

A Study on the Impact of Value Co-creation in Short Video Content Marketing on User Behavior

Yilong Zhu*

Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou, 571126, China

*Corresponding author: 13637655987@163.com

Abstract: With the rise of short video platforms, the content marketing model has gradually shifted from one-way dissemination to value co-creation characterized by two-way interaction between brands and users. This study focuses on the mechanism through which value co-creation in short video content marketing influences user behavior. By deconstructing the dimensions of value co-creation, analyzing the mediating psychological paths of users, and observing explicit behavioral outcomes, a theoretical model of "behavior-psychology-outcome" is constructed. The research finds that value co-creation, through three dimensions-user-generated content, brand interaction and response, and community meaning construction-triggers core psychological mechanisms in users, such as psychological ownership, internalization of perceived value, and community identification. These psychological mechanisms ultimately lead to behavioral outcomes including deepened user participation, networked content diffusion, and sustained co-creation willingness. This study provides theoretical foundations and practical insights for brands to optimize their short video marketing strategies.

Keywords: short video content marketing; value co-creation; user behavior; psychological mechanism; community identification

Introduction

Within the digital media ecosystem, short video content marketing has become a crucial avenue for brands to establish connections with users. However, traditional one-way communication models face challenges such as low user engagement, information overload, and a lack of trust, creating an urgent need to explore more interactive and sustainable marketing paradigms. The theory of value co-creation provides a new perspective for understanding the dynamic process through which brands and users collaboratively create value. Nevertheless, its constituent dimensions, psychological pathways, and behavioral manifestations within the context of short videos have yet to be framed within a systematic research structure. This study addresses this theoretical gap by analyzing the multidimensional structure of value co-creation, elucidating the intrinsic psychological mechanisms through which it influences user behavior, and observing its ultimate explicit behavioral outcomes. The aim is to construct an integrated theoretical model. The research not only contributes to a deeper understanding of user participation behavior in short video marketing but also provides theoretical support and practical guidance for brands to build long-term user relationships in highly interactive media environments.

1. The Constituent Dimensions of Value Co-Creation in Short Video Content Marketing

In the dynamic field of short video content marketing, value co-creation is no longer an abstract theoretical concept but is manifested as a series of specific, observable interactive behaviors. These behaviors collectively constitute the multidimensional structure of value co-creation, laying the foundation for the operationalization of the core independent variable in this study. This chapter aims to deconstruct this complex process, dividing it into three interrelated yet distinct constituent dimensions: user-generated content and creative collaboration, brand-user interaction and response, and community participation and meaning construction.

1.1 User-Generated Content and Creative Collaboration

User-generated content constitutes the most intuitive and fundamental level of value co-creation. It marks a fundamental shift in the user's role from a passive audience to an active co-creator. Within this

dimension, users do not merely consume pre-set marketing messages from the brand. Instead, through their own content production behaviors, they directly participate in the construction of the brand narrative^[1]. This behavior surpasses simple feedback, presenting itself as a proactive contribution of creativity.

For example, users inject personal interpretations and styles by imitating, remixing, or re-creating brand official videos, thereby deriving novel meanings and forms of expression not originally covered by the source content. Participation in challenge campaigns or topic activities initiated by brands is also a typical manifestation of user creative collaboration. The creativity and effort contributed by users in this process greatly enrich the diversity and authenticity of brand content. Consequently, marketing messages no longer appear as a monolithic brand monologue but evolve into a dialogue involving multiple participants. This collaboration essentially transforms the collective intelligence and creativity of users into brand content assets, providing a continuous stream of material and momentum for value co-creation.

1.2 Brand-User Interaction and Response

The effectiveness of value co-creation largely depends on the sustained interaction and response mechanisms established between the brand side and users. This dimension emphasizes the two-way and real-time nature of the co-creation process, forming a crucial link that connects brand strategy with user contributions. The role of the brand side shifts from being a mere content publisher to an active participant and listener within the community. Specific behaviors include, but are not limited to: providing substantive replies to user comments, publicly adopting and showcasing user creativity in subsequent video content, and offering immediate feedback regarding user questions and suggestions. This interaction is not a formulaic courtesy but aims to establish a relational connection based on respect and recognition.

Through this dynamic dialogue, the brand side not only conveys affirmation of the value of user contributions but can also keenly capture subtle shifts in user preferences and market trends, thereby enabling agile adjustments to content strategy. This dimension ensures that value co-creation is not an isolated user act, but rather a closed-loop system characterized by reciprocal exchange and mutual shaping. The brand's proactive responses further incentivize user willingness to participate, forming a positive feedback loop that reinforces the stability and continuity of the co-creative relationship^[2].

1.3 Community Participation and Meaning Construction

The highest level of value co-creation is manifested in the community network formed around brand short video content and the collective meaning construction undertaken within it. This dimension transcends the binary relationship between the brand and individual users, expanding the perspective to encompass the social interactions among users themselves. At this level, users form a psychological community with a shared consciousness based on common interest in the brand or content. Community members collectively participate in interpreting and re-creating brand value by sharing content, engaging in in-depth discussions, and developing internal-specific "in-jokes" or cultural symbols.

This process ensures that the meaning carried by short video content is no longer confined to the brand's initial intent but is endowed with richer social and cultural connotations. For instance, a product usage scenario might, through collective interpretation within the community, transform from a functional positioning into a symbol of identity or a certain lifestyle. This collective construction of meaning provides users with a sense of belonging and group identification during their participation, significantly enhancing the emotional bond between users and the brand. Consequently, the community becomes a powerful amplifier of meaning and a cultural incubator. The narrative system it co-constructs forms an indispensable and highly dynamic component of brand equity, elevating value co-creation from the behavioral level to the level of emotional and cultural identification.

2. User Psychological Mechanisms in the Context of Value Co-Creation

2.1 The Formation and Role of Psychological Ownership

Psychological ownership is a core construct that explains the deep psychological connection between an individual and a target object, representing the individual's perceived sense of possession and intimate relationship with a specific target, even in the absence of legal ownership. Within the

value co-creation ecosystem of short video content marketing, the generation of psychological ownership primarily stems from users' investment of various key resources into the co-creation process. When users invest their valuable time, focused cognitive effort, unique knowledge and skills, and personalized creative ideas, they establish a substantive psychological connection with the brand content or the brand itself. This investment follows the fundamental psychological principle that "individuals perceive ownership through the investment of themselves." For example, users' re-creation of official brand videos, active participation in brand-initiated creative challenges, or constructive suggestions in comment sections that are adopted by the brand all constitute specific pathways through which users project their "self" onto the brand.

Once established, psychological ownership triggers a series of crucial attitudinal and behavioral consequences. At the cognitive level, it motivates users to process brand information more deeply, enhancing their understanding of the consistency and coherence of the brand narrative. At the emotional level, this internal sense of possession evolves into emotional attachment and a sense of belonging toward the brand, significantly increasing users' sense of responsibility and protective tendencies. Specific manifestations include users developing a higher psychological threshold for defending against negative evaluations of the brand and becoming more proactive in maintaining the brand's online reputation. At the level of behavioral motivation, psychological ownership transforms users' participatory drive from extrinsic, instrumental motivations (such as obtaining rewards) into intrinsic, identity-based motivations, prompting them to engage in more citizenship behaviors that go beyond utilitarian calculation and actively protect the brand's interests. Therefore, psychological ownership constitutes the core psychological cornerstone that sustains and deepens the value co-creation relationship between users and the brand. It is a key psychological variable for understanding the shift of users from temporary participants to long-term brand advocates^[3].

2.2 The Internalization and Moderation of Perceived Value

The process of user participation in value co-creation is, in essence, a dynamic and multi-dimensional complex process of value perception, evaluation, and internalization. This process transcends the singular acquisition of functional value in traditional consumption, forming a multi-faceted value system that includes functional value, emotional value, social value, and even cognitive value. Functional value is reflected in users acquiring practical product knowledge, solutions, or skill enhancement through participation. Emotional value stems from the pleasure, sense of accomplishment, and entertainment experienced during the co-creation process. Social value arises from the social connections, group belongingness, and enhanced social image constructed through interaction. Users subjectively weigh these value dimensions and conduct an overall evaluation based on their own needs, goals, and context.

This integrated and evaluated perceived value does not merely reside at the level of momentary satisfaction but undergoes a deeper process of "internalization." Internalization refers to the process whereby an individual transforms the value concepts conveyed by external stimuli or experiences into part of their own internal, stable system of attitudes and belief structures. In the context of value co-creation, users integrate the multiple values gained from the co-creative experience into their own cognitive schemas and emotional response patterns concerning the brand, thereby forming a more solid and positive attitudinal schema towards the brand. This internalization process enables perceived value to play a key mediating and moderating role. It not only establishes a causal link between value co-creation behavior and users' ultimate behavioral intentions, but the degree and nature of its internalization further moderate the strength and direction of this relationship. Highly internalized, positive value can significantly strengthen user brand loyalty and commitment, thereby positively driving a series of high-involvement behavioral manifestations, such as sustained content co-creation, voluntary word-of-mouth dissemination, and a higher willingness to pay. Therefore, the internalization of perceived value is a core indicator for measuring the psychological efficacy of value co-creation, transforming a one-time interactive experience into a sustainable user-brand relationship asset^[4].

2.3 The Driving Effect of Community Identification

Within the communal context of short video content marketing, the effects of value co-creation are largely amplified and sustained through the socio-psychological mechanism of "community identification." Originating from social identity theory, community identification refers to an individual's cognitive sense of belonging, emotional attachment, and the resulting sense of value and emotional significance toward their perceived social category. When users continuously participate in

brand community interactions on short video platforms—such as engaging in topic discussions, adhering to community norms, using community-specific discourse symbols, and frequently engaging in social exchange with other members—they gradually strengthen their self-categorization into the "we" group identity.

The establishment of community identification signifies a deep integration of the user's self-concept with the community identity. This integration fulfills the individual's basic psychological needs for belonging, respect, and social identity confirmation. On this basis, the user's motivation and behavioral logic undergo a fundamental shift. The driving force for their behavior transitions from individual rationality based on personal cost-benefit calculations to social rationality based on group welfare and identity consistency. Users with a high level of community identification exhibit a strong in-group preference. They internalize the community's values as their own behavioral guidelines and strive to maintain and enhance the status and reputation of their community through their actions.

This driving effect is concretely manifested in a series of extra-role behaviors beneficial to both the brand and the community's development. Users not only more actively produce high-quality content to contribute to the community but also voluntarily take on the role of community stewards—for example, by helping new members, mediating internal conflicts, and spontaneously defending against external negative evaluations. Their brand loyalty is no longer based solely on the merits of the product itself but becomes deeply rooted in loyalty to and defense of the community. Therefore, community identification elevates value co-creation from a binary exchange relationship between the individual and the brand to the level of social identity fusion between the individual and the collective. It provides a more profound and powerful socio-psychological explanation for why users can participate in value co-creation continuously and without expecting immediate returns. This mechanism ensures that user behavior maintains a high degree of stability and resilience within a dynamically changing marketing environment^[5].

3. User Behavioral Manifestations Induced by Value Co-Creation

The in-depth development of value co-creation activities not only reshapes users' psychological cognitive structure but also demonstrates its practical efficacy through specific, externally observable behaviors. These behavioral manifestations constitute the final output of value co-creation activities and serve as important indicators for measuring marketing effectiveness. Based on the aforementioned psychological mechanisms, this chapter systematically examines the multi-level behavioral spectrum exhibited by users in the context of value co-creation, with a focus on analyzing three dimensions: behavioral depth, dissemination breadth, and temporal persistence. These behavioral manifestations extend beyond the scope of traditional consumer behavior, exhibiting stronger participatory, social, and sustainable characteristics, thereby providing behavioral-level evidence for understanding the actual value of co-creation.

3.1 The Deepening of User Participation Behavior

Within the context of value co-creation, user participation behavior exhibits a significant deepening characteristic, evolving from superficial interaction to deep involvement. This deepening is primarily reflected in the increased complexity of actions and the expansion of role scope. Users are no longer confined to simple actions like liking or viewing but are shifting towards more creative and contributory forms of participation. Specific manifestations include the strengthening of knowledge-based contributions; for instance, users provide detailed product usage experiences, solutions, or professional suggestions in comment sections, content which often becomes a significant component of the brand's knowledge base^[6].

Simultaneously, users demonstrate a stronger tendency for collaborative creation, actively participating in brand-initiated thematic discussions, creative solicitations, and even spontaneously creating derivative content. These behaviors greatly enrich the brand's content ecosystem. Furthermore, some deeply involved participants gradually assume community management functions, assisting in maintaining interaction order and answering questions from other users, forming a user-autonomous community operation mechanism. The essence of this behavioral deepening is the user's role transformation from a value consumer to a value co-creator. Their participation behavior consequently shifts from being sporadic and casual interaction to a systematic and continuous process of value output.

3.2 Content Diffusion and Network Extension

Value co-creation activates users' proactive role as nodes in the content dissemination process, significantly expanding the reach radius and influence network of brand information. This behavioral dimension focuses on how users become amplifiers and re-disseminators of brand content. After gaining valuable co-creation experiences, users develop a strong motivation to share content, integrating brand materials into their personal social networks via social media platforms.

This sharing behavior differs from mechanical reposting, as it is often accompanied by personalized reasons for recommendation and contextualized descriptions of use, thereby enhancing the credibility and appeal of the brand message. More importantly, users who are deeply involved in co-creation evolve into key nodes within the brand's communication network. They proactively construct brand-centric sub-dissemination networks by establishing fan communities, managing relevant hashtags, and creating dissemination tutorials, among other methods. These actions not only substantially increase the exposure and reach of brand content but, more critically, achieve diversification and networking of communication pathways. This enables brand information to exhibit an exponential diffusion trend within users' social networks. This user-driven content diffusion model breaks the limitations of linear transmission inherent in traditional marketing, forming a more resilient and dynamic communication ecosystem.

3.3 The Sustainability of Value Co-creation Willingness

The long-term value of value co-creation is largely reflected in the stability and persistence of users' willingness to participate continuously. This dimension focuses on users' psychological commitment and behavioral inclination towards future interactive behaviors following a single co-creation experience. Users who undergo deep value co-creation experiences develop a behavior inertia based on psychological identification, integrating participation in brand interactions into their stable consumption habits and lifestyle. This sustained willingness manifests not only in basic loyalty behaviors such as repeat purchases or continued attention but, more importantly, in the active seeking out and responsive engagement with future co-creation opportunities. For example, users consistently follow the brand's new content updates, proactively participate in newly launched co-creation projects, and maintain long-term interest and investment in the brand's evolution.

This sustained willingness is founded on multiple factors, including the user's identification with the brand's values, satisfaction with the co-creation process, and positive expectations of future value returns. It elevates the relationship between the user and the brand beyond transient transactional interactions, developing into a long-term partnership characterized by resilience and growth potential. This ongoing willingness to co-create forms a crucial foundation for the brand to accumulate social capital and build competitive barriers. It is also the fundamental guarantee for value co-creation activities to achieve long-term commercial value.

Conclusion

This study systematically analyzes the constituent dimensions, psychological mechanisms, and behavioral manifestations of value co-creation in short video content marketing, revealing its internal pathways and external expressions in influencing user behavior. The findings indicate that value co-creation, operating through the three dimensions of user-generated content and creative collaboration, brand-user interaction and response, and community participation and meaning construction, triggers psychological processes in users such as the formation of psychological ownership, the internalization of perceived value, and the strengthening of community identification. These processes ultimately drive the deepening of user participation behavior, the extension of content diffusion networks, and the sustainability of co-creation willingness. These discoveries not only verify the multi-level mechanism of value co-creation in short video marketing but also provide theoretical support for brands to build user-led marketing ecosystems. Future research could further explore the differentiated manifestations of value co-creation across diverse cultural contexts and platform characteristics, develop more contextually adaptive measurement tools, and conduct in-depth analyses of the dynamic evolutionary paths through which value co-creation impacts long-term brand equity.

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