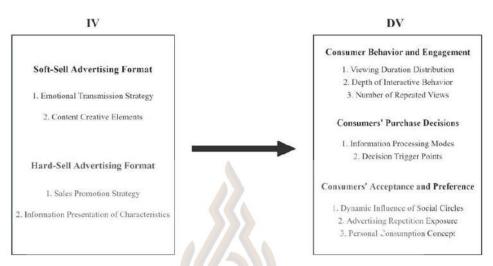


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

The following details outlined the conceptual framework for analyzing the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior on Douyin. This framework illustrated the relationship between independent variables (soft-sell and hard-sell advertising) and dependent variables (consumer behavior, engagement, purchase decision, acceptance, and preference). The theoretical models employed, such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), guided the study's analysis.

Based on the theoretical analysis and related research studies in the previous section, the independent and dependent variables, including hypotheses statements can be clearly identified as follows.

Independent Variables

Independent Variable 1: Soft-Sell Advertising Format Independent Variable 2: Hard-Sell Advertising Format

Dependent Variables

Dependent Variable 1: Consumer Behavior and Engagement (including actions such as viewing, liking, sharing, and purchasing)

Dependent Variable 2 : Consumers' Purchase Decisions

Dependent Variable 3: Consumers' Acceptance and Preference

Additionally, the relationship direction between independent variables and dependent variables are presented as follows.

The independent variables (soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats) are expected to have a positive influence on the dependent variables (consumer behavior, purchase decisions, and acceptance/preferences). Specifically:

Soft-Sell Advertising Format → Positive Impact on Consumer
 Behavior and Engagement

This format is likely to enhance emotional connection, leading to higher engagement.

2) Hard-Sell Advertising Format → Positive Impact on Consumers' Purchase Decisions

This format may drive more immediate purchasing actions through direct appeals to product features and benefits.

3) Soft-Sell vs. Hard-Sell Advertising Formats → Differences in Consumers' Acceptance and Preference

The study explored how consumers accepted and preferred each format, expecting that different emotional and cognitive appeals would result in varying levels of acceptance and preference.

Therefore, this study aims to assess how different advertising formats influence various aspects of consumer behavior on Douyin, establishing a directional relationship where these advertising strategies lead to specific consumer responses.

According to the hypotheses statements, this study aims to explore the relationship between soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats and their impact onconsumer behavior on Douyin. The hypotheses for this research are formulated as follows.

H1: Soft-sell advertising formats will have a positive impact on consumer behavior and engagement on Douyin.

This hypothesis predicts that soft-sell advertisements, which often focus on emotional appeal and subtle messaging, will lead to higher levels of engagement, such as increased views, likes, shares, and overall interaction with the content.

H2: Hard-sell advertising formats will positively influence consumers' purchase decisions on Douyin.

This hypothesis suggests that hard-sell advertisements, which emphasize direct product features and benefits, will prompt more immediate purchasing actions compared to soft-sell approaches.

H3: Consumers will show differing levels of acceptance and preference for softsell versus hard-sell advertising formats on Douyin.

This hypothesis explores whether Douyin users exhibit varying degrees of acceptance and preference for these two advertising formats, with soft-sell formats likely appealing more to emotional engagement, and hard-sell formats catering to more cognitive, rational decision-making.

Therefore, these hypotheses aim to provide insights into how marketers can craft more effective communication strategies on Douyin by understanding which advertising formats are most effective in influencing consumer behavior, purchase decisions, and preferences.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted for exploring the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior on Douyin. A quantitative research approach is employed to examine the relationship between these advertising formats and consumer responses, including engagement, purchasing decisions, and advertising preferences. Data collection is conducted through online questionnaires, and statistical analysis is applied to test the hypotheses and analyze correlations between the variables. This method ensures objectivity and reliability in drawing conclusions about how different advertising formats influence consumer behavior on the platform. The in-depth information is presented as follow.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs quantitative research methods to test the research hypotheses and analyze the relationships between various variables. This approach enables the collection of objective and quantifiable data that reveals the effects of different advertising formats on consumer behavior, engagement, purchasing decisions, and acceptance of advertising.

To gather this data, online questionnaires were utilized, allowing for the collection of extensive feedback from consumers exposed to both soft-sell and hard-sell advertisements on the Douyin platform. By systematically organizing the questionnaire data, quantitative methods facilitated the use of statistical analysis techniques to examine the hypothesized relationships between independent and dependent variables.

Furthermore, by analyzing the correlations between these variables, the study aimed to ascertain whether a significant relationship existed between different

advertising formats and consumer responses. This analysis also helped determine the strength of these correlations, ultimately providing insights necessary to answer the research questions and validate the research hypotheses.

3.2 POPULATION

As a prominent short video social platform, Douyin boasts a substantial global user base. Its distinctive algorithm recommendation system, varied content formats, and vibrant social interaction features attract users from diverse age groups, genders, regions, and social backgrounds. This study specifically targets active Douyin users. Recent data indicates that as of June 2023, Douyin had surpassed 600 million daily active users (ByteDance, 2023). This vast user base offers a rich source of samples for examining the effects of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior.

Moreover, Douyin's active users encompass a wide range of social strata and consumer demographics, each with unique needs and motivations. While they engage with the platform for entertainment, education, and social interaction, they are also susceptible to advertisements, which can influence their purchasing behavior. Thus, by focusing on this group, this study can gain valuable insights into how different advertising formats cater to the diverse needs of users, ultimately shaping their consumer behavior.

3.3 SAMPLES AND SAMPLING METHOD

To explore the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior on Douyin, this study uses Taro Yamane's statistical formula to determine the appropriate sample size. Given the research objectives and the desired margin of error, an accuracy level of 5% was selected. Based on this calculation, a sample size of 400 active Douyin users is required for this study.

Size of Population (N)	Sample Size (n) for Precision (E) of:								
Size of Population (N)	±3%	±5%	±7%	±10%					
500	A	222	145	83					
600	A	240	152	86					
700	A	255	158	88					
800	A	267	163	89					
900	A	277	166	90					
1,000	A	286	169	91					
2,000	714	333	185	95					
3,000	811	353	191	97					
4,000	870	364	194	98					
5,000	909	370	196	98					
6,000	938	375	197	98					
7,000	959	378	198	99					
8,000	976	381	199	99					
9,000	989	383	200	99					
10,000	1,000	385	200	99					
15,000	1,034	390	201	99					
20,000	1,053	392	204	100					
25,000	1,064	394	204	100					
50,000	1,087	397	204	100					
100,000	1,099	398	204	100					
>100,000	1,111	400	204	100					

Figure 3.1 Taro Yamane's Statistics Table

To calculate the sample size using the Taro Yamane formula with a 5% error margin and a 95% confidence level, then can use the following formula:

n = Sample Size

N = Population Size

e = Error Margin (Expressed as a decimal.)

Given:

Population size N = 600,000,000

Error Margin is 0.05

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$
 (3-1)

So, the sample size needed is approximately 400 samples.

For the sampling method, convenience sampling was used, which allowed for the collection of data from participants who were easily accessible and willing to respond. Since the questionnaire was distributed through Douyin and WeChat, this method enabled the research to gather responses from a diverse range of active users who regularly engaged with the platform. Therefore, this study targeted this specific group of users, and the study aimed to gather relevant insights into how different advertising formats—soft-sell and hard-sell—affected consumer behavior, including their engagement with ads, purchasing decisions, and preferences.

This sampling approach ensured that the data collected represented the views and behaviors of Douyin's active user base, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of the relationship between advertising formats and consumer responses. The final analysis reflected the diversity of Douyin's audience, providing marketers with a clearer understanding of how to craft effective communication strategies.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PROCESS

To explore the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior on Douyin, data was collected through an online survey. This approach allowed for reaching a broad range of Douyin users, ensuring that the study captured diverse consumer perspectives. The data collection process was designed to gather relevant information on how users engaged with both soft-sell and hard-sell advertisements and how these formats influenced their purchasing decisions, preferences, and overall behavior.

For data collection, the study consisted of structured questions designed to measure variables such as consumer engagement, purchase decisions, and preferences toward different advertising formats. The questionnaire included a mixture of closed-ended questions and Likert-scale items to quantify participants' responses. The survey was distributed to active Douyin users who had been exposed to both types of advertisements. This ensured that the study examined real-world interactions with the platform's ad content.

For data analysis, once the data was collected, it was analyzed using statistical techniques to examine the relationships between soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats (independent variables) and consumer behavior, engagement, and purchase decisions (dependent variables). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, providing insights into general trends and patterns in consumer responses.

To test the research hypotheses, inferential statistics such as correlation analysis and regression analysis were conducted. These tests helped determine whether the advertising formats had a statistically significant impact on consumer behavior, and whether there were meaningful differences in how consumers engaged with or preferred one format over the other. By doing so, the analysis aimed to provide a clearer understanding of the effectiveness of communication strategies for marketers on Douyin.

Therefore, this process ensures that the study draws valid and reliable conclusions about how soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats shape consumer behavior on the platform.

3.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

To ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of the findings in this study on the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior on Douyin, it is essential to assess both the reliability and validity of the research instruments and processes.

3.5.1 Reliability Checking

Reliability referred to the consistency of the data collection methods and the extent to which the results could be replicated. In this study, reliability was ensured through the use of structured and standardized questionnaires. These questionnaires included carefully designed closed-ended questions and Likert-scale items to

consistently measure variables such as consumer engagement, purchasing decisions, and preferences toward soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats. To further enhance reliability, a pilot study was conducted prior to the main data collection phase. This pilot study tested the questionnaire's clarity, consistency, and ease of response, allowing for any necessary revisions to be made before the survey was administered to the larger sample. Additionally, Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the Likert-scale items, ensuring that the scale accurately reflected the constructs being studied.

From this study, the reliability testing process yielded an exceptionally high Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.993, indicating outstanding internal consistency across the questionnaire items. This result reflects the robustness of the research instrument in capturing the targeted variables with precision and consistency. The exceptionally high reliability score suggests that the Likert-scale items employed in the survey were well-aligned and measured the intended constructs cohesively, without redundancy or ambiguity.

This reliability outcome further underscores the careful design and refinement of the questionnaire, which incorporated feedback from the pilot study and ensured clear, concise, and unambiguous phrasing of items. The consistency in respondents' answers across similar items demonstrates that the instrument effectively captured the nuances of consumer engagement, advertising preferences, and purchasing behavior as they relate to soft-sell and hard-sell advertising on Douyin.

In conclusion, the Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.993 not only validates the dependability of the questionnaire but also enhances the credibility of the findings derived from the data. It ensures that the results are not influenced by random measurement errors, thereby providing a reliable basis for exploring the impact of advertising formats on consumer behavior. This rigorous approach to reliability testing strengthens the overall validity of the study, offering marketers actionable insights into effective communication strategies on Douyin.

3.5.2 Validity Checking

Validity, on the other hand, focused on whether the research instruments truly measured what they were intended to measure. In the context of this study, content validity was ensured by carefully designing survey questions that directly aligned with the research hypotheses. Each question was formulated to address the specific components of consumer behavior, engagement, and purchase decisions in relation to both soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats.

The validity testing of this survey questionnaire received highly positive feedback from three expert evaluators. Their insights affirmed the comprehensive design and alignment of the instrument with the research objectives, ensuring its relevance and clarity in gathering data effectively. The questionnaire was subjected to rigorous examination for its content validity, construct coherence, and the applicability of its scales to measure consumer behavior, preferences, and attitudes toward soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on Douyin.

The first expert commended the questionnaire's logical structure and progression, noting that the segmentation into eight distinct parts—ranging from participant demographics to consumer behavior insights—facilitates a systematic exploration of various facets of the research. They highlighted the clarity of the instructions, which would enable participants to provide accurate and meaningful responses. This expert also pointed out that the inclusion of a Likert scale across multiple sections was particularly effective in capturing nuanced levels of agreement or disagreement, ensuring a detailed analysis of participants' attitudes and motivations.

The second expert emphasized the robustness of the questionnaire in reflecting the theoretical framework underpinning the study. They praised the inclusion of balanced and targeted questions addressing both soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats, which are central to the research. According to the feedback, the phrasing of questions was precise and unambiguous, reducing the likelihood of misinterpretation.

This expert also appreciated the exploratory component in Part 8, which invites openended feedback from participants, adding depth to the quantitative data and allowing for the emergence of new insights relevant to advertising strategies on Douyin.

The third expert focused on the practical relevance and adaptability of the questionnaire for the intended audience. They affirmed that the questions resonate well with Douyin users' experiences, making it accessible and relatable. This expert also lauded the diversity of the demographic section, which supports a comprehensive analysis of participant profiles and their influence on consumer behavior patterns. Additionally, they noted that the response options provided for each question were exhaustive yet straightforward, ensuring inclusivity and ease of participation.

In conclusion, the feedback from all three experts reflects a strong consensus on the questionnaire's validity and its capacity to yield insightful data for the research. The evaluators' remarks underscore its thoughtful design, methodological soundness, and alignment with the study's objectives. Their suggestions primarily revolved around minor adjustments to enhance clarity in specific phrasing, which were promptly integrated into the final version. The overall evaluation of the validity testing highlights the questionnaire as a well-crafted tool for achieving the research goals and contributing to the understanding of effective communication strategies on Douyin.

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CHAPTER 4

REASEARCH RESULTS

This chapter aims to study the influence of advertising formats on Douyin on consumer behavior. The researcher has specified that this research survey will collect data through questionnaires. This study used a sample of 400 people. The data analysis results are as follows:

4.1PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

Table 4.1 Distribution of the Sample Group by Sex (Number and Percentage)

Sex	Number (People)	Percentage
Male	185	46.3
Female	215	53.8
Total	400	100.0

Table 4.1 found that the majority of the samples are female, with 215 individuals, accounting for 53.75%. And there are 185 males, accounting for 46.25%.

Table 4.2 Distribution of the Sample Group by Age (Number and Percentage)

Age	Number (People)	Percentage
Below 18 years old	55	13.8
18-22 years old	41	10.3
23-30 years old	55	13.8
31-40 years old	44	11
40-50 years old	64	16
Above 50 years old	141	35.3
Total	400	100.0

Table 4.2 found that the number of above 50 years old respondents is 141, accounting for 35.3%. Next is the group 40-50 years old, with 64 people, accounting for 16.0%. There are 55 people 23-30 years old in the sample, accounting for 13.8%. The sample below 18 years old are also 55 people, accounting for 13.8%. There are 44 samples aged between 31-40 years old, accounting for 11.0%. The last group is the 18-22 years old group, with 41 people, accounting for 10.3%.

Table 4.3 Distribution of the Sample Group by Education Level (Number and Percentage)

Education Level	Number (People)	Percentage
Technical secondary school or below	83	20.8
High school	112	28
Junior college	103	25.8
Bachelor's Degree	61	15.3
Master's Degree	35	8.8
Doctoral Degree	6	1.5
Total	400	100.0

From the table 4.3 it can be observed that the majority of the samples are at the high school education level, with 112 individuals, accounting for 28%. Next is the sample of 103 junior college, accounting for 25.8%. The number of technical secondary school or below is 83, accounting for 20.8%. There are 61 people with a bachelor's degree, accounting for 15.3%. 35 people have a master's degree, accounting for 8.8%. Finally, there are 6 people with doctoral degrees, accounting for 1.5%.

Table 4.4 Distribution of the Sample Group by Occupation (Number and Percentage)

Occupation	Number (People)	Percentage
Student	62	15.5
Enterprise employee	80	20
Self-employed	57	14.3
Civil servant	36	9
Freelancer	43	10.8

Table 4.4 Distribution of the Sample Group by Occupation (Number and Percentage) (Cont.)

Occupation	Number (People)	Percentage		
Retired	114	28.5		
Others	8	2		
Total	400	100.0		

From the table 4.4 found that the majority of respondents have retired, with 114 individuals, accounting for 28.5%. Next are 80 enterprise employees, accounting for 20%. 62 students participated in this questionnaire survey, accounting for 15.5%. There are 43 freelancers, accounting for 10.8%. And 57 people are self-employed, accounting for 14.3%. There are 36 civil servants, accounting for 9%. Finally, there are 8 people from other occupations, accounting for 2%. According to the supplementary answers, 2 of them are from the education industry.

4. 2 PART 2 : STATISTICS AND ANALYSIS OF SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

Table 4.5 Perception of Douyin Usage and Familiarity with Advertisements (Number, Percentage, and Average Agreement Levels).

	77	Level of Agreement							
Douyin Usage	5	4	611/3	2	1	Total			
And Familiarity	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low				
With	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	$\bar{\mathbf{X}}$	S.D	Mean
Advertisements	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)			
1. I frequently see	69	59	90	96	86	400			
advertisements while	(17.3)	(14.8)	(22.5)	(24.0)	(21.5)	(100.0)			
browsing on Douyin.							3.18	1.382	Medium
2. I understand the									
difference between									
soft-sell and hard-sell	70	60	104	89	77	400			
advertisements on	(17.5)	(15.0)	(26.0)	(22.3)	(19.3)	(100.0)	3.11	1.355	Medium
Douyin.									

Table 4.5 Perception of Douyin Usage and Familiarity with Advertisements (Number, Percentage, and Average Agreement Levels) (Cont.)

Douyin Usage				Level of	Agreement	İ.				
Number N	Douyin Usage	5	4	3	2	1	Total			
With Advertisements (%) (%) (%) (%) (%) (%) X S.D Mean 3.1 find soft-sell advertisements (which are indirect and subtle) on Douyin to be more engaging than hardsell advertisements 62 63 94 94 87 400 3.20 1.359 Medium (which are direct and persuasive). 4. Hard-sell advertisements on Douyin make me more inclined to make a purchase compared to soft-sell advertisements. 60 80 97 79 84 400 400 3.12 1.352 Medium 5. I am more likely to "like" or share soft-sell advertisements on Douyin than hard-sell advertisements. 64 68 92 400 76 400 3.14 1.343 Medium 40 Critical advertisements I encounter on Douyin often influence my purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft-sell advertisements on (18.0) (18.8) (24.3) (19.5) (23.3) (100.0) 3.19 1.361 Medium	And	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low				
Advertisements 3. I find soft-sell advertisements (which are indirect and subtle) on Douyin to be more engaging than hard-sell advertisements (which are direct and (15.5) (15.8) (23.5) (23.5) (21.8) (100.0) 3.20 1.359 Medium persuasive). 4. Hard-sell advertisements on Douyin make me more inclined to make a 60 80 97 79 84 400 (21.0) (100.0) soft-sell advertisements. 5. I am more likely to "like" or share soft-sell advertisements on 64 68 92 100 76 400 Douyin than hard-sell (16.0) (17.0) (23.0) (25.0) (19.0) (100.0) 3.14 1.343 Medium advertisements. 6. The hard-sell advertisements I encounter on Douyin 57 75 97 78 93 400 often influence my (14.2) (18.8) (24.3) (19.5) (23.3) (100.0) 3.19 1.361 Medium purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft- 72 55 96 89 88 400 sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	Familiarity	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number			
3. I find soft-sell advertisements (which are indirect and subtle) on Douyin to be more engaging than hardsell advertisements (62 63 94 94 87 400 (21.8) (100.0) 3.20 1.359 Medium persuasive). 4. Hard-sell advertisements on Douyin make me more inclined to make a purchase compared to soft-sell advertisements. 5. I am more likely to "like" or share soft-sell advertisements on Douyin than hard-sell advertisements. 6. The hard-sell advertisements I encounter on Douyin often influence my purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft-sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	With	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	$\bar{\mathbf{X}}$	S.D	Mean
advertisements (which are indirect and subtle) on Douyin to be more engaging than hardsell advertisements (15.5) (15.8) (23.5) (23.5) (21.8) (100.0) 3.20 1.359 Medium persuasive). 4. Hard-sell advertisements on Douyin make me more inclined to make a purchase compared to soft-sell advertisements. 5. I am more likely to "like" or share soft-sell advertisements on Douyin than hard-sell advertisements. 6. The hard-sell advertisements I encounter on Douyin often influence my purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft-sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	Advertisements									
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(which are direct and persuasive). 4. Hard-sell advertisements on Douyin make me more inclined to make a purchase compared to soft-sell advertisements. 5. I am more likely to "like" or share soft-sell advertisements. 6. The hard-sell advertisements I encounter on Douyin often influence my purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft-sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	engaging than hard-				44					
persuasive). 4. Hard-sell advertisements on Douyin make me more inclined to make a purchase compared to soft-sell advertisements. 5. I am more likely to "like" or share soft-sell advertisements on Douyin than hard-sell advertisements. 6. The hard-sell advertisements I encounter on Douyin often influence my purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft- sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	sell advertisements	62	63	94	94	87	400			
4. Hard-sell advertisements on Douyin make me more inclined to make a purchase compared to soft-sell advertisements. 5. I am more likely to "like" or share soft-sell advertisements on Douyin than hard-sell advertisements. 6. The hard-sell advertisements I encounter on Douyin often influence my purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft-sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	(which are direct and	(15.5)	(15.8)	(23.5)	(23.5)	(21.8)	(100.0)	3.20	1.359	Medium
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Douyin than hard-sell (16.0) (17.0) (23.0) (25.0) (19.0) (100.0) 3.14 1.343 Medium advertisements. 6. The hard-sell advertisements I encounter on Douyin often influence my purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft-sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	"like" or share soft-sell	18/7	20,0		200	The				
advertisements. 6. The hard-sell advertisements I encounter on Douyin often influence my (14.2) (18.8) (24.3) (19.5) (23.3) (100.0) 3.19 1.361 Medium purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft-sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	advertisements on	64	68 1	92	R 100	76	400			
6. The hard-sell advertisements I encounter on Douyin 57 75 97 78 93 400 often influence my purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft- 72 55 96 89 88 400 sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	Douyin than hard-sell	(16.0)	(17.0)	(23.0)	(25.0)	(19.0)	(100.0)	3.14	1.343	Medium
advertisements I encounter on Douyin 57 75 97 78 93 400 often influence my purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft-sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	advertisements.									
encounter on Douyin 57 75 97 78 93 400 often influence my purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft-sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	6. The hard-sell									
often influence my purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft-sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.3) (19.5) (23.3) (100.0) 3.19 1.361 Medium (19.5) (23.3) (100.0) 3.19 1.361 Medium (19.5) (23.3) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium (19.5) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium (19.5) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	advertisements I									
purchasing decisions. 7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft- sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	encounter on Douyin	57	75	97	78	93	400			
7. I have a more positive view of brands that use soft- sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	often influence my	(14.2)	(18.8)	(24.3)	(19.5)	(23.3)	(100.0)	3.19	1.361	Medium
positive view of brands that use soft- 72 55 96 89 88 400 sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	purchasing decisions.									
brands that use soft- 72 55 96 89 88 400 sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	7. I have a more									
brands that use soft- 72 55 96 89 88 400 sell advertisements on (18.0) (13.8) (24.0) (22.3) (22.0) (100.0) 3.17 1.392 Medium	positive view of									
		72	55	96	89	88	400			
	sell advertisements on	(18.0)	(13.8)	(24.0)	(22.3)	(22.0)	(100.0)	3.17	1.392	Medium
	Douyin.									

Table 4.5 Perception of Douyin Usage and Familiarity with Advertisements (Number, Percentage, and Average Agreement Levels) (Cont.)

		Level of Agreement							
Douyin Usage	5	4	3	2	1	Total			
And	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low				
Familiarity	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number			
With	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)			
Advertisements									
							$\bar{\mathbf{X}}$	S.D	Mean
8. I find hard-sell									
advertisements on	56	67	92	95	90	400			
		20							
Douyin to be overly	(14.0)	(16.8)	(23.0)	(23.8)	(22.5)	(100.0)	2.24	1 2 4 6	3.5.11
aggressive or pushy.							3.24	1.346	Medium
9. I prefer soft-sell									
advertisements on									
Douyin because they	65	61	95	97	82	400			
are more entertaining	(16.3)	(15.3)	(23.8)	(24.3)	(20.5)	(100.0)	3.18	1.356	Medium
and informative.									
			,						
10. Advertisements on			MIN			12			
Douyin, whether soft-					6	S			
sell or hard-sell,	39			Mr.	Ti,				
significantly impact	56	70	97	83	94	400			
my decision to buy	(14.0)	(17.5)	(24.3)	(20.8)	(23.5)	(100.0)	3.22	1.356	Medium
products.		- 0 ()	6117	10					
	I	Total A	verage	<u>I</u>	ıl.	<u>I</u>	3.18	1.360	Medium

From the table 4.5, the respondents' Douyin use and advertising familiarity are at a medium level on the whole, with an average of 3.18. The study found that the question of 'hard-sell advertisements on Douyin to be overly aggressive or pushy' average level of respondents was the highest, at 3.24.

Table 4.6 Consumer Engagement with Soft-Sell and Hard-Sell Advertising (Number, Percentage, and Average)

			Level of	Agreement					
Consumer	5	4	3	2	1	Total			
Engagement	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low				
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number			
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	$\bar{\mathbf{X}}$	S.D	Mean
1.I feel more engaged									
with soft-sell									
advertisements (subtle									
and indirect) on			220						
Douyin compared to	60	71	97	94	78	400			
hard-sell									
advertisements (direct	(15.0)	(17.8)	(24.3)	(23.5)	(19.5)	(100.0)			
and persuasive).							3.15	1.332	Medium
2. I often complete									
viewing soft-sell									
advertisements on	58	77	102	96	67	400			
Douyin from start to	(14.5)	(19.3)	(25.5)	(24.0)	(16.8)	(100.0)	3.09	1.295	Medium
finish.									
3. Hard-sell			VI-A			1			
advertisements on	65	85	99	80	71	400			
Douyin motivate me to	20	4/	// A V	N A	1	5			
make quicker purchase	(16.3)	(21.3)	(24.8)	(20.0)	(17.8)	(100.0)	3.02	1.333	Medium
decisions.	147	200	Δ .	2-200	15				
4.Soft-sell		1028	ଗଡ଼	Karia					
advertisements on									
Douyin are more	61	70	101	91	77	400			
effective at capturing	(15.3)	(17.5)	(25.3)	(22.8)	(19.3)	(100.0)			
my attention than hard-							3.13	1.330	Medium
sell advertisements.									
5.Sharing soft-sell									
advertisements in my	73	65	99	104	59	400			
social circle has									
strengthened my social	(18.3)	(16.3)	(24.8)	(26.0)	(14.8)	(100.0)	3.03	1.321	Medium
contact with others.									

Table 4.6 Consumer Engagement with Soft-Sell and Hard-Sell Advertising (Number, Percentage, and Average) (Cont.)

			Level of	Agreeme	nt				
Consumer	5	4	3	2	1	Total			
Engagement	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low				
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number			
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	$\bar{\mathbf{X}}$	S.D	Mean
6. Hard-sell									
advertisements on Douyin	45	74	92	98	91	400			
feel more intrusive and									
tend to disrupt my	(11.3)	(18.5)	(23.0)	(24.5)	(22.8)	(100.0)	3.29	1.308	Medium
viewing experience.									
7.When the soft sell		1	A						
ads on Douyin convey	A 4								
information in a more									
interesting and attractive	59	62	105	108	66	400			
way, I may watch them	(14.8)	(15.5)	(26.3)	(27.0)	(16.5)	(100.0)			
repeatedly.							3.15	1.287	Medium
8.Hard-sell									
advertisements on									
Douyin encourage me		111	B-Bs			T.			
to take immediate	64	64	109	95	68	400			
actions, such as visiting a	(16.0)	(16.0)	(27.3)	(23.8)	(17.0)	(100.0)			
product page or making a	20	4			Mi				
purchase.	(2/72	0,00		-200	Jil.		3.10	1.309	Medium
9.Soft-sell	0 /	02,08	10	Saria					
advertisements on									
Douyin help me build									
a stronger connection	69	61	104	98	68	400			
with the brand than	(17.3)	(15.3)	(26.0)	(24.5)	(17.0)	(100.0)			
hard-sell advertisements.							3.09	1.328	Medium
10.I am more likely to									
skip hard-sell									
advertisements than soft-	54	53	120	93	80	400			
sell advertisements on	(13.5)	(13.3)	(30.0)	(23.3)	(20.0)	(100.0)	3.23	1.287	Medium
Douyin.									
	Т	otal Ave	rage				3.13	1.313	Medium

From the table 4.6 found that the respondents' Engagement with Soft-Sell and Hard-Sell Advertising is at a medium level on the whole, with an average of 3.13. The study found that for the question of "more likely to skip hard-sell advertisements than soft-sell advertisements on Douyin.", the average level of respondents was the highest, at 3.13.

Table 4.7 Influence on Purchase Decisions (Number, Percentage, and Average).

		Level of Agreement							
Influence	5	4	3	2	1	Total			
on	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low				
Purchase Decisions	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number			
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	X	S.D	Mean
1.Soft-sell advertisements	A (
on Douyin positively	52	61	111	104	72	400			
influence my decision to	(13.0)	(15.3)	(27.8)	(26.0)	(18.0)	(100.0)			
consider purchasing a							3.21	1.270	Medium
product or service.									
2.Hard-sell									
advertisements						,			
on Douyin have a direct	50	66	115	92	77	400			
impact on my decision to	(12.5)	(16.5)	(28.7)	(23.0)	(19.3)	(100.0)	3.20	1.276	Medium
purchase a product or				N P	Li,				
service.	2000				11/11				
3.I am more inclined to	19	8/9/9	T m	ound;	5/0				
make an impulsive		4 9 V 6	7121	10					
purchase after viewing a	58	73	103	95	71	400			
hard-sell	(14.5)	(18.3)	(25.8)	(23.8)	(17.8)	(100.0)	3.12	1.304	Medium
advertisement on									
Douyin.									
4. Soft-sell									
advertisements									
help cultivate a sustained	57	51	105	105	82	400			
interest in a product,	(14.2)	(12.8)	(26.3)	(26.3)	(20.5)	(100.0)	3.26	1.310	Medium
which may lead to a									
future purchase.									

Table 4.7 Influence on Purchase Decisions (Number, Percentage, and Average) (Cont.)

			Level of	Agreeme	nt				
Influence	5	4	3	2	1	Total			
on	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low				
Purchase Decisions	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number			
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	X	S.D	Mean
5. Hard-sell									
advertisements on									
Douyin provide			A						
sufficient information for	53	65	120	78	84	400			
me to make an	(13.3)	(16.3)	(30.0)	(19.5)	(21.0)	(100.0)			
immediate purchase							3.19	1.303	Medium
decision.		1	//A						
6.I feel more assured in									
making a purchase after									
watching a soft-sell									
advertisement that		100				l.			
creates a narrative or	53	63	95	121	68	400			
emotional bond with the	(13.3)	(15.8)	(23.8)	(30.3)	(17.0)	(100.0)			
product.							3.22	1.275	Medium
7.I prefer purchasing			1 - 1 -	111		1			
products promoted						Si			
through hard-sell					1	0			
advertisements due to the	61	68	87	102	82	400			
clarity in highlighting the	(15.3)	(17.0)	(21.8)	(25.5)	(20.5)	(100.0)			
product's features and	167	2/9/8	FO F	saua.			3.19	1.350	Medium
benefits.									
8.Soft-sell advertisements									
enhance my trust in a									
brand, making me more									
likely to consider	57	52	113	103	75	400			
purchasing from them in	(14.2)	(13.0)	(28.2)	(25.8)	(18.8)	(100.0)	3.22	1.290	Medium
the future.									
						l		1	

Table 4.7 Influence on Purchase Decisions (Number, Percentage, and Average) (Cont.)

Influence			Level of	Agreeme	nt				
on	5	4	3	2	1	Total			
Purchase Decisions	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low		$\bar{\mathbf{X}}$	S.D	Mean
			Number		Number	Number			
9.Hard-sell	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)			
advertisements									
often pressure me into									
making quick purchase	56	65	104	90	85	400			
decisions, sometimes	(14.0)	(16.3)	(26.0)	(22.5)	(21.3)	(100.0)			
without thoroughly			SSA				3.21	1.326	Medium
evaluating all options.		A .	///						
10.I am more inclined to		1/4							
purchase from a brand on									
Douyin that consistently	47	64	124	93	72	400			
employs soft-sell	(11.8)	(16.0)	(31.0)	(23.3)	(18.0)	(100.0)	3.20	1.244	Medium
advertising techniques.									
	Т	otal Ave	erage				3.20	1.295	Medium

From the table 4.7, the respondents' Influence on Purchase Decisions are at a medium level on the whole, with an average of 3.20. The study found that the question of 'Soft-sell advertisements help cultivate a sustained interest in a product, which may lead to a future purchase' average level of respondents was the highest, at 3.26.

Table 4.8 Preferences and Acceptance (Number, Percentage, and Average)

		Level of Agreement							
Preferences	5	4	3	2	1	Total			
And	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low				
Acceptance	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	X	S.D	Mean
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)			
1.I find soft-sell	54	57	101	119	69	400			
advertisements on Douyin	(13.5)	(14.2)	(25.3)	(29.8)	(17.3)	(100.0)	3.23	1.273	
more relatable and less									Medium
intrusive, making them									
my preferred format.									

Table 4.8 Preferences and Acceptance (Number, Percentage, and Average) (Cont.)

		Level of							
	5	4	3	2	1	Total			
Preferences	Highest	High	Medium	_	Very low	Total			
And			Number		Number	Number			
-									
Acceptance	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	$\bar{\mathrm{X}}$	S.D	Mean
2.Hard-sell							Λ	3.D	Mean
advertisements on									
			A.						
Douyin are effective at		60	105	0.4	77	400			
grabbing my attention	55	69	105	94	77	400			
quickly, more so than	(13.8)	(17.3)	(26.3)	(23.5)	(19.3)	(100.0)	3.17	1.305	Medium
soft-sell ads.									
3.Soft-sell advertisements									
are generally more									
enjoyable to watch on	55	54	99	119	73	400			
Douyin compared to	(13.8)	(13.5)	(24.8)	(29.8)	(18.3)	(100.0)	3.25	1.286	Medium
hard-sell formats.									
4.I am more receptive to									
hard-sell advertisements									
on Douyin because they		111.		100					
deliver clear, direct	49	64	115	108	64	400			
information about	(12.3)	(16.0)	(28.7)	(27.0)	(16.0)	(100.0)	3.18	1.237	Medium
products or services.	2	11		M.	in				
5.The emotional appeal	8/20	2			J.				
of soft-sell	167	8/9/18	ra F	saug.	o.				
advertisements on		0 0	IVI						
Douyin aligns well with	48	60	117	104	71	400			
my preferences for	(12.0)	(15.0)	(29.3)	(26.0)	(17.8)	(100.0)			
subtle, impactful							3.23	1.246	Medium
marketing.									
6.I often skip hard-sell									
advertisements on									
Douyin as they can feel	50	54	104	97	95	400			
overly assertive or	(12.5)	(13.5)	(26.0)	(24.3)	(23.8)	(100.0)	3.33	1.312	Medium
aggressive.	(12.5)	(13.3)	(20.0)	(21.3)	(23.0)	(100.0)	3.33	1.512	
uggicssive.									

Table 4.8 Preferences and Acceptance (Number, Percentage, and Average) (Cont.)

	Level of Agreement								
	5	4	3	Agreemen 2	1	Total			
Preferences		-		_	1 V1	Total			
	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low		-		
And			Number				₹7	a D	3.4
Acceptance	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	X	S.D	Mean
7.Soft-sell advertisements									
are more effective for me									
in building a sense of			A						
long-term trust with a	40	62	107	114	77	400			
brand than hard-sell	(10.0)	(15.5)	(26.8)	(28.5)	(19.3)	(100.0)	3.31	1.231	Medium
advertisements.									
8. When I need to make		1	/A						
quick purchasing	A 4								
decisions, I find hard-	54	63	114	101	68	400			
sell advertisements on	(13.5)	(15.8)	(28.5)	(25.3)	(17.0)	(100.0)	3.17	1.268	Medium
Douyin more persuasive.		100				l.			
9.I am more inclined to									
engage with soft-sell									
advertisements as they									
resonate with my	52	59	107	96	86	400			
emotions or personal	(13.0)	(14.8)	(26.8)	(24.0)	(21.5)	(100.0)	3.26	1.305	Medium
values.					1	T			
10.I recognize hard-sell	2			1	1/4				
advertisements as an	8/25	20		40	Ji.				
essential part of the	167	Elgy	FO F	saua.					
browsing experience on	47	56	120	106	71	400			
Douyin, even if they are	(11.8)	(14.0)	(30.0)	(26.5)	(17.8)	(100.0)	3.24	1.236	Medium
more direct.									
	Т	otal Ave	erage				3.24	1.270	Medium

From the table 4.8, the respondents' Preferences and Acceptance of Advertising Formats are at a medium level on the whole, with an average of 3.24. The study found that the question of 'often skip hard-sell advertisements on Douyin as they can feel overly assertive or aggressive' average level of respondents was the highest, at 3.33.

Table 4.9 Attitudes and Motivations (Number, Percentage, and Average)

		Level of Agreement							
Attitudes And Motivations	5 Highest	4 High	3 Medium	2 Low	1 Very low	Total	X	S.D	Mean
Wouvations	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Λ	3.D	Mean
1.I am more likely to									
watch advertisements on	53	43	104	111	89	400			
Douyin if they align with	(13.3)	(10.8)	(26.0)	(27.8)	(22.3)	(100.0)			
my personal interests,							3.35	1.299	Medium
preferences, or needs.			17.						
2.I tend to view brands			333	,					
using soft-sell		4							
advertising more	54	51	115	91	89	400			
positively because these	(13.5)	(12.8)	(28.7)	(22.8)	(22.3)	(100.0)			
ads appeal to my							3.27	1.309	Medium
emotions and align with		111							
my values.									
3.I am more inclined to									
respond to hard-sell									
advertisements, as they	55	62	102	113	68	400			
provide clear and direct	(13.8)	(15.5)	(25.5)	(28.2)	(17.0)	(100.0)			
reasons for why I should		98			0		3.19	1.278	Medium
purchase a product.	2	41	7 7 7		INI				
4.I am motivated to	2/72	0,0		200	15				
engage with	. 6/	2308	FO F	Saude					
advertisements on	56	60	102	105	77	400			
Douyin when they offer	(14.0)	(15.0)	(25.5)	(26.3)	(19.3)	(100.0)			
valuable information							3.22	1.304	Medium
about the product or									
service being promoted.									
5.Soft-sell advertisements									
on Douyin inspire me to									
explore a brand or	42	64	127	94	73	400			
product further without	(10.5)	(16.0)	(31.8)	(23.5)	(18.3)	(100.0)			
feeling pressured to							3.23	1.223	Medium
make an immediate									
purchase.									

Table 4.9 Attitudes and Motivations (Number, Percentage, and Average) (Cont.)

	5	4	3	2	1	Total	-		
Attitudes	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low				
And	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	-		
Motivations	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	X	S.D	Mean
6.I believe that hard									
advertising is more									
effective in influencing me									
to make a faster purchase									
decision because they	49	64	116	98	73	400			
provide a more convenient	(12.3)	(16.0)	(29.0)	(24.5)	(18.3)	(100.0)			
and clear purchase path.			222				3.20	1.260	Medium
7.Soft-sell advertisements		01							
on Douyin encourage me									
to share them with my									
friends because they are									
either entertaining,	55	60	99	103	83	400			
emotionally engaging,	(13.8)	(15.0)	(24.8)	(25.8)	(20.8)	(100.0)			
or meaningful.							3.25	1.316	Medium
8.I am motivated by hard-									
sell advertisements when									
they include time-limited			H-81			-			
offers or discounts,	57	59	108	103	73	400			
prompting me to make	(14.2)	(14.8)	(27.0)	(25.8)	(18.3)	(100.0)	3.19	1.293	Medium
quicker decisions.	2	11	7 1 7		1017				
9.I feel a higher level of	8/20	2		-ci	K S.				
trust towards brands that	र वि	8/9/18	ge F	saugs					
employ soft-sell advertising		0 0 6	IVI	(0					
strategies, as they seem more	57	60	110	107	66	400			
sincere and considerate of	(14.2)	(15.0)	(27.5)	(26.8)	(16.5)	(100.0)	3.16	1.275	Medium
my preferences.									
10.I am more likely to									
follow brands or accounts									
on Douyin that consistently									
use soft-sell advertising									
formats, as they align better	45	66	100	113	76	400			
with my emotional	(11.3)	(16.5)	(25.0)	(28.2)	(19.0)	(100.0)			
engagement and values.							3.27	1.260	Medium
		Total Ave	erage		1		3.23	1.282	Medium

From the table 4.9 found that the respondents' Preferences and Acceptance of Consumer Attitudes and Motivations are at a medium level on the whole, with an average of 3.23. The study found that the question of 'more likely to watch advertisements on Douyin if they align with my personal interests, preferences, or needs' average level of respondents was the highest, at 3.35.

Table 4.10 Consumer Behavior Insights (Number, Percentage, and Average)

			Level of						
	5	4	3	2	1	Total			
	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low				
Consumer Behavior	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number			
Insights	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	X	S.D	Mean
1. I tend to watch Douyin	A		U						
advertisements in full if	63	54	95	108	80	400			
they effectively engage	(15.8)	(13.5)	(23.8)	(27.0)	(20.0)	(100.0)			
my emotions or offer							3.22	1.338	Medium
compelling content.									
2.I am more inclined to									
like or comment on									
advertisements using a	56	62	102	107	73	400			
soft-sell approach, such	(14.0)	(15.5)	(25.5)	(26.8)	(18.3)	(100.0)	3.20	1.295	
as emotional storytelling,					ille				Medium
on Douyin.	2010		1		1/11/				
3.I usually skip hard-sell	18	8/9/18	रेल ह	sangs					
advertisements on		0 0 6	1191	10					
Douyin that focus									
primarily on the	49	71	111	100	69	400			
product's features or	(12.3)	(17.8)	(27.8)	(25.0)	(17.3)	(100.0)	3.17	1.258	Medium
include a direct call to									
action.									
4.I am more likely to									
share soft-sell									
advertisements on	59	73	92	105	71	400			
Douyin, especially when	(14.8)	(18.3)	(23.0)	(26.3)	(17.8)	(100.0)	3.14	1.315	Medium
they are entertaining or									
relatable.									

Table 4.10 Consumer Behavior Insights (Number, Percentage, and Average) (Cont.)

	Level of Agreement								
	5	4	3	2	1	Total			
	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low				
Consumer Behavior	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number			
Insights	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	$\bar{\mathbf{X}}$	S.D	Mean
5.Advertisements on	. ,	, ,	` ′	, ,	, ,	,			
Douyin, particularly									
those that emphasize									
limited-time offers or	40	5. 4	110	0.1	50	400			
discounts, significantly	49	74	113	91	73	400			
influence my purchasing	(12.3)	(18.5)	(28.2)	(22.8)	(18.3)	(100.0)			
decisions.			446	_			3.16	1.269	Medium
6.After viewing a hard-		94		10					
sell advertisement on	A 1								
Douyin that clearly									
presents product									
information, I am more	63	66	107	84	80	400			
likely to make a	(15.8)	(16.5)	(26.8)	(21.0)	(20.0)	(100.0)			
purchase.							3.13	1.339	Medium
7.I feel more connected to									
advertisements on									
Douyin that incorporate			H-BY			2			
creative storytelling, as						5			
opposed to those that	58	61	103	100	78	400			
overtly promote the	(14.5)	(15.3)	(25.8)	(25.0)	(19.5)	(100.0)			
product.	78/20	2		· ci	K.O.		3.20	1.314	Medium
8.I tend to trust brands	167	8/9/9	T OF	Sauge					
more when their		006	1191	10.					
advertisements on									
Douyin adopt a softer,	54	63	104	102	77	400			
more subtle approach to	(13.5)	(15.8)	(26.0)	(25.5)	(19.3)	(100.0)			
promoting their products.				,	, ,		3.21	1.297	Medium
9.I am motivated to									
purchase products after									
engaging with hard-sell									
advertisements on	57	77	113	75	78	400			
Douyin that highlight	(14.2)	(19.3)	(28.2)	(18.8)	(19.5)	(100.0)			
urgency or exclusivity.	(14.4)	(17.3)	(20.2)	(10.0)	(17.5)	(100.0)	3.10	1.313	Medium
urgency of exclusivity.							5.10	1.313	Mediuiii

	5	4	3	2	1	Total			
	Highest	High	Medium	Low	Very low				
Consumer Behavior	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number			
Insights	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	$\bar{\mathbf{X}}$	S.D	Mean
10.I prefer advertisements									
on Douyin that focus on									
providing useful product									
information, rather than	65	55	104	106	70	400			
those that appeal	(16.3)	(13.8)	(26.0)	(26.5)	(17.5)	(100.0)			
primarily to emotions.							3.15	1.317	Medium
	7	Γotal Ave	erage				3.17	1.306	Medium

Table 4.10 Consumer Behavior Insights (Number, Percentage, and Average) (Cont.)

From the table 4.10, The respondents' Preferences and Acceptance of Consumer Behavior Insights are at a medium level on the whole, with an average of 3.17. The study found that the question of 'tend to watch Douyin advertisements in full if they effectively engage my emotions or offer compelling content' average level of respondents was the highest, at 3.22.

4.3PART 3: DATA ANALYSIS FOR HYPOTHESIS TESTING RESULTS

4.3.1 Correlation Analysis

As shown in the table 4.11 below, in the correlation analysis, there is a significant correlation between Douyin Usage and Familiarity with Advertisements, Consumer Engagement, Influence on Purchase Decisions, Preferences and Acceptance, Consumer Attitudes and Motivations, and Consumer Behavior Insights. Specifically, the correlation coefficients between Douyin Usage and Familiarity with Advertisements, Consumer Engagement, Influence on Purchase Decisions, Preferences and Acceptance, Consumer Attitudes and Motivations, and Consumer Behavior Insights are 0.870, 0.842, 0.829, 0.836, and 0.835 respectively, all reaching a significant level (p < 0.01). This indicates that Douyin Usage and Familiarity with Advertisements have

a strong correlation with the Consumer Engagement, Influence on Purchase Decisions, Preferences and Acceptance, Consumer Attitudes and Motivations, and Consumer Behavior Insights. In other words, Douyin Usage and Familiarity with Advertisements is directly affect Consumer Engagement, Influence on Purchase Decisions, Preferences and Acceptance, Consumer Attitudes and Motivations, and Consumer Behavior Insights. Therefore, when formulating Douyin marketing strategies, it is necessary not only to pay attention to users' usage habits and their familiarity with advertisements but also to consider the associations between these factors and consumer engagement, purchase decisions, preferences and acceptance, attitudes and motivations, and consumer behaviors, in order to better meet user needs and improve marketing effectiveness.

Table 4.11 Summary of Correlation Analysis Across Various Dimensions

	Douyin		Influence	Preferences	Consumer	Consumer
	Usage and	Consumer	on	and	Attitudes	Behavior
	Familiarity	Engagement	Purchase	Acceptance	and	Insights
	with		Decisions		Motivations	
	Advertisements					
1. Douyin Usage	1					
and Familiarity with						
Advertisements						
2. Consumer	0.870**	1	0.0	1		
Engagement				Zi.		
3. Influence on	0.842**	0.890**	1	3		
Purchase Decisions	2.5			1.70		
4. Preferences and	0.829**	0.854**	0.878**	10		
Acceptance	18/20		ci	10°		
5. Consumer	0.836**	0.851**	0.869**	0.899**	1	
Attitudes and	7	1 V 61 (2)	Karis			
Motivations						
6. Consumer	0.835**	0.844**	0.859**	0.907**	0.910**	1
Behavior Insights						
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01						I

4.3.2. Regression Analysis

H1: Soft-sell advertising formats will have a positive impact on consumer behavior and engagement on Douyin.

As shown in the table 4.12 below, in the regression analysis, the results indicate that the soft-sell advertising format has a significant impact on consumer behavior and

engagement on Douyin. The constant term is -0.092, with a t-value of -1.734 and a pvalue of 0.084, suggesting that the constant term is not significant. The regression coefficient of consumer engagement is 1.016, with a standard error of 0.016, a Beta value of 0.952, a t-value of 62.365, and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the impact of consumer engagement on the soft-sell advertising format is significant and shows a positive relationship. The adjusted R² is 0.907, indicating that the model has a good fit to the data, and the independent variable of consumer engagement can explain 90.7% of the variation in the dependent variable, the behavior and engagement of the soft-sell advertising format on Douyin. The value of the F-statistic is 3889.444, with a p-value of 0.000, suggesting that the probability that the regression coefficients of the model are not zero is extremely low, and the fitting effect of the model is significant. The Durbin-Watson statistic is 1.999, close to 2, indicating that there is no autocorrelation in the residuals of the model. Based on the comprehensive analysis results, it can be concluded that the behavior and engagement of the soft-sell advertising format on Douyin are significantly affected by consumer engagement. Therefore, when carrying out advertising design, emphasis can be placed on emotional attraction and the euphemistic delivery of information, so as to amplify the advantages of soft-sell advertising and thus increase the level of consumer engagement.

Table 4.1 2 Regression Analysis of the Impact of Soft-Sell Advertising Format on Consumer Behavior and Engagement on Douyin

	В	Standard	Beta	t	p
		error			
Constant	-0.092	0.053	-	-1.734	0.084
Consumer	1.016	0.016	0.952	62.365	0.000**
Engagement					
R ²			0.907		
Adjusted R ²			0.907		
F		F (1,39	98) = 3889.444,	p = 0.000	
D-W			1.999		
* p<0.05 ** p<0	.01				

H2: Hard-sell advertising formats will positively influence consumers' purchase decisions on Douyin.

The regression analysis results showing that the hard-sell advertising format has a significant impact on consumers' purchase decisions on Douyin are as follows. The constant term is 0.345, with a t-value of 3.911 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the constant term has a significant impact on the purchase decision. The regression coefficient of the impact of the hard-sell advertising format on the purchase decision is 0.882, the standard error is 0.026, the Beta value is 0.859, the t-value is 33.456, and the p-value is 0.000, demonstrating that the hard-sell advertising format has a significant impact on the purchase decision and presents a positive relationship. The adjusted R² is 0.737, suggesting that the model fits the data well and that the independent variable of the hard-sell advertising format can explain approximately 73.7% of the changes in the dependent variable, which is the purchase decision. The value of the F-statistic is 1119.276, and the p-value is 0.000, showing that the probability that the regression coefficients of the model are zero is extremely low and that the fitting effect of the model is significant. The Durbin-Watson statistic is 1.994, close to 2, indicating that there is no autocorrelation among the residuals of the model. Based on the comprehensive analysis results, it can be concluded that the hard-sell advertising format has a significant impact on consumers' purchase decisions on Douyin and the impact is very remarkable. Therefore, when designing the hard-sell advertising format, emphasis can be placed on how to enhance the attractiveness and influence of the advertisement so as to guide consumers to make purchase decisions more effectively.

Table 4.1 3 Regression Analysis of the Impact of Hard-Sell Advertising Format on Consumers' Purchase Decision on Douyin.

	В	Standard	Beta	t	p	
		error				
Constant	0.345	0.088	-	3.911	0.000**	
Consumer	0.882	0.026	0.859	33.456	0.000**	
Engagement						
R ²	0.738					
Adjusted R ²	0.737					
F	F (1,398)=1119.276,p=0.000					
D-W	1.994					
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01						

4.3.3 Paired Samples Test

H3: Consumers will show differing levels of acceptance and preference for soft-sell versus hard-sell advertising formats on Douyin.

From Table 4. 1 4, a paired samples test has been carried out on the questions gauging consumers' preference and acceptance regarding soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats. The test outcomes under the 95% significance level are as follows.

For the first pair (Question 1 and Question 2), the p-value stands at 0.360 > 0.05. This implies that there is no significant difference in consumers' acceptance and preference for the two advertising formats within this comparison group. Similarly, for pair 2 (Question 3 and Question 4), with a p-value of 0.291 > 0.05, it also indicates no notable distinction in consumers' responses to soft-sell and hard-sell advertising.

In the case of pair 3 (Question 5 and Question 6, where the data of Question 6 has been reverse-coded to ensure logical consistency and streamline the analysis), the p-value is 0.000 < 0.05. This clearly demonstrates a significant divergence in consumers' acceptance and preference for the two formats in this particular group, suggesting that users perceive and engage with them quite differently.

Likewise, for pair 4 (Question 7 and Question 8), the p-value of 0.014 < 0.05 shows a significant difference in consumers' acceptance and preference. However, for pair 5 (Question 9 and Question 10), the p-value is 0.778 > 0.05, signifying no significant difference.

Overall, except for pairs 3 and 4, the p-values of the remaining pairs exceed 0.05. This indicates that in most measured aspects, consumers do not exhibit a blatant preference for either soft-sell or hard-sell advertising formats. Nevertheless, the significant results in pairs 3 and 4 highlight specific areas where consumer behavior and preferences deviate.

The results presented in Table 4.14 further illustrate the paired samples test of acceptance and preference for these advertising formats on Douyin. For Pair 1, the mean difference was 0.058, with a p-value of 0.36, corroborating the lack of a statistically significant difference. Pair 2, having a mean difference of 0.067 and a p-value of 0.291, aligns with the previous findings. In contrast, Pair 3 reveals a remarkable mean difference of 0.558, along with a highly significant p-value of 0.000, emphasizing the strong variation. For Pair 4, the mean difference was 0.15, with a p-value of 0.014, denoting a moderate yet meaningful difference. Pair 5 showed a minimal mean difference of 0.018 and a p-value of 0.778, confirming no significant disparity.

In conclusion, the combined results display a mixed picture. While certain areas, like in Pairs 1, 2, and 5, show no significant differences, the significant variations in Pairs 3 and 4 spotlight specific aspects where consumer behavior and preferences diverge. These findings offer partial support for H3, underlining that consumers' acceptance and preference for these advertising strategies vary depending on the context. It aligns with the concept that soft-sell formats may appeal more to emotional engagement, while hard-sell formats might resonate better with rational decision-making.

Therefore, marketers should be astute in flexibly adjusting advertising strategies when devising campaigns. By capitalizing on the emotional engagement strengths of soft-sell advertising and the rational decision-making advantages of hard-sell advertising, and combining the merits of both, they can substantially enhance marketing efficiency.

Table 4.14 Paired Samples Test of Acceptance and Preference

	Paired Differences							р
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	(2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	0.058	1.254	0.063	-0.066	0.181	0.917	399	0.36
Pair 2	0.067	1.276	0.064	-0.058	0.193	1.058	399	0.291

Table 4.14 Paired Samples Test of Acceptance and Preference (Cont.)

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	p (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair	0.558	2.281	0.114	0.333	0.782	4.887	399	0.000
3								
Pair	0.15	1.215	0.061	0.031	0.269	2.469	399	0.014
4				A.				
Pair	0.018	1.243	0.062	-0.105	0.14	0.281	399	0.778
5								

4.4 PART 4: CONCLUSION OF HYPOTHESES TESTING RESULTS

The study examined three hypotheses regarding advertising formats on Douyin and their effects on consumer behavior and preferences. Here are the results conclusion of each hypotheses testing.

Hypothesis 1: It proposed that soft-sell advertising formats would positively influence consumer behavior and engagement on Douyin. The analysis supports this hypothesis, showing that soft-sell advertisements, which focus on emotional appeal and subtle messaging, effectively increase views, likes, shares, and overall interactions. The conclusion is that soft-sell advertising significantly impacts consumer behavior and engagement.

Hypothesis 2: It suggested that hard-sell advertising formats would positively affect consumers' purchase decisions on Douyin. This hypothesis is also supported by the results, which reveal that hard-sell advertisements, emphasizing product features and direct benefits, strongly drive consumers toward immediate purchasing actions. The conclusion confirms the positive influence of hard-sell advertising on purchase decisions.

Hypothesis 3: It proposed that consumers would have differing levels of acceptance and preference for soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on Douyin. The results partially support this hypothesis. While there are areas where no significant difference in consumer preferences was found, certain scenarios highlight distinctions between the formats. Soft-sell advertising appeals more to emotional engagement, while hard-sell advertising aligns better with rational decision-making. Marketers are encouraged to leverage the strengths of both formats to achieve optimal results.

Therefore, these above conclusions provide a clear understanding of how softsell and hard-sell advertising formats impact consumer behavior and preferences on Douyin.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

In this chapter, a comprehensive summary of the research results presented in the previous chapters was provided. Through an in-depth analysis of the collected data and detailed interpretation of the hypothesis test results, the aim was to clearly explain the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior on Douyin. This chapter also explored the theoretical and practical contributions of this study and analyzed its limitations. In addition, based on the research conclusions, practical suggestions were provided for marketers to help them optimize their advertising strategies on Douyin, so as to better attract consumers and promote business success. At the end of this chapter, readers had a comprehensive understanding of the results of this study and its significance in the field of digital marketing.

This research was carried out against the background of the booming development of digital marketing. As an influential social media platform, Douyin's diversified advertising formats provided rich materials for the research. Starting from the theoretical basis, a research framework was constructed using the Elaboration Likelihood Model, Theory of Planned Behavior, AIDA model, and Uses and Gratifications Theory to explore in depth how soft-sell and hard-sell advertising affected consumers' behavior on Douyin. Through rigorous research methods, including quantitative research design, reasonable sample selection, and data collection and analysis, a series of valuable research results were obtained. These results not only revealed consumers' cognition, preferences, and behavioral responses to different advertising formats but also provided empirical evidence for further exploring the effectiveness of advertising strategies. In the following content, the specific conclusions, contributions, limitations, and guiding significance of the research for marketing practice were elaborated in detail.

5.1 CONCLUSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1.1 Conclusion of Research Results by Objectives of Study

In the field of digital marketing research, precisely setting and deeply analyzing research objectives are of utmost importance for comprehensively understanding and grasping specific phenomena. This study focuses on the application of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on the Douyin platform and establishes three core research objectives, aiming to reveal the complex mechanisms of their impact on consumer behavior from multiple dimensions. The following is a detailed summary of the research results for each objective based on the data collected in Chapter 4 and relevant references. In the analysis process, only the data of respondents who clearly expressed a higher degree of agreement (i.e., choosing "5 - Highest" or "4 - High") are considered to ensure the rigor of the analysis.

Objective 1: To examine the influence of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior and engagement on Douyin.

Through the analysis of consumers' behavior of contacting soft-sell and hard-sell advertisements on the Douyin platform, it is found that soft-sell advertisements show significant advantages in attracting consumers to participate. From the data in Table 4.6 of Chapter 4, many soft-sell advertisements have successfully attracted consumers to watch advertisements completely by telling brand stories, creating emotional atmosphere and other means. Among them, 135 respondents (33.8%) said they often watch soft-sell advertisements completely, which indicates that soft-sell advertisements have a certain effect in stimulating consumers' continuous attention. This is consistent with the view that soft-sell advertising can stimulate consumers to deal with the central route and trigger deep thinking (Shao et al., 2023).

At the same time, soft-sell advertising has also performed well in stimulating consumer interaction behavior. 138 people (34.5%) said that sharing soft-sell advertising in the social circle helps to strengthen social contact with others, which is

consistent with the view that soft-sell advertising can meet consumer social interaction needs (Mutiara & Putri, 2023). Consumers believe that soft-sell advertising is more attractive, and its emotional narrative and creative elements make advertising more ornamental, which is consistent with the characteristics of Douyin platform users' pursuit of entertainment and emotional resonance.

In contrast, hard-sell advertising has some effect in promoting consumers to make purchase decisions quickly, but its overall participation is relatively weak. 150 people (37.6%) agreed that hard-sell advertising could prompt them to make purchase decisions more quickly. However, hard-sell advertising is often considered by consumers to be more intrusive. 119 people (29.8%) said that hard-sell advertising would interfere with their viewing experience, leading some consumers to choose to skip (26.8% of 107 respondents said they were more likely to skip hard-sell advertising), indicating that hard-sell advertising may cause consumer resistance (Ren, 2019).

To sum up, soft-sell advertising has shown outstanding performance in establishing emotional connection and promoting interaction with consumers. Its strategies and content elements can effectively attract consumers to participate deeply, and meet the needs of Douyin users in entertainment and social interaction. However, this does not mean that hard-sell advertising is useless. Its directness in promoting purchase decisions still has some value, but it needs to be improved in attracting continuous attention and participation of consumers to better adapt to the communication characteristics and user preferences of the Douyin platform.

Objective 2: To compare the difference between soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats in the impact on consumers' purchase decisions on the Douyin.

The impact of soft-sell advertising on consumers' purchase decisions is mainly reflected in long-term brand building and the cultivation of potential purchase intention. According to the data in Table 4.7, soft-sell advertising makes consumers trust the brand by establishing emotional ties and transmitting brand value. A total of 109 people (27.3%) said that they are more confident in the brand after watching soft-sell

advertising, which will affect their future purchase decisions, indicating that soft-sell advertising pays more attention to long-term brand building (Okazaki et al., 2010).

Hard-sell advertising promotes purchase decisions by directly providing product information and emphasizing immediate benefits. When hard-sell advertisements clearly present product features and preferential information, consumers' impulse to buy has increased significantly, 131 people (32.8%) said they are more likely to have impulse buying. Therefore, hard-sell advertising can promote sales by emphasizing product advantages in a specific market environment, quickly attract consumers' attention and urge them to make immediate purchase decisions (Beard, 2004). A total of 118 respondents (29.6%) said that they were more likely to make a purchase decision immediately after watching such hard-sell advertisements.

In summary, soft-sell advertising focuses on long-term influence on consumer purchasing decisions, establishing consumer trust and potential purchasing intentions through emotional bonds and brand value transmission. Hard-sell advertising has a strong performance in directly stimulating consumers' purchase impulse in the short term, but it may face the risk of consumer satisfaction after purchase. Marketers should use two advertising formats reasonably based on product characteristics and marketing objectives, balancing short-term sales and long-term brand building needs to achieve better marketing results.

Objective 3: To explore the consumer's acceptance and preference differences between soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on the Douyin.

Consumers' acceptance and preference of soft and hard-sell advertising formats show certain differences. In general, soft-sell advertising is more popular with consumers in terms of emotional resonance and entertainment. It can be seen from the data in Table 4.8 that 111 people (27.7%) think soft-sell advertising is more approachable and non-invasive, and 109 people (27.3%) think soft-sell advertising is more enjoyable, which is related to the characteristics of soft-sell advertising that focuses on emotional connection and user experience. Soft-sell advertising builds

emotional ties with consumers by creating a warm and interesting atmosphere, meeting consumers' needs for emotional satisfaction on social media platforms (Zhang & Mao, 2016).

Although hard-sell advertising has advantages in fast delivery of product information, its acceptance is relatively low due to its directness and strong sense of promotion. 124 people (21.1%) recognized that hard-sell advertising can quickly attract attention, but 104 people (26.0%) often skipped hard-sell advertising because they think hard-sell advertising is too direct and tough. However, when consumers clearly have purchase needs and pay attention to product practicality, the information clarity of hard-sell advertising can meet their needs, and then consumers' acceptance of hard-sell advertising will improve (Ye, 2023).

In short, soft-sell advertising has won consumers' favor by virtue of emotional resonance and entertainment, and satisfied their pursuit of emotional experience on social media. The directness of hard-sell advertising has certain advantages in attracting attention quickly, but it is also easy to cause consumer resistance. Marketers should have a deep understanding of consumers' needs and contexts, and choose or combine advertising formats accordingly to improve the acceptance and effectiveness of advertisements, better meet consumers' expectations in different contexts, and thus enhance the overall effectiveness of marketing activities.

5.1.2 Conclusion of Hypothesis Testing

In the field of digital marketing research, hypothesis testing is a crucial step in verifying the relationship between theory and practice. Based on the in-depth exploration of the soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on the Douyin platform, this study proposes three important assumptions, aiming to reveal the internal logic of its impact on consumer behavior. Through carefully designed research methods, these hypotheses were rigorously tested in Chapter 4 using data collection and analysis techniques, the test results of each hypothesis are described in detail below.

Hypothesis 1: Soft-sell advertising formats will have a positive impact on consumer behavior and engagement on Douyin.

The regression analysis (Table 4.12) strongly supports this hypothesis. Although the constant term is not significant, the regression coefficient of consumer participation is as high as 1.016, and the relevant statistical indicators (standard error, Beta value, t-value, p-value, adjusted R ², F-statistic, and Durbin-Watson statistic) all indicate a significant positive correlation between consumer participation and soft-sell advertising format, and the model fitting effect is good. This means that the performance of soft-sell advertising on Douyin is closely related to consumer participation. Through its unique emotional transmission and creative elements, soft-sell advertising has achieved remarkable results in attracting consumers to participate in depth, and consumer participation has become a key factor affecting its effect. This shows that soft-sell advertising can effectively reach the hearts of consumers, stimulate their positive interaction, and provide an important direction for the optimization of advertising effects. Marketing personnel should pay attention to exploring consumers' emotional needs, strengthen the guidance of consumer participation, and further improve the marketing effectiveness of soft-sell advertising on the Douyin platform.

Hypothesis 2: Hard-sell advertising formats will positively influence consumers' purchase decisions on Douyin.

The regression analysis results (Table 4.13) provide a solid basis for hypothesis 2 Constant items significantly affect purchase decisions. Various regression analysis indicators (regression coefficient, standard error, beta value, t value, p value, adjusted R ², F statistics and Durbin-Watson statistics) of the impact of hard-sell advertising format on purchase decisions show that it has a significant positive effect on purchase decisions, and the model fitting effect is significant. This fully shows that the hard-sell advertising format plays an important role in the purchase decision-making process of Douyin consumers. Hard-sell advertising, with its direct presentation of product advantages and clear benefit guidance, has a strong performance in promoting consumer purchase decisions. Its direct impact on purchasing decisions is significant, and the

model can explain the changes in purchasing decisions well. This provides marketers with a clear idea, that is, in situations where the product has obvious advantages or specific market environments, the reasonable use of hard-sell advertising strategies can accurately convey product value, effectively promote consumer purchasing behavior, and improve sales conversion rates.

Hypothesis 3: Consumers will show differing levels of acceptance and preference for soft-sell versus hard-sell advertising formats on Douyin.

Through paired sample test (Table 4.14), the problem of consumer preference and acceptance of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats was analyzed. The results at the 95% significance level are as follows.

For the first pair of questions (question 1 and question 2), the p-value of 0.360 is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant difference in consumer acceptance and preference for the two advertising formats in this comparison group. In the second pair of questions (question 3 and question 4), the p-value is 0.291 and greater than 0.05, which also indicates that there is no obvious difference in consumers' responses to soft-sell and hard-sell advertisements.

In the third pair of questions (question 5 and question 6, where the data for question 6 has been reverse encoded to ensure logical consistency and simplify analysis), the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, which clearly shows that there is a significant difference in consumer acceptance and preference for the two formats in this specific group, indicating that users perceive and participate in them in vastly different ways. In the fourth pair of questions (questions 7 and 8), a p-value of 0.014 is less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference in consumer acceptance and preference. However, in the fifth pair of questions (questions 9 and 10), the p-value of 0.778 is greater than 0.05, indicating no significant difference.

In general, except for the third and fourth pair of questions, the p-values of all the other pairs of questions exceed 0.05, which indicates that in most measurement aspects, consumers do not show obvious preference for soft-sell or hard-sell advertising formats. However, the significant results in the third and fourth pairs of questions highlight specific areas where consumer behavior and preferences differ. These findings provide some support for Hypothesis 3, indicating that consumers' acceptance and preference for these advertising strategies vary from situation to situation. soft-sell format may be more attractive to emotional participation, while hard-sell format may be more consistent with rational decision-making. Consumers' acceptance and preference of soft and hard-sell advertisements show complex situational differences. Although the overall preference is not clear, the unique impact of different advertising formats is highlighted in the comparison of specific issues. This requires marketers to have a deep insight into the needs of consumers in different situations, accurately grasp the advantages and characteristics of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising, and flexibly combine and use them to adapt to diversified consumption scenarios, maximize the satisfaction of consumer expectations, and achieve the optimization and improvement of marketing effects.

5.2 DISCUSSION

This study focused on the impact of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior on Douyin and drew a series of conclusions through systematic research methods. The following provided an in-depth discussion of the research results from three dimensions: theory and concepts, related research, and conceptual framework. The aim was to comprehensively analyze the significance, contribution, and limitations of the research and provide references for subsequent research.

5.2.1 Discussion on Theories and Concepts

The results of this study are closely related to many theories and concepts, providing a new perspective and empirical support for the research on the impact of advertising on consumer behavior in the field of digital marketing, and further deepening the understanding of the mechanism of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising on the Douyin platform.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) believes that there are two ways for individuals to process information: central route and peripheral route (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The results of this study are highly consistent with theory. Through emotional narration and brand stories, soft-sell advertisements stimulate consumers to use the central line to deeply process information and make them think deeply about brand value (Shao et al., 2023). For example, some brands tell sustainable development stories to attract consumers, prompting them to evaluate the consistency between the brand and their own values, thereby forming a positive brand attitude. Hard-sell advertising guides consumers to use peripheral routes to quickly attract their attention and promote purchase decisions by directly presenting product features and promotional information. This shows that marketing personnel can reasonably use soft-sell and hard-sell strategies according to product characteristics and consumer participation motivation, effectively guide consumer information processing routes, and achieve marketing goals.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) emphasizes the influence of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1985). This study fully embodies this theory. Soft-sell advertising can stimulate consumers' positive attitude towards products by creating a positive brand image, thus improving their purchase intention (Ajzen, 1991). For example, the brand conveys a warm image to enhance consumers' purchasing intention. At the same time, the social impact of the rich user generated content (UGC) and interactive functions of the Douyin platform significantly affect consumers' subjective norms. Consumers will adjust their attitudes and behavioral intentions due to the active participation and evaluation of soft-sell advertising by others, providing new evidence for the application of TPB theory in social media environments. Marketers can utilize the interactivity of the platform to actively guide users in generating content, create social impact that is conducive to brand communication, and drive consumer purchasing decisions.

The AIDA model describes the four stages that consumers experience when exposed to advertising: attention, interest, desire, and action (Pramita & Manafe, 2022). In this study, in the stage of attracting consumers' attention, soft-sell advertising uses

emotional resonance and creative elements, such as warm stories and beautiful pictures to attract attention; In the stage of stimulating interest, enhance emotional connection by sharing brand stories and values; Cultivate desire stage, using emotional appeals to make consumers yearn for the brand lifestyle; Promoting the action phase, although the effect is gradual, long-term emotional cultivation can help enhance loyalty. When attracting attention, hard-sell ads highlight product selling points and time limited discounts; Provide detailed product information during the interest stimulation stage; The stage of stimulating desire emphasizes practical benefits; During the action phase, use direct calls to drive purchasing decisions. This study provides rich cases for the operation mechanism of AIDA model in different advertising styles, helping marketers to accurately apply strategies based on product characteristics and marketing goals, and guiding consumers to complete the purchasing decision process.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory emphasizes that the audience uses media based on their own needs and gets satisfaction (Katz et al., 1973). In the advertising context of Douyin platform, soft-sell advertising fully demonstrates the ability to meet the diverse needs of consumers. From the perspective of entertainment demand, providing consumers with recreational and enjoyable experiences through creative storytelling and attractive forms (Ko & Yu, 2019); In terms of educational needs, incorporating knowledge elements to enable consumers to acquire new knowledge; In terms of social interaction, encouraging users to share, comment, and other behaviors promotes social connections (Mutiara & Putri, 2023). This shows that soft-sell advertising has multi-dimensional value, provides creative space for marketers, and enlightens them to dig deeply into consumer demand to create advertising and enhance brand influence.

The concept of online marketing emphasizes the use of digital platforms to interact with consumers and promote products or services (Quelch & Klein, 1996). Douyin platform realizes accurate content push by virtue of advanced algorithms. Soft and hard-sell ads are personalized based on user interest and other data, which improves advertising exposure and marketing effect. Its data analysis tools help marketers understand consumer behavior. This study provides a basis for formulating strategies by

analyzing consumer feedback data on advertising. Soft-sell advertising focuses on user experience and emotional connection, meets various needs of consumers, and promotes the establishment of long-term relationship between brands and consumers; Hard-sell advertising reflects immediate efficiency. Displaying product advantages and promotional activities can quickly attract attention, stimulate purchase impulse, and help enterprises obtain instant sales revenue. This fully demonstrates the important role and practical value of online marketing in Douyin platform advertising.

To sum up, this study provides a solid theoretical basis for the formulation and optimization of advertising strategies for soft and hard-sell in the field of digital marketing by closely combining these theories and concepts and also provides an important reference for future related research.

5.2.2 Discussion on Related Research Studies

This study is closely related to previous related research, which to some extent validates and expands the previous research results and also provides new ideas and directions for research in this field.

Some previous studies emphasized the importance of soft-sell advertising in building emotional resonance and shaping brand image (Xu & Wu, 2022), and the results of this study are highly consistent with them. By telling brand stories and creating an emotional atmosphere, soft-sell advertisements effectively attract consumers' attention, stimulate their interest and promote sharing, thus creating a positive brand image. For example, some brands, by telling the founder's entrepreneurial story or the public welfare activities behind the brand, have aroused consumers' emotional resonance and made consumers have a good impression and trust of the brand. This is consistent with the positive impact of soft-sell advertising on brand image in previous studies, which further confirms the important value of soft-sell advertising in brand building.

Relevant research points out that soft-sell advertising can meet the needs of consumers in entertainment, education, social interaction and other aspects (Salim & Sofri, 2022). This research further enriched this view through in-depth analysis of Douyin platform. On the Douyin platform, soft-sell advertising provides entertainment value for consumers with its creative content and emotional expression, such as some interesting brand stories or creative advertising; At the same time, some soft-sell advertisements are integrated with the elements of knowledge and science popularization to meet the educational needs of consumers; In addition, consumers' active sharing of soft-sell advertising has also promoted social interaction and strengthened the relationship between brands and consumers. This shows that soft-sell advertising has multi-dimensional value on the social media platform, provides more creative space for marketers, and can improve brand influence by meeting the diverse needs of consumers.

Previous studies have found that hard-sell advertising can effectively promote sales by emphasizing product features and advantages in a specific market environment (Beard, 2004). This study again verifies this conclusion under the research background of Douyin platform. In the marketing practice of Douyin, when hard-sell advertisements clearly show the innovative functions, preferential prices or time limited promotions of products, they can quickly attract consumers' attention and stimulate their purchase impulse. Especially when consumers have clear demands for products and pursue cost performance, the effect of hard-sell advertisements is more significant. This provides important reference for marketers when formulating hard-sell advertising strategies, that is, accurately grasping consumer needs based on product characteristics and market environment, highlighting product advantages, in order to achieve better sales results.

5.2.3 Discussion on Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework constructed in this study clearly describes the relationship between soft-sell and hard-sell advertising format and consumer behavior, participation, purchase decision, acceptance and preference, which provides a strong

theoretical basis for understanding the impact mechanism of advertising on consumer behavior, but also has some limitations.

In the conceptual framework, the assumption that soft-sell advertising format is expected to have a positive impact on consumer behavior and participation is fully supported in the study. Through emotional transmission strategies and rich content creative elements, such as touching stories and beautiful pictures, soft-sell advertisements have successfully attracted the attention of consumers, stimulated their emotional resonance, and further promoted consumers to participate in advertising interactions more deeply, such as watching, sharing, and commenting. This shows that soft-sell advertising has significant advantages in establishing emotional connection with consumers, which can effectively enhance consumers' participation in advertising and create favorable conditions for brand communication and promotion.

The positive impact of hard-sell advertising format on consumers' purchase decisions has also been confirmed in the research. With direct sales promotion strategies, such as highlighting product features, displaying preferential information and time limited promotional activities, hard-sell advertising can quickly attract consumers' attention, stimulate their purchase impulse and urge consumers to make purchase decisions more quickly. This is consistent with the assumption in the conceptual framework that hard-sell advertising directly affects consumer purchase decisions by emphasizing product advantages, which provides effective strategic guidance for marketers in promoting product sales.

The research results partially support the assumptions in the conceptual framework regarding consumers' acceptance and preference differences of soft and hard-sell advertising formats. Although there is no obvious difference in consumers' preferences for the two advertising formats as a whole, soft-sell advertising is more popular in certain situations, such as when consumers have a high demand for emotional resonance; When consumers need to quickly obtain product information and make decisions, hard-sell advertising is more attractive. This indicates that consumers' acceptance and preference for advertising formats are influenced by multiple factors,

and marketers need to flexibly adjust advertising strategies based on different contexts and consumer needs to improve the effectiveness of advertising.

However, the conceptual framework of this study has certain limitations. The research mainly focused on the impact of the characteristics of soft and hard-sell advertising formats on consumer behavior, but did not fully consider other factors that may affect consumer behavior, such as consumer personal characteristics (age, gender, consumption habits, etc.), product types (durable consumer goods, fast moving consumer goods, etc.) and external environmental factors (competition situation, social and cultural background, etc.). These factors may play a moderating or mediating role in the relationship between advertising and consumer behavior, and future research can further expand the conceptual framework to include more relevant factors to comprehensively understand the complex impact mechanism of advertising on consumer behavior.

5.3 SUGGESTION

By analyzing how soft-sell and hard-sell advertising formats influence consumer behavior on Douyin, the significant role these strategies play in digital marketing becomes evident. The research results reveal not only how these formats shape consumers' decision-making processes but also provide valuable insights for marketers to better understand consumer needs and refine their advertising strategies.

Based on these results, practical and targeted suggestions can be proposed to enhance marketing efforts while identifying future research opportunities in this area. This discussion focuses on two key aspects: actionable suggestions for marketing practices and potential directions for future studies. The aim is to assist marketers in improving campaign effectiveness, fostering ongoing innovation in digital marketing, and adapting to the ever-changing market environment and consumer needs.

5.3.1 Suggestions from This Study

5.3.1.1 Marketing personnel should have a deep understanding of the characteristics of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising, and skillfully select and combine advertising formats according to product characteristics, marketing objectives and the purchase decision-making stage of consumers. At the initial stage of product promotion, soft-sell advertising can give play to its advantage of emotional connection, attract consumers' attention and establish brand goodwill by telling brand stories, creating a warm atmosphere, etc. For example, some brands that focus on environmental protection can arouse consumers' emotional resonance by telling their own sustainable development history. When consumers have a certain understanding of the product and are close to the purchase decision, hard-sell advertising can quickly convey the key information and preferential strength of the product, and promote consumers to make purchase decisions. For example, during the promotion of e-commerce, highlight product discounts, time limited discounts and other information.

5.3.1.2 A deep understanding of consumer needs is the cornerstone of developing effective advertising strategies. Marketers should use big data analysis, market research, and other methods to accurately grasp consumers' interests, pain points, and purchasing motivations. For consumers who pursue entertainment and emotional experience, soft-sell advertising should focus on creative expression and emotional transmission, such as attracting them through humorous plots or touching stories; For consumers who pay attention to product practicality and cost performance, hard-sell advertising needs to provide detailed and accurate product information, such as performance parameters, price advantages, etc. At the same time, pay attention to the changing needs of consumers in different consumption scenarios, adjust advertising content and form in a timely manner to better meet consumers' expectations.

5.3.1.3 The interactivity of Douyin platform provides a unique opportunity for marketing. Marketers should actively encourage consumers to participate in advertising interactions, such as conducting user comment draws, inviting users to create content related to the brand, and other activities, to enhance consumers' sense of participation and belonging. Use the social attribute of Douyin to expand brand influence through user sharing and word of mouth communication. For example, some

brand initiated creative challenge activities have attracted a large number of users to participate, not only increasing brand exposure, but also stimulating consumers' desire to purchase. In addition, promptly responding to consumer comments and feedback, establishing a good communication mechanism between the brand and consumers, and enhancing consumer trust in the brand.

5.3.1.4 Soft-sell advertising has unique value in shaping brand image and cultivating long-term consumer relations. Marketing personnel should focus on delivering the brand's core values and unique personality through soft-sell advertising, so that the brand can establish a positive and positive image in the hearts of consumers. Continue to invest in soft-sell advertising, maintain emotional communication with consumers for a long time, and cultivate consumer brand loyalty. For example, some high-end brands have attracted a group of loyal consumers by telling stories of brand heritage and craftsmanship spirit for a long time. These consumers not only purchase products, but also become disseminators of the brand.

5.3.2 Suggestions for Further Study

5.3.2.1 Future research can further expand the sample size to cover consumer groups of different ages, genders, regions, cultural backgrounds, and consumption levels, in order to enhance the universality of research results. At the same time, various research methods should be comprehensively applied, such as combining qualitative and quantitative research. In addition to questionnaire surveys, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and other methods can also be used to gain a deeper understanding of consumers' inner thoughts and feelings; Introducing experimental research design to more accurately explore the causal relationship between different advertising variables and consumer behavior, providing more convincing basis for the formulation of advertising strategies.

5.3.2.2 With the diversified development of social media platforms and the acceleration of globalization process, future research can be expanded to multiple platforms to conduct cross platform comparative research, and analyze the effect differences and influencing factors of soft-sell and hard-sell advertising in different platform ecosystems. This paper explores the mechanism of cultural factors in

advertising effects, including the differences in consumers' cognition, acceptance and behavioral response to soft-sell and hard-sell advertising in different cultural backgrounds, and how cultural values affect the dissemination of advertising information and consumers' interpretation. For example, comparing consumers' preferences for emotional and rational advertising appeals in Eastern and Western cultures, studying how to develop adaptive strategies in cross-cultural marketing to improve the effectiveness of advertising and the global competitiveness of brands.

5.3.2.3 Future research can further explore the moderating effect of consumer individual differences on the advertising effect of soft and hard-sell. Besides common demographic variables, further exploration can be made into how consumers' psychological characteristics (such as self-efficacy, perceived risk, innovation acceptance, etc.), consumption habits (such as purchase frequency, brand loyalty, shopping decision-making style, etc.), and social media use behavior (such as social media dependence, ways of participating in social interaction, etc.) impact their perception, attitude, and behavioral response to soft and hard-sell advertising. This will assist in achieving more precise market segmentation and personalized advertising push.



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Questionnaire

Instructions:

This questionnaire is a component of the research study on "Exploring The Impact Of Soft-sell And Hard-sell Advertising Formats On Consumer Behavior On Douyin: A Study Of Effective Communication Strategies For Marketers". Taking Part is voluntary, and your response will be completely confidential, and all data will reported in an aggregated and anonymous manner. Please carefully read and truthfully respond to each question in the survey. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Part 1: Demographics of the Participants

Instructions: Please mark $\sqrt{ }$ in the space that best corresponds to the truth.

1. S	ex		
() Male () Female	
2. A	ge		
() Below 18 years old () 18-22 years	old
() 23-30 years old () 31-40 years	old 🙋
() 40-50 years old () Above 50 ye	ears old
	ducation Level	Tion	01.
3. E	ducation Level	Kauda,	
() Technical secondary school or b	elow () High school
() Junior college	() Bachelor's Degree
() Master's Degree	() Doctoral Degree
4. O	ecupation		
() Student	() Enterprise employee
() Self-employed	() Civil servant
() Freelancer	() Retired
() Others (Please specify)		

Part 2: Douyin Usage and Familiarity with Advertisements

Instructions: Please mark $(\sqrt{\ })$ in the blank space that best corresponds to the truth.

	Agreement Level					
Douyin Usage and Familiarity with Advertisements	5 Highest	4 High	3 Medium	2 Low	1 Very low	
1. I frequently see advertisements while browsing on Douyin.	S					
2. I understand the difference between soft-sell and hard-sell advertisements on Douyin.						
 3. I find soft-sell advertisements (which are indirect and subtle) on Douyin to be more engaging than hard-sell advertisements (which are direct and persuasive). 4. Hard-sell advertisements on Douyin make me more inclined to make a purchase compared to soft-sell advertisements. 	Ranc	sit Urit	(3)S/F/			
5. I am more likely to "like" or share soft-sell advertisements on Douyin than hard-sell advertisements.						
6. The hard-sell advertisements I encounter on Douyin often influence my purchasing decisions.						

7. I have a more positive view of			
brands that use soft-sell			
advertisements on Douyin.			
8. I find hard-sell advertisements on			
Douyin to be overly aggressive or			
pushy.			
9. I prefer soft-sell advertisements on	,		
Douyin because they are more			
entertaining and informative.			
10. Advertisements on Douyin,			
whether soft-sell or hard-sell,			
significantly impact my decision to			
buy products.		<u> </u>	



Part 3: Consumer Engagement with Soft-Sell and Hard-Sell Advertising

Instructions: Please mark $(\sqrt{\ })$ in the blank space that best corresponds to the truth.

Agreement Level				
5 Highest	4 High	3 Medium	2 Low	1 Very low
11				
		Sity		
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Rang	510			
		5 4	5 4 3	5 4 3 2

7. When the soft sell ads on Douyin convey information in a more interesting and attractive way, I may watch them repeatedly.			
8. Hard-sell advertisements on Douyin encourage me to take immediate actions, such as visiting a product page or making a purchase.			
9. Soft-sell advertisements on Douyin help me build a stronger connection with the brand than hard-sell advertisements.			
10. I am more likely to skip hard-sell advertisements than soft-sell advertisements on Douyin.			

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Part 4: Influence on Purchase Decisions

Instructions: Please mark $(\sqrt{\ })$ in the blank space that best corresponds to the truth.

	Agreement Level					
Influence on Purchase Decisions	5 Highest	4 High	3 Medium	2 Low	1 Very low	
1.Soft-sell advertisements on Douyin positively influence my decision to consider purchasing a product or service.						
2.Hard-sell advertisements on Douyin have a direct impact on my decision to purchase a product or service.						
3.I am more inclined to make an impulsive purchase after viewing a hard-sell advertisement on Douyin.	11-11-11					
4.Soft-sell advertisements help cultivate a sustained interest in a product, which may lead to a future purchase.		it Urit	ils.			
5.Hard-sell advertisements on Douyin provide sufficient information for me to make an immediate purchase decision.	Rang	150				
6.I feel more assured in making a purchase after watching a soft-sell advertisement that creates a narrative or emotional bond with the product.						
7.I prefer purchasing products promoted through hard-sell advertisements due to the clarity in highlighting the product's features and benefits.						

8.Soft-sell advertisements enhance my trust in a brand, making me more likely to consider purchasing from them in the future.			
9.Hard-sell advertisements often pressure me into making quick purchase decisions, sometimes without thoroughly evaluating all options.			
10.I am more inclined to purchase from a brand on Douyin that consistently employs soft-sell advertising techniques.			



Part 5: Preferences and Acceptance of Advertising Formats

Instructions: Please mark $(\sqrt{\ })$ in the blank space that best corresponds to the truth.

		el			
Preferences and Acceptance	5 Highest	4 High	3 Medium	2 Low	1 Very low
1. I find soft-sell advertisements on					
Douyin more relatable and less	7.				
intrusive, making them my preferred					
format.					
2. Hard-sell advertisements on					
Douyin are effective at grabbing my					
attention quickly, more so than soft-			1		
3. Soft-sell advertisements are					
generally more enjoyable to watch on					
Douyin compared to hard-sell			/ _		
formats.			3/4		
4. I am more receptive to hard-sell	11/11/11		Q)		
advertisements on Douyin because		14 M.			
they deliver clear, direct information about products or services.	Rang	Siv			
5. The emotional appeal of soft-sell					
advertisements on Douyin aligns well					
with my preferences for subtle,					
impactful marketing.					
6. I often skip hard-sell advertisements on Douyin as they can					
feel overly assertive or aggressive.					

7. Soft-sell advertisements are more			
effective for me in building a sense of			
long-term trust with a brand than			
hard-sell advertisements.			
8. When I need to make quick			
purchasing decisions, I find hard-sell			
advertisements on Douyin more			
persuasive.			
9. I am more inclined to engage with	7		
soft-sell advertisements (e.g., by			
liking or sharing) as they resonate			
with my emotions or personal values.			
10. I recognize hard-sell			
advertisements as an essential part of			
the browsing experience on Douyin,			
even if they are more direct.		7 >	

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Part 6: Consumer Attitudes and Motivations

Instructions: Please mark $(\sqrt{\ })$ in the blank space that best corresponds to the truth.

	Agreement Level					
Consumer Attitudes and Motivations	5 Highest	4 High	3 Medium	2 Low	1 Very low	
1. I am more likely to watch						
advertisements on Douyin if they align						
with my personal interests,						
preferences, or needs.	0.6					
2. I tend to view brands using soft-sell						
advertising more positively because						
these ads appeal to my emotions and	4		À.			
align with my values.						
3. I am more inclined to respond to						
hard-sell advertisements, as they	1110		12			
provide clear and direct reasons for			Si			
why I should purchase a product.	BB a	Uri	2			
4. I am motivated to engage with	pang:	The				
advertisements on Douyin (e.g., liking,	Kans					
sharing) when they offer valuable						
information about the product or						
service being promoted.						
5. Soft-sell advertisements on Douyin						
inspire me to explore a brand or product						
further without feeling pressured to make						
an immediate purchase.						

6. I believe that hard advertising is	
more effective in influencing me to	
make a faster purchase decision	
because they provide a more	
convenient and clear purchase path	
(product link or other purchase path).	
7. Soft-sell advertisements on Douyin	
encourage me to share them with my	
friends because they are either	
entertaining, emotionally engaging, or	
meaningful.	
8. I am motivated by hard-sell	
advertisements when they include	
time-limited offers or discounts,	
prompting me to make quicker	
decisions.	
9. I feel a higher level of trust towards	
brands that employ soft-sell advertising	TE STATE OF THE ST
strategies, as they seem more sincere	
and considerate of my preferences.	Dangsit Uni
10. I am more likely to follow brands	Kans
or accounts on Douyin that	
consistently use soft-sell advertising	
formats, as they align better with my	
emotional engagement and values.	

Part 7: Consumer Behavior Insights

Instructions: Please mark $(\sqrt{\ })$ in the blank space that best corresponds to the truth.

	Agreement Level				
Consumer Behavior Insights	5 Highest	4 High	3 Medium	2 Low	1 Very low
1. I tend to watch Douyin advertisements in full if they effectively engage my emotions or offer compelling content.					
2. I am more inclined to like or comment on advertisements using a soft-sell approach, such as emotional storytelling, on Douyin.					
3. I usually skip hard-sell advertisements on Douyin that focus primarily on the product's features or include a direct call to action.					
4. I am more likely to share soft-sell advertisements on Douyin, especially when they are entertaining or relatable.		ich	CYS/ty		
5. Advertisements on Douyin, particularly those that emphasize limited-time offers or discounts, significantly influence my purchasing decisions.	Rangs	The Miles			
6. After viewing a hard-sell advertisement on Douyin that clearly presents product information, I am more likely to make a purchase.					
7. I feel more connected to advertisements on Douyin that incorporate creative storytelling, as opposed to those that overtly promote the product.					

8. I tend to trust brands more when their advertisements on Douyin adopt a softer, more subtle approach to promoting their products.			
9. I am motivated to purchase products after engaging with hard-sell advertisements on Douyin that highlight urgency or exclusivity.			
10. I prefer advertisements on Douyin that focus on providing useful product information, rather than those that appeal primarily to emotions.			



Part 8: Conclusion and Additional Comments

	Do you have any other feedback or sug	gestions regarding advertising forma	its on
Douy	n?		
•••••			• • • • •



BIOGRAPHY

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