

Chinese Drama Short Video Ad Persuasion Strategy in Building Audience Response on TikTok

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ABSTRACT

The development of digital technology and social media has changed people's entertainment consumption patterns, one of which is through the emergence of short Chinese drama video ads on TikTok that utilize short durations, emotional conflicts, and cliffhanger techniques to attract the attention of audiences. This study aims to analyse the audience's response to Chinese short video drama ads on TikTok which includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects and identify persuasion strategies used to attract audience interest. The research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, non-participatory observations, documentation, and literature studies of 26 informants selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data analysis was carried out using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The results showed that cognitive responses were characterized by attention, understanding, and curiosity about the storyline, affective responses were shown through emotional involvement due to conflict and attractive visual presentations, while behavioral responses were manifested in the act of liking, commenting, following accounts, searching for drama titles, and watching follow-up episodes on other platforms. In addition, persuasion strategies in the form of emotional conflicts, cliffhanger techniques, interesting scene selection, and TikTok's For You Page (FYP) algorithm support have proven to be effective in increasing audience attention, engagement, and active behavior towards Chinese short drama videos.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Published September 1st 2026



KEYWORDS

audience response, digital ads, short video Chinese dramas, persuasion strategies, TikTok.

ARTICLE LICENCE

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1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has changed the way people access, consume, and interact with entertainment content. The ease of internet access and the increasing use of social media make audiovisual content one of the most popular forms of entertainment. These changes have led to the emergence of various content formats that are more concise and easy to consume, one of which is short videos (short video) (Ardianto & Zulfiningrum, 2022). Digital audiences tend to be more active in choosing content, have shorter attention spans, and like content that can provide an emotional experience quickly. This condition encourages the entertainment industry to develop a content distribution strategy that is more adaptive to people's media consumption behavior (Cahyo et al., 2026; Rahman & Amir, 2019; Pratiwi et al., 2026; Suma et al., 2026).

One form of such adaptation is the emergence of Short Video Drama or Micro-drama Chinese origin (Duanju). The drama that was previously 45–60 minutes per episode is now packaged in a 1–5-minute vertical video format with a fast-paced storyline, dense conflict, and suspenseful resolution (Cliffhanger). According to Arsyad (2014), Micro-drama Developed in response to changing media consumption behaviors of the younger generation who want brief entertainment but are still able to build emotional engagement. Kurniawati & Sipayung (2015) also explains that the success of Micro-drama It is supported by a dense narrative, intense conflicts, and its presentation that suits the characteristics of mobile device users.

The popularity of Chinese dramas is increasing through the TikTok platform. Footage of scenes that show the main conflict, romance story, and tension of the story are often used as promotional media to attract the audience's curiosity to continue watching on the drama provider platform (Deryansyah et al., 2023; Junaid et al., 2023; Junaid & Andini, 2026;

Tenrisanna et al., 2022). From a marketing communication perspective, the snippet is a form of digital advertising. McQuail (2010) Explains that advertising is a communication process that aims to convey information about a product or service to the audience so that it can attract attention, build interest, and encourage certain actions from the audience. Therefore, Short Video Drama on TikTok not only serves as entertainment, but also as a promotional strategy that harnesses the power of short narratives and emotional visuals (Nasrullah, 2017; Adam et al., 2026; Yuniatun et al., 2025; Manaf et al., 2024).

TikTok has become a very effective medium in spreading short video Because it is supported by a recommendation algorithm that is able to display content according to the user's preferences (Bordwell, 2013). Based on the 2025 APJII Survey, TikTok is the most widely used social media by the Indonesian people. Vertical video characteristics, short duration, and interactive features such as Like, comments, Share, and Save making the platform able to build engagement (Commitment) audience in high esteem. In the context of communication, audience response is an important indicator to assess the effectiveness of a message. Effendy (2003) states that communication is said to be successful if it is able to cause a certain effect on the recipient of the message, while Rakhmat (2007) Grouping audience responses into three dimensions, namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses.

The phenomenon has attracted the attention of various researchers. Padilah & Kurniawati (2025) found that TikTok audiences tend to accept creator content positively through active engagement in the form of Like, comments, Save, and Share, thus forming a strong digital community. Furthermore, Rusman et al. (2024) through Systematic Literature Review explained that the use of TikTok is influenced by entertainment needs, social interaction, self-expression, and satisfaction with recommendation algorithms, so that TikTok develops as a digital communication medium that is able to meet various psychological needs of users. Research Zahra et al. (2023) also shows that TikTok is effectively used as a medium of business communication because short video content is able to provide stimuli that affect the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects of the audience.

Meanwhile, research on drama still discusses more structural and learning aspects. Zahra et al. (2023) It shows that the drama script has a strong connection between themes, characters, plots, and settings in building the meaning of the story. Rahmadona et al. (2022) also proves that the learning model Concept Sentence able to improve students' ability to write drama scripts. These findings show that the study of drama is still oriented towards literary and educational aspects, not on its use as a digital promotional medium through social media platforms.

Based on the previous research, it can be seen that most of the research still focuses on audience acceptance of TikTok content, satisfaction with social media use, business communication through short videos, and analysis of drama structures. To date, studies that have specifically examined audience responses to ads short video Chinese dramas on TikTok are still very limited. In addition, there have not been many studies that have analyzed audience responses based on cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions to drama footage used as a digital promotion strategy (Fatmawati et al., 2023; Kaye et al., 2022). This research gap is an important basis for the implementation of this research.

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to analyze the audience's response to Chinese drama short video ads on TikTok by examining the forms of audience responses, both from cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects, as well as the factors that influence the emergence of these responses. The results of the research are expected to contribute to the development of digital communication studies, audience behavior, and social media, as well as input for the entertainment industry in designing a more effective short video drama promotion strategy.

2. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to analyze the audience's response to advertising *short video* Chinese drama on the TikTok platform. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research focuses on understanding the meaning, perception, and experience of the audience in responding to digital content, while the descriptive method is used to describe phenomena that occur systematically according to conditions in the field without manipulating the object of research (Creswell, 2014). The object of this research is the audience's response to advertising *short video* Chinese drama on TikTok, while the research subjects were active TikTok users who had watched and responded to the content. Informants are selected using the *purposive sampling* based on the criteria of active TikTok users, have watched *short video* Chinese drama, once responded in the form of *Like*, comments, *Share*, or *Save*, and willing to be a research informant.

The research data consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews (*in-depth interview*) with the informant to obtain information about the understanding, interest, experience, and

form of response to the advertisement *short video* Chinese drama on TikTok. Secondary data was obtained through literature studies which included books, scientific articles, journals, research reports, and other documents related to digital communication, social media, TikTok, and audience responses as the theoretical basis of the research (Endraswara, 2013).

Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews, non-participatory observations, and documentation. Interviews are used to explore the experiences and views of informants on the content being studied. Observation is carried out by observing the form of user interaction on the content *short video* Chinese drama, such as commentary, number *Like*, *Share*, and *Save*, while documentation was used to collect supporting evidence in the form of screenshots, comment archives, and statistical data on content interactions relevant to the focus of the research (Moleong, 2018).

Data analysis uses the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion withdrawal and verification (Miles et al., 2014). The data that has been obtained from the results of interviews, observations, and documentation is categorized based on themes related to the cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses of the audience, then interpreted to answer the research objectives. The validity of the data is tested through source triangulation techniques and triangulation techniques by comparing the results from various data sources so that the research findings have a level of credibility that can be accounted for.

3. Results and Discussion

This study involved 26 informants who were selected using *purposive sampling* techniques in accordance with the research objectives. All informants are active TikTok users who have watched *short video* advertisements for Chinese dramas and have experience responding to the content. The interview was held in the period from April 14 to May 13, 2026 through the TikTok and WhatsApp applications. The characteristics of the informants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Research Informants

Informant Code	Interview Date	Media Interviews
I1	April 14, 2026	TikTok
I2	April 18, 2026	TikTok
I3	April 18, 2026	TikTok
I4	April 18, 2026	TikTok
I5	April 18, 2026	Posted by E
I6	April 18, 2026	Posted by E
I7	April 19, 2026	TikTok
I8	April 19, 2026	Posted by E
I9	April 19, 2026	Posted by E
I10	April 19, 2026	TikTok
I11	April 19, 2026	Posted by E
I12	April 19, 2026	TikTok
I13	April 19, 2026	TikTok
I14	April 20, 2026	Posted by E
I15	April 20, 2026	Posted by E
I16	April 21, 2026	TikTok
I17	April 22, 2026	TikTok
I18	April 22, 2026	TikTok
I19	April 22, 2026	TikTok

I20	April 23, 2026	TikTok
I21	April 23, 2026	TikTok
I22	24 April 2026	TikTok
I23	24 April 2026	TikTok
I24	April 25, 2026	TikTok
I25	May 10, 2026	TikTok
I26	13 May 2026	Posted by E

Source: Research Data, 2026.

Based on Table 1, all informants are active TikTok users who meet the research criteria, namely having been exposed to Chinese *drama short video* ads and having experience in responding to the content. The interview was conducted through the media used by the informant in communicating, namely TikTok and WhatsApp. The diversity of informant characteristics is expected to be able to provide a more comprehensive picture of the audience's response to Chinese drama *short video* ads on TikTok.

3.1 Overview of Audience Response to Chinese *Drama Short Video* Ads on TikTok

The results of the study showed that audiences responded to Chinese drama *short video* ads shown on TikTok. Based on the results of interviews with 26 informants, these responses can be grouped into three dimensions, namely cognitive response, affective response, and behavioral response. These three dimensions show that Chinese drama *short video* ads are not only able to attract the attention of the audience, but also build emotional engagement and encourage follow-up action after seeing the content displayed on the *For You Page* (FYP).

3.1.1 Audience Cognitive Response

Cognitive responses are shown through the audience's attention, recognition process, and curiosity to Chinese drama *short video* ads. Most of the informants admitted that they first knew *Dracus* because the video often appeared on TikTok's FYP page. Repeated exposure to content makes the audience begin to recognize the characteristics of the story, understand the plot, and be interested in following the next video.

One of the informants stated:

Data 1

"At first it was a strange cake, but it took me a long time to get addicted."

The statement shows that the intensity of content appearance in FYP plays a role in building audience attention. Repeated exposure makes informants who were initially not interested become accustomed to the dracine presentation pattern, so that there is an interest in continuing to follow the content.

In addition to attention, curiosity is the most dominant form of cognitive response. The informant revealed that the story that was presented incompletely made them feel compelled to know the continuation of the storyline.

Data 2

"Curious about the continuation."

Data 3

"Very curious to know how it goes."

Data 4

"That was a very interesting episode, sir."

The findings show that the use of the *cliffhanger technique* successfully builds the audience's curiosity. The story pieces that stop at the main conflict section make the audience feel compelled to look for further information about the advertised drama. This condition shows that the cognitive response is not only in the form of attention to the advertisement, but also the emergence of a desire to obtain more complete information about the content of the story.

3.1.2 Audience Affective Response

The affective response can be seen from the emotional involvement of the audience after watching a *short video* advertisement for a Chinese drama. Most informants stated that the conflict shown in the ad was the main factor that made them interested in continuing to watch.

One of the informants revealed:

Data 5

"There are, usually the main conflict parts like the fight, plot twist, or revenge scenes that I'm very curious about."

Another informant also said:

Data 6

"Ads usually feature interesting and conflicting snippets of scenes, making viewers curious about the storyline."

In addition to conflict, the visuals displayed are also considered to be able to build the audience's emotions.

Data 7

"A piece of the drama."

Based on the results of the interview, it is known that conflict and scene selection are the main elements that shape the audience's affective response. Scenes that feature quarrels, revenge, and *plot twists* are able to arouse curiosity, tension, and enthusiasm so that the audience is more emotionally involved in the story being told. Short but concise visual presentations also help keep the audience's attention during the viewing of the ad.

3.1.3 Audience Behavioral Response

The behavioral response is shown through various actions taken by the audience after seeing a *short video* advertisement for a Chinese drama on TikTok. These actions include *liking*, following accounts, searching for drama titles, and watching follow-up episodes on other platforms.

One of the informants stated:

Data 8

"Yes, I have liked and followed the account if the story is interesting, so I don't miss the update or continuation of the video."

Another informant revealed:

Data 9

"Immediately search on TikTok for the title and watch it immediately."

Meanwhile, another informant said:

Data 10

"Looking for follow-up episodes anywhere."

These results show that ads are not only able to attract the attention of the audience, but also encourage the emergence of real actions to obtain more information about the advertised drama. The interest built through video footage makes the audience feel compelled to move to other platforms to continue the full viewing.

In addition to these actions, social interaction is also a form of behavioral response that appears after the audience sees the ad.

Data 11

"It's always fun to interact with your teammates."

The statement shows that TikTok not only serves as a medium for spreading ads, but also becomes a space for social interaction for *dracin's* viewers. The comment column is used to exchange information, share recommendations, and discuss storylines with other users who share the same interests.

Overall, the results show that the audience's response to Chinese drama *short video* ads on TikTok takes place through three interrelated dimensions. Cognitive responses can be seen from attention and curiosity to the content of the story, affective responses are shown through emotional involvement in the conflicts presented, while behavioral responses are manifested in the act of seeking further information, following accounts, providing digital interactions, and watching the drama in full. These findings show that Chinese drama *short video* ads on TikTok are able to build a communication process that not only stops at the message reception stage, but also generates real engagement and action from the audience.

3.2 Chinese Drama Short Video Ad Persuasion Strategy to Attract Audience Interest on TikTok

The results show that the success of Chinese drama *short video ads* on TikTok is influenced by persuasion strategies that are able to attract attention and build audience engagement. Based on the results of the interviews, there are four most dominant persuasion strategies, namely the presentation of emotional conflicts, the use of *cliffhanger techniques*, the selection of interesting scene cuts, and the support of TikTok's *For You Page* (FYP) algorithm. The combination of these four strategies is able to increase the curiosity of the audience and encourage them to continue consuming content.

The first strategy that is most felt by informants is the presentation of conflict as the main attraction in advertising. The informant assessed that video footage generally shows scenes full of conflicts, *plot twists*, or conflicts between characters so that they are able to attract attention from the beginning of the airing. One of the informants revealed:

"Ads usually feature interesting and conflicting snippets of scenes, making viewers curious about the storyline."
(Data 6)

The findings show that conflict is an effective element of persuasion in building audience attention. The presentation of conflict at the beginning of the video makes the audience encouraged to continue following the story and seek a solution to the conflict shown. Thus, the conflict served as an initial trigger that built audience interest in *Chinese drama short video ads*.

In addition to conflict, the *cliffhanger* technique is the most dominant persuasion strategy in maintaining the audience's curiosity. This technique is done by stopping the story at the climax so that the audience is encouraged to know the continuation of the story. This is reflected in the following informant's statement.

"That was a very interesting episode, sir." (Data 4)

"Very curious to know how it goes." (Data 3)

Both quotes show that stopping the story at the most tense part manages to build the audience's curiosity. This strategy encourages viewers to look for the next episode, either through TikTok or other platforms. Therefore, *cliffhangers* not only serve as a storytelling technique, but also become a persuasion strategy that is able to maintain audience engagement.

The next persuasion strategy is seen in the selection of scene pieces used as promotional materials. The informant considers that the advertisement only shows the parts that are considered the most interesting so that it is able to convey the essence of the story in a short time.

"A piece of the drama." (Data 7)

The statement shows that scene selection is an important part of building ad appeal. The scenes chosen generally contain conflicts, emotional expressions, and *plot twists* so that they are able to retain the audience's attention even though the video duration is relatively short. This strategy is in accordance with the characteristics of TikTok users who tend to consume content quickly so that the delivery of messages must be done effectively from the beginning of the video.

In addition to the content aspect, the persuasion strategy is also supported by TikTok's algorithm that allows content to appear repeatedly on users' FYP pages. Constant exposure makes the audience more familiar and accustomed to *dracin's* content. One of the informants stated:

"At first it was a strange cake, but it took me a long time to get addicted." (Data 1)

The statement shows that the frequency of content appearing on FYPs contributes to increased audience interest. Repeated exposure makes informants begin to recognize story patterns, understand *dracin's characteristics*, and finally be encouraged to continue following the content displayed. These findings show that TikTok's algorithm plays a role in supporting the effectiveness of persuasion strategies through increasing the intensity of content exposure.

The success of a persuasion strategy is also reflected in the follow-up actions that the audience takes after seeing the ad. The informant admitted that he was encouraged to look for drama titles, follow content provider accounts, and look for follow-up episodes on other platforms.

"Immediately search on TikTok for the title and watch it immediately." (Data 9)

"Looking for follow-up episodes anywhere." (Data 10)

In addition, some informants also use the comment column as a space to discuss with fellow viewers.

"It's always fun to interact with your teammates." (Data 11)

The findings show that the persuasion strategies applied are not only successful in building attention and curiosity, but are also able to influence the behavior of the audience to take follow-up actions and form social interactions between users. Thus, the persuasive strategy of Chinese *short video* drama ads on TikTok has proven to be effective in increasing audience interest through a combination of emotional conflict, *cliffhanger* techniques, attractive visual selection, and FYP algorithm support that expands the reach and intensity of content exposure.

3.3 Discussion

3.3.1 Audience Interpretation of Chinese Drama Short Video Ads on TikTok

The results of the study show that the audience's cognitive response is formed through the process of recognizing, understanding, and interpreting the content of the message conveyed in *the Chinese drama short video advertisement* on TikTok. Although the duration of the video is relatively short, the majority of informants are able to follow the storyline because the main conflict is presented from the beginning and is supported by Indonesian subtitles. This condition shows that the audience is not only the recipient of information, but also plays an active role in processing the message so that they can understand the storyline that is displayed.

In the perspective of the response theory put forward by Rakhmat (2007), cognitive response is the initial stage when individuals receive, recognize, and interpret stimuli obtained through media. In this study, stimulus in the form of drama footage that appears repeatedly on TikTok's FYP encourages the audience to recognize the story pattern, understand the conflict, and arouse curiosity about the continuation of the storyline. Thus, repeated exposure to content through the TikTok algorithm contributes to the formation of audience cognitive processes.

The findings are in line with research Rusman et al. (2024) which states that TikTok users are actively utilizing short videos to meet their information and entertainment needs. These similarities show that the characteristics of short videos that are concise, easy to understand, and in accordance with user preferences are able to improve the audience's understanding of the message being conveyed. However, this study provides additional findings that the use of *Cliffhanger* Not only does it increase curiosity, but it also strengthens the audience's cognitive processes through the desire to seek further information regarding the plays being shown.

3.3.2 Audience's Emotional Engagement with Chinese Drama Short Video Ads on TikTok

The results of the study show that intense conflicts, *plot twists*, and character expressions are the main factors that give rise to emotions such as curiosity, tension, sadness, and enthusiasm. This condition shows that the emotional element is the main strength in building the appeal of Chinese drama *short video* ads on TikTok. The stronger the conflict shown, the greater the audience's tendency to get emotionally involved and follow the story to the end.

According to Rakhmat (2007), affective responses are related to changes in an individual's feelings and attitudes after receiving a message. In this study, emotional involvement arises because the presentation of conflict is carried out quickly and directly in the core part of the story so that the audience is more easily carried away. The use of background music, player expressions, shooting techniques, and a hanging storyline further strengthens the emotional experience during the watching. The combination of these elements makes the audience not only enjoy the content of the story, but also feel the emotions experienced by the characters in the drama.

The results of this study support the findings Padilah & Kurniawati (2025) which states that TikTok content that has elements of entertainment and emotional closeness is able to increase audience engagement. However, this study shows that emotional engagement is not only influenced by the quality of content, but also by narrative presentation techniques that utilize conflict and *Cliffhanger*. In addition, the characteristics of TikTok that present videos quickly through the page *For You Page* (FYP) also strengthens affective responses because audiences are exposed to content repeatedly. Thus, the storytelling strategy is an important factor in building the audience's affective response to advertising *short video* Chinese drama at the same time encourages them to continue to follow the continuation of the story presented.

3.3.3 Audience Behavior as the Impact of *Chinese Drama Short Video Ads* on TikTok

The results show that the audience's response does not stop at the stage of attention and emotional engagement, but develops into tangible action after seeing the ad. The informant admitted that he was looking for drama titles, following content provider accounts, giving *likes*, sharing videos, and watching follow-up episodes through other platforms. The findings show that Chinese drama *short video* ads are able to encourage follow-up behavior as a form of active audience engagement with content. This behavior indicates that ads not only serve as a promotional medium, but are also capable of influencing the audience's decision to continue consuming the advertised content.

In response theory Rakhmat (2007), behavioral responses are a form of real action taken by individuals as a result of the stimulus received. In this study, these actions are realized through various digital activities, both in the form of interaction on the TikTok platform and the search for further information about the drama being watched. In addition to interacting through the *Like*, comments, *Share*, and *follow*, the audience also shows the behavior of moving to other platforms to gain access to the next episode. This shows that the effectiveness of an ad is not only measured by the number of impressions, but also by the ability of the content to encourage the audience to take action after receiving the message and maintain their engagement with the promoted content.

The findings of this study are in line with the research Zahra et al. (2023) which explains that short video content on TikTok is able to influence user behavior through digital interactions such as *Like*, comments, *Share*, and *follow*. The difference is that the study found that audience behavior is not only in the form of interaction on the platform, but also extends to searching for advanced episodes and moving to other platforms to watch the full drama. This shows that the *Cliffhanger* has a considerable influence in encouraging digital content consumption behavior. Thus, the strategy of presenting a hanging story not only increases the audience's curiosity, but also becomes a factor that encourages the formation of behavioral responses as a form of active audience involvement in advertising *short video* Chinese drama on TikTok.

3.3.4 Factors Influencing Audience Response to *Chinese Drama Short Video Ads* on TikTok

This study identified several factors that influence the formation of audience response to Chinese drama *short video* ads on TikTok. The first factor is the presentation of a short but conflict-filled storyline so that it can attract attention from the beginning of the video. The second factor is visual quality which includes player expressions, cinematography, and emotional scene selection so as to strengthen audience engagement. The third factor is the use of *the cliffhanger technique* that encourages curiosity and the desire to know the continuation of the story. The last factor is the support of TikTok's FYP algorithm which increases the frequency of content exposure so that audiences become more familiar with *Chinese drama* short videos.

The findings support the research Rusman et al. (2024) regarding the role of TikTok's algorithm in increasing the consumption of short videos through a recommendation system that matches user preferences. In addition, the results of the study Padilah & Kurniawati (2025) It also shows that the characteristics of social media content and interactivity contribute to increased audience engagement. This study complements both findings by showing that the success of advertising *short video* Chinese drama is the result of a combination of content quality, persuasion techniques, and distribution mechanisms through TikTok's algorithm. This combination produces cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses that show the effectiveness of TikTok as a digital promotional medium for *short video* Chinese drama.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that audiences respond to Chinese drama *short video ads* on TikTok in three dimensions, namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Cognitive responses can be seen from the audience's ability to understand the storyline and the emergence of curiosity about the continuation of the story. Affective responses are shown through emotional involvement influenced by conflict, *storytelling*, and engaging visuals. Meanwhile, behavioral responses are

reflected in audience actions, such as liking, commenting, following accounts, and searching for and watching follow-up episodes. These findings show that persuasion strategies through conflict, *cliffhanger* techniques, and TikTok's *For You Page* (FYP) algorithm support are effective in building audience attention, emotional engagement, and active behavior. Further research is suggested to involve more diverse informants and use different approaches in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of audience responses to digital content.

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