



Research on Video Cover Design Optimization in Content E-Commerce: Guided by E-Commerce Politeness

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ABSTRACT: This study focuses on the rapid development of content e-commerce platforms and examines video covers as the primary point of user interaction. Despite their importance, video covers are often plagued by issues such as “clickbait” and “cover fraud,” which undermine user experience. Innovatively, this research introduces the concept of *e-commerce politeness* into video cover design studies, investigating how cover design influences users’ perception of politeness in interaction. Using the Critical Incident Technique, 240 valid incidents were systematically collected and analyzed to construct a classification framework of “polite–impolite” behaviors in video covers, with five core categories each for satisfactory and unsatisfactory incidents. Findings reveal that user dissatisfaction is highly concentrated in the fundamental dimensions of “authenticity and credibility” and “clarity of information,” whereas satisfaction primarily stems from high-quality presentation in “value expectation” and “content expressiveness.” This highlights the core tension between attractiveness and authenticity in current cover design practices. Based on these insights, the study proposes a multi-stakeholder improvement path encompassing platform governance optimization, creator content guidelines, regulatory system enhancement, industry standard development, and user feedback mechanisms. Theoretically, this research extends the notion of *e-commerce politeness* from interpersonal interaction to human–computer interaction scenarios. Practically, it provides actionable guidance for optimizing visual interaction design and fostering a healthy content ecosystem on e-commerce platforms, offering valuable reference for the industry’s transition from traffic competition to experience competition.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As user experience increasingly becomes the core source of competitive advantage, content e-commerce platforms (such as Douyin, Xiaohongshu, and Bilibili) are driving a profound transformation from traditional “transaction arenas” to modern “content communities.” These platforms not only sell products but also construct a digital ecosystem centered on content, integrating information, sharing, and emotional connection. Here, consumption often begins not with a specific product but with diverse content created by users—tutorials, reviews, and experience sharing. This “discovery-driven shopping” model, where interest sparked by

content leads to consumption, has become mainstream. Its healthy operation relies fundamentally on strong trust relationships among platforms, creators, and users.

Video covers, as the “first dialogue” between content and users in the information flow, serve purposes far beyond instant clicks. For platforms built on sharing and trust, the cover is the primary visual credential by which users judge the informational value, professionalism, and sincerity of creators. A high-quality cover provides an accurate preview and commitment to the content’s value, whereas a misleading cover directly erodes user trust. However, under the intense competition for traffic, this crucial trust interface faces severe challenges. In pursuit of immediate click-through rates, many cover designs deviate from principles of authenticity and clarity, creating systemic gaps between user expectations and actual content. Such widespread irregularities in cover design essentially represent a serious lack of *e-commerce politeness*. They not only damage users’ single interaction experiences but also gradually erode the trust foundation of the platform’s content ecosystem.

Grounded in the content ecosystem of e-commerce platforms, this study focuses on video covers as a critical interaction node in creator–user engagement. By innovatively introducing the perspective of *e-commerce politeness* and employing the Critical Incident Technique, it systematically collects and analyzes real user experiences with video covers. Through identifying and categorizing “polite” and “impolite” cover behaviors, the study reveals the core contradictions affecting user trust and experiential perception in this specific context. Ultimately, it aims to provide empirically grounded governance recommendations for building a respectful, trust-enhancing content e-commerce ecosystem.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Development and Current Status of Content E-Commerce Platforms

Content e-commerce platforms are an inevitable outcome of social commerce’s deep optimization of user experience amid competition; their core advantage lies in proactively building trust and driving purchase decisions by creating and disseminating valuable content. The rise of this model marks a critical turning point in which e-commerce evolves from being “transaction-centered” to being “relationship- and interaction-centered.” Tracing its developmental trajectory, early research on social commerce aimed to construct macro theoretical frameworks to define this emerging field. For example, some studies proposed a four-dimensional research framework integrating business, technology, people, and information, laying a foundation for understanding social commerce (Zhou et al., 2013); other work constructed a taxonomy of six elements including research themes, social media, and commercial activities, systematically mapping the research landscape of the field (Liang & Turban, 2011). These pioneering efforts jointly revealed the essence of social commerce as commercial activities mediated by social media, leveraging Web 2.0 technologies and social interaction to empower commercial transactions (Curty & Zhang, 2011).

As industry practice and academic research have progressed in parallel, the connotation and focus of social commerce have undergone significant evolution. Systematic literature reviews indicate that research focus has shifted from broad conceptual frameworks to several core experiential elements: user behavior and platform (website) design have repeatedly been emphasized as long-standing dominant research topics (Busalim, 2016; Esmaeili & Hashemi G, 2019); meanwhile, elements closely related to user experience such as trust mechanisms, online reviews, and electronic word-of-mouth have been found to attract increasing scholarly attention (Lin et al., 2017). In this evolution, a new model that places “content” as the fundamental driver of consumption demand — the content e-commerce platform — has become increasingly distinctive and important. Research shows that effective content marketing can not only directly enhance brand trust and customer engagement (Alfraihat et al., 2024; MS, 2021), but also, by providing informational, entertaining, and social value, shape consumers’ positive experiential evaluations and thereby indirectly strengthen brand loyalty (Lou & Xie, 2021). On typical platforms such as TikTok Shop, the synergy between content marketing and electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) has been confirmed as a powerful driver of users’ purchase intentions (Aritonang et al., 2025; Setianingsih & Dema, 2025).

At the same time, the experience on content e-commerce platforms heavily depends on specific platform functions and interaction modes. Studies indicate that users’ informational experience, entertainment experience, and quasi-social relationship-based experience on a platform profoundly affect their commitment to the platform and to influencers, thereby driving purchase intentions (Zhao & Wagner, 2024). This pathway clearly outlines a “discovery shopping” scenario in which users have no explicit shopping goal but have their needs stimulated while browsing content. In this scenario, live-stream participation (Wang et al., 2023), influencer

credibility (Lin & Nuangjamnong, 2022), and intelligent recommendation systems (Wang et al., 2023) have been shown to be key factors influencing user decisions. The design of these interaction links directly determines the quality of the “human–machine interaction” experience between platform and user. However, this content- and interaction-dependent business model also makes user experience highly vulnerable to damage from the platform’s “impolite” designs. Research confirms that the quality and credibility of user-generated content are key prerequisites for building consumer trust, and trust directly relates to final purchase decisions (Sahai et al., 2024). Conversely, empirical studies also show that effective content marketing can significantly enhance customers’ perceived value and willingness to engage (Dwiputra et al., 2025), which implies that low-quality or intrusive content may fail to produce positive experiences and may even harm user relationships. Such behaviors undermine the experiential foundation built on perceived value and trust, constituting “impoliteness” in user experience.

Therefore, optimizing the micro touchpoints of “human–machine interaction” and avoiding design choices that damage user experience through “impoliteness” have become a key consensus for content e-commerce platforms seeking to enhance core competitiveness. Reviewing existing research, scholars have analyzed the operational logic and user experience composition of content e-commerce platforms from macro frameworks, driving mechanisms (such as content marketing and E-WOM), and key functions (such as live streaming and recommendation algorithms). However, as the first visual touchpoint in the content ecosystem and the starting point of “discovery shopping,” the way video thumbnails influence users’ politeness experience has not been systematically explored. Video thumbnails are the primary interface through which users form cognition, develop expectations, and decide whether to engage further; their design quality directly affects the “first impression” of user experience and serves as an early indicator of whether a platform is “polite.” This study aims to fill that research gap by focusing on the video thumbnail — an overlooked but crucial micro-interaction element — and using CIT to investigate how its design elicits users’ perceptions of politeness. This not only deepens research on user experience in content e-commerce platforms but also provides practical and theoretical guidance for platforms to optimize initial interaction experiences and build a polite digital consumption environment.

2.2 The Current State and Applications of e-commerce politeness

With the rise of content e-commerce platforms, the core of user experience has shifted from mere functional implementation to the perceived quality of the entire interaction process, and e-commerce politeness as a key construct has attracted broad attention from academia and industry. The theoretical foundation of e-commerce politeness originates in the human–computer interaction field, where pioneering research introduced concepts such as “politeness computing” and the “politeness of social software,” emphasizing that software design should embody humanized traits like respect, transparency, and responsiveness to earn user trust and continued use (Whitworth, 2005, 2009). This provides an important theoretical basis for understanding the politeness attributes that e-commerce platforms, as human–computer interaction systems, should possess. Guided by this theory, researchers began to systematically apply politeness frameworks to specific e-commerce contexts. Other studies have approached e-commerce platform service quality from a politeness framework perspective, constructing a user value co-creation influence model based on user experience and empirically revealing the impact pathways of the politeness framework and the moderating role of platform type (Chen & Huang, 2025).

At the concrete interaction level between users and platforms, the absence of E-Commerce Politeness can directly trigger negative psychological and behavioral responses. Research that analyzes e-commerce complaint behavior from a pragmatic perspective found that users’ dissatisfaction stems from perceived “moral transgressions” by service agents, manifested as violations of distributive and interactional justice (Huang & Liu, 2025). This study reveals that breaches of e-commerce politeness can damage trust relationships. Conversely, in live-stream e-commerce — a scenario that heavily depends on real-time communication — positive politeness practices become key to facilitating transactions. Studies found that sellers achieve effective polite persuasion by flexibly combining assertions, expressions, directives, commitments, and small talk, indicating that politeness has been deeply embedded in the dynamic, emotional discourse system of digital retail (Widiana & Sri, 2024).

Furthermore, the research scope of e-commerce politeness has expanded to diverse platform types and commercial modalities, demonstrating its wide applicability. From a system-creation perspective, some research suggests that the social technologies adopted by e-commerce platforms should be integrated with social norms and technical implementation to achieve fair, collaborative, and transparent interaction experiences (Whitworth & Ahmad, 2013); in the logistics e-commerce domain, studies indicate that a platform’s display of e-commerce politeness is key to enhancing customer trust, satisfaction, and shaping brand image (Chen & Lu,

2025). In the food-delivery platform context, research has identified that politeness issues in interface design, accurate delivery, and humanistic care significantly affect service quality experience (Chen & Ye, 2025). In cross-domain cooperation contexts, studies from the perspectives of reputation and trust confirm that corporate reputation promotes cooperation among cross-border e-commerce firms through partial mediation by trust, and that politeness principles in information sharing play an important role in building trustworthy cooperative relationships (Chen et al., 2022).

In summary, existing research has preliminarily constructed a research system of e-commerce politeness from multiple dimensions including theoretical foundations, framework applications, psychological drivers, and cultural adaptation. These findings consistently indicate that e-commerce politeness is a complex concept that spans human–computer interaction design, platform service strategy, user psychological perception, and cross-cultural communication. However, despite the growing body of research, the current literature pays relatively little attention to the politeness experience of the video thumbnail — the initial visual touchpoint — within content e-commerce platforms. As the visual gateway through which users first interact with product content, the video thumbnail's politeness attributes such as informational authenticity, visual friendliness, and respect for users' choice autonomy have not been systematically investigated. Therefore, this study focuses on video thumbnails on content e-commerce platforms and employs CIT to capture and analyze the critical incidents that influence users' politeness experience, aiming to fill the gap in the visual-interface politeness dimension and provide empirical evidence for platforms to optimize content presentation strategies and improve user experience.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Critical Incident Technique (CIT)

CIT was first proposed by Flanagan in 1954 as a method that collects and analyzes individuals' experiences of "critical incidents" in specific situations — incidents that they regard as exceptionally effective or ineffective — to reveal core factors that influence behavior, performance, and experience, thereby providing a solid factual basis for understanding complex phenomena (Flanagan, 1954). Due to its strong practicality and flexibility, CIT has been widely applied across multiple disciplines.

In the fields of service research and quality management, the methodological system of CIT has been continuously refined and applied. In service research, a study systematically reviewed 141 applications of CIT and provided guidance for researchers on standardizing the application and reporting of the method, greatly enhancing the rigor and comparability of subsequent studies (Gremler, 2004). Other research deepened CIT at the theoretical level by combining memory and judgment mechanisms from psychology, critically examining the dynamic nature of "criticality" and proposing a "Criticality Critical Incident Technique" (CCIT) analytical framework that emphasizes understanding the critical degree of events from the individual customer's cognitive perspective (Edvardsson & Roos, 2001). This theoretical advancement provides key support for applying CIT in user experience research, suggesting that users' satisfaction or dissatisfaction is not determined solely by the event itself but is closely related to their personal memory, expectations, and judgment processes.

As research contexts extend into the digital world, CIT has also proven to be an effective tool for capturing human–computer interaction experiences. In e-commerce contexts, studies have directly applied CIT to assess a platform's service quality by collecting customers' descriptions of positive and negative incidents, clearly identifying service touchpoints that lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction and providing concrete directions for platform improvement (Ingaldi & Brožová, 2020). In mobile application research, CIT was further combined with situational theory to find that users' behaviors after encountering critical incidents in mobile apps (such as continued use, word-of-mouth, or complaints) are significantly associated with the specific context in which the incident occurred (such as location or social environment) (Salo & Frank, 2017). This research powerfully demonstrates that in digital human–computer interaction, user experience is not isolated but is deeply embedded in specific situational contexts.

In summary, prior research practices in service management, e-commerce, and information systems collectively confirm the unique advantages and effectiveness of the Critical Incident Technique in capturing, analyzing, and understanding users' subjective experiences and behavioral drivers. These studies not only build a solid methodological foundation but also demonstrate how CIT can reveal deep logic that affects overall experience by focusing on specific "critical moments." Based on this, the present study adopts CIT to investigate the issue of e-commerce politeness on content e-commerce platforms. By collecting users' most memorable positive and negative critical incidents when interacting with video thumbnails, this study aims to systematically analyze the core

factors that influence users' perceptions of politeness and thereby provide empirical evidence for optimizing human-computer interaction design based on users' real experiences.

3.2 Research Design

This study extends the concept of "politeness" from traditional interpersonal interaction to the domain of human-computer interaction, specifically referring to the quality of interaction presented by digital platforms in engaging with users. Focusing on video covers as a critical touchpoint, the study examines whether their design, information delivery, and interaction guidance meet users' core requirements for efficiency, accuracy, and comfort. To achieve this, CIT was employed. Open-ended questions combining positive and negative perspectives were designed to systematically collect users' "most satisfactory" and "most unsatisfactory" critical incidents related to video covers, thereby uncovering deeper experiential and attitudinal tendencies.

For data collection, random sampling was adopted to cover user groups of different ages, regions, and usage habits through both online and offline channels. Questionnaire data were collected between July 26 and October 8, 2025. Ultimately, this study aims to systematically analyze user experiences to reveal the politeness performance of video covers on content e-commerce platforms, thereby providing a solid theoretical and practical foundation for optimizing cover design, enhancing human-computer interaction quality, and improving user satisfaction.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Data Collection and Processing

Based on CIT, this study collected a total of 316 raw data entries through questionnaires. To ensure accuracy and validity in subsequent analysis, all data were rigorously screened and verified. A total of 76 entries were excluded due to vague content, irrelevance to video covers, or failure to meet the definition of critical incidents. Ultimately, 240 valid critical incidents were retained, providing a reliable data foundation for exploring politeness experiences on content e-commerce platforms. Among these valid incidents, 120 reflected users' "most satisfactory" experiences and 120 reflected "most unsatisfactory" experiences. This balanced dataset ensured robust comparative analysis of positive and negative dimensions, enabling the study to reveal both strengths and weaknesses of video covers in terms of e-commerce politeness.

4.2 Classification Principles

The classification in this study was primarily based on users' feedback regarding critical incidents in their interactions with video covers on content e-commerce platforms, with emphasis on user perceptions. Through systematic analysis and organization of the collected incidents, five core categories were identified for each type of experience—"most satisfactory" and "most unsatisfactory." The specific category names and detailed explanations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of Critical Incidents and Their Explanations

Satisfactory Incident Categories	Definition	Unsatisfactory Incident Categories	Definition
Visual Appeal (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory)	The user's first impression and intuitive perception of the overall visual presentation of the cover.		
Content Expressiveness	The overall quality and tonal atmosphere of the content as perceived by the user through the cover's visual presentation.	Content Appropriateness	The extent to which the video cover content aligns with the user's moral standards, societal norms, and platform expectations.
Brand Recognizability	The user's ability to identify a specific creator or series of content through distinctive elements in the cover.	Credibility	The retrospective evaluation of consistency between the promises implied by the cover and the actual video

			content.
Information Clarity (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory)		The ease and speed with which users understand the video's theme and core information conveyed by the cover.	
Value Expectation (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory)		The user's anticipation, based on the cover, of the specific benefits or emotional satisfaction the video content may provide.	

Table 2. Number of Individual Consistencies and Individual Classification Consistency of Raters

Events	Satisfactory Incidents		Unsatisfactory Incidents	
	Number of Individual Consistencies	Individual Classification Consistency	Number of Individual Consistencies	Individual Classification Consistency
Rater 1	100	0.833	97	0.808
Rater 2	104	0.867	101	0.842
Rater 3	98	0.817	98	0.817

4.3 Reliability and Validity Testing

Reliability is a key indicator for assessing whether a research method or instrument can produce stable and consistent results across different contexts, and it is crucial for ensuring the accuracy and trustworthiness of research conclusions. In the Critical Incident Technique, reliability analysis of categorization typically includes two core aspects: first, individual coder consistency; and second, inter-coder consistency (Flanagan, 1954).

4.3.1 Individual Coder Consistency

Individual coder consistency evaluates the degree to which different coders classify critical incidents in the same way, directly affecting the objectivity and reliability of the study data. When the consistency coefficients of two or more coders all exceed 0.8, the classification results can be considered to have desirable stability and consistency (Flanagan, 1954). This study invited three professionals with relevant domain expertise to participate in the coding process simultaneously: a university instructor in e-commerce, a senior operator from a content e-commerce platform, and a successful content creator. The analysis results (see Table 2) show that the consistency coefficients for both positive (satisfaction) and negative (dissatisfaction) incidents among the three experts all exceed 0.8, indicating that the classification results meet the reliability requirements.

4.3.2 Inter-Rater Consistency

Inter-rater consistency is used to measure the degree of agreement among different raters when classifying critical incidents, serving as an important indicator for ensuring research reliability. Since the Critical Incident Technique relies on the subjective judgment of raters, testing inter-rater consistency is as crucial as assessing individual classification consistency. When multiple raters categorize incidents according to established standards, the level of agreement directly determines the credibility of the research. A higher level of consistency indicates that the classification criteria are clear and the classification process is reliable. To ensure rigor in classification, this study conducted two rounds of classification at two different time points (with a 14-day interval). The summarized results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Number of Inter-Rater Consistencies

Events	Satisfactory Incidents			Unsatisfactory Incidents		
	Raters	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 1	Rater 2
Rater 1	100	--	--	97	--	--
Rater 2	87	104	--	82	101	--
Rater 3	86	83	86	84	78	98

The reliability analysis method proposed by Holsti was adopted to verify the degree of classification agreement among multiple coders (Holsti, 1969); its calculation formulas are shown in Equations 1 and 2.

$$R = \frac{(N \times A)}{1 + [(N - 1) \times A]} \quad (1)$$

$$A = \frac{\frac{2M_{12}}{n_1 + n_2} + \frac{2M_{23}}{n_2 + n_3} + \frac{2M_{13}}{n_1 + n_3}}{N} \quad (2)$$

R = Reliability

N = Number of raters

A = Average level of inter-rater consistency

M = Number of identical classifications among raters

n = Number of samples classified by each rater

Based on the formulas, the following results were obtained, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Classification Reliability Table

	Average Level of Inter-Rater Consistency (A)	Reliability (R)
Satisfactory Incidents	0.848	0.944
Unsatisfactory Incidents	0.824	0.934

The research results show that the reliability values exceeded 0.9, meeting the requirements set by scholars. This indicates that the inter-rater consistency among the three classifiers demonstrates sufficient reliability and can be considered acceptable.

4.3.3 Validity Analysis

Validity analysis is a critical step in evaluating whether a research method can accurately measure the target concept, playing an essential role in ensuring the scientific rigor and reliability of research findings. To guarantee methodological rigor, this study systematically examines validity from three dimensions: expert validity, content validity, and face validity. The details are as follows:

4.3.3.1 Expert Validity

Expert validity refers to the evaluation by domain experts of the measurement instruments used in a study to judge their professionalism, reasonableness, and scientific rigor, thereby ensuring that the instruments accurately reflect the research topic and comply with academic standards. Research indicates that commonly used assessment tools with a given structure and function should have their content validity reviewed by experts (Haynes et al., 1995). Accordingly, this study invited three experts from different professional backgrounds (including a professor specializing in e-commerce, a senior operator from a content e-commerce platform, and a successful content creator) to jointly evaluate and appropriately revise the collected critical-incident data, thereby ensuring good expert validity for this research.

4.3.3.2 Content Validity

Content validity is used to measure the relevance and comprehensiveness of the content with respect to the research topic, that is, whether the research content sufficiently covers all aspects involved in the topic and accurately reflects its core elements (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). This study employed CIT (Flanagan, 1954) to systematically analyze the representativeness and logical coherence of the collected positive and negative incidents at the content level. The analysis indicates that the critical-incident data obtained in this study effectively cover the core aspects of users' experiences with video thumbnails on content e-commerce platforms, align with the research objectives, and demonstrate good content validity.

4.3.3.3 Face Validity

Face validity concerns how the measurement items appear to respondents, assessing whether the instrument superficially seems related to the research topic from the respondents' perspective (Thomas et al., 1992). This study collected users' real experiences with video thumbnails on content e-commerce platforms via open-ended questionnaires and used intuitive category labels and concrete examples to explain each category, enabling non-expert readers to accurately understand the meaning and classification

logic of each category. The collected data broadly cover the entire interaction process between users and video thumbnails, including first impressions when browsing recommendation pages, judging content value from thumbnails, recognizing creator branding, and retrospective evaluations of thumbnail authenticity after viewing content—typical scenarios that align with the interaction characteristics of content e-commerce platforms where visual content is a key touchpoint. Based on this, the study considers the data used to have good face validity.

4.4 Classification Results

This study divided both satisfactory and unsatisfactory incidents into five categories. Representative critical incidents were extracted from each category for illustration, as shown in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5. Examples of Satisfactory Incidents

Visual Appeal	In the video cover of the game <i>Genshin Impact</i> version PV or character demo, the moment of a character's ultimate move is selected, combined with dazzling light effects and a shattered background. The strong color contrast and dynamic impact immediately attract us as <i>Genshin Impact</i> players.
Content Expressiveness	The cover of the Bilibili creator “Luo Xiang Talks About Criminal Law” incorporates the character “Zhang San” as a design element, along with humorous text. At first glance, it is immediately recognizable as Luo Xiang’s video.
Brand Recognizability	The cover of the Bilibili creator “Luo Xiang Talks About Criminal Law” incorporates the character “Zhang San” as a design element, along with humorous text. At first glance, it is immediately recognizable as Luo Xiang’s video.
Information Clarity	On the brand advertisement cover, a cute little girl is eating dumplings, with large ancient-style clerical script stating “We support Chinese dumplings for heritage listing,” directly highlighting the theme.
Value Expectation	The science popularization cover uses a left-right comparison composition (eating bread in the subway vs. office setting), with the title “From a monthly salary of 3k to 30k, I only changed one habit!” This makes me believe it is “low-cost and replicable.”

Table 6. Examples of Unsatisfactory Incidents

Visual Appeal	Some video covers have very low resolution and are extremely blurry, showing only a vague outline of an animal. They fail to clearly present the video’s subject, leaving me with no desire to click and watch.
Content Appropriateness	Some platform-pushed covers contain borderline content, even targeting user groups that include minors. At times, searching normal keywords yields very different content depending on gender. Such practices may negatively affect minors’ physical and mental health and violate public norms.
Credibility	The video cover used fake, unreleased movie stills with a yellow background and red text stating “Final Episode: Everyone Dies!” (though the actual plot contained no such event). Despite exceeding ten million views, 95% of comments were negative, such as “Clickbait” and “Unsubscribe.” The video received over 120,000 reports and was eventually forcibly removed by the platform.
Information Clarity	A science account released a video titled “The Ultimate Mystery of the Universe,” with a cover showing a PPT screenshot filled with dense formulas in tiny black text, making the title nearly unreadable.
Value Expectation	The cover is a plain photo of a city street, with no landmarks or distinctive elements. The title is simply “Travel Guide,” offering nothing unique and leaving me with no desire to watch.

A preliminary statistical analysis of the classification data was conducted to understand user feedback across different categories, as shown in Table 6 and Table 8.

Table 7. Summary of Categories of Satisfaction Incidents

	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Average	Rank
Visual Appeal	17	9	13	13	4
Content Expressiveness	29	34	29	30.67	2
Brand Recognizability	9	9	11	9.67	5
Information Clarity	25	28	27	26.67	3
Value Expectation	40	40	49	40	1

The analysis of satisfactory incidents reveals that the core drivers of users' positive experiences are, in order: value expectation (mean = 40, ranked first), content expressiveness (mean = 30.67, ranked second), and information clarity (mean = 26.67, ranked third). This ranking indicates that when video covers can accurately signal content value, effectively convey content quality through visual language, and provide clear and comprehensible information, users show strong recognition. Notably, visual appeal (mean = 13, ranked fourth) holds a relatively secondary position in satisfaction, suggesting that mere aesthetic attractiveness is no longer the ultimate pursuit of users, but rather must serve the core function of value communication.

Table 8. Summary of Categories of Dissatisfaction Incidents

	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Average	Rank
Visual Appeal	23	19	22	21.33	3
Content Appropriateness	12	17	8	12.33	4
Credibility	50	43	51	48	1
Information Clarity	26	35	24	28.33	2
Value Expectation	9	6	15	10	5

In contrast, the data on unsatisfactory incidents present markedly different characteristics. Users' negative experiences are highly concentrated in two fundamental dimensions: credibility (mean = 48, ranked first) and information clarity (mean = 28.33, ranked second). This finding indicates that when video covers fail to meet these basic requirements of authenticity and clarity, they constitute the most severe form of "impolite" behavior. Specifically, issues such as "cover fraud" and "inconsistent text and image" directly undermine the foundation of user trust, while ambiguity and confusion in information delivery significantly increase users' cognitive burden. It is noteworthy that the value expectation category ranks lowest (mean = 10, ranked fifth). However, this does not imply that users disregard value perception; rather, when covers cannot even guarantee the basic requirements of credibility and clarity, users' higher-level demand for "value resonance" is substantially suppressed. This finding provides a clear strategic path for platform optimization: credibility and clarity must be prioritized to build a foundation of trust; only on this basis can improvements in content expressiveness and value expectation achieve an upgrade from "usable" to "truly useful" user experiences.

These findings have direct implications for the sustainable development of content e-commerce platforms. Persistent failures in credibility and information clarity of video covers not only lead to user attrition and declining conversion rates, thereby directly impacting economic performance, but also erode user trust over time, ultimately undermining the platform's social value and brand equity. Therefore, platform optimization strategies require fundamental adjustment, with resources prioritized toward establishing a truthful and transparent cover content system and systematically enhancing the accuracy and readability of information delivery. Only by repositioning video covers from "traffic bait" to "value messengers" can platforms effectively resolve the current experiential crisis and transform covers into a competitive advantage that supports long-term development.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on a systematic analysis of 240 valid critical incidents, the study finds that user dissatisfaction is highly concentrated in the two fundamental dimensions of credibility and information clarity, while user satisfaction primarily derives from the high-quality realization of value expectation and content expressiveness. This reveals the core contradiction in current video cover design: in pursuing visual appeal and value expectation, platforms and creators have neglected credibility and clarity—the cornerstones of user experience. To address this, collaborative efforts are required to build a more “polite” content e-commerce ecosystem.

To systematically resolve this contradiction and construct a healthy, sustainable content e-commerce ecosystem, figure 1). This framework clarifies the core responsibilities and interactive relationships among five key stakeholders—regulatory authorities, industry organizations, platforms, creators, and users—working together to build an ecosystem of e-commerce politeness that better meets user experience expectations.

Content E-commerce Platform Ecosystem Guided by “E-commerce Courtesy”



Figure 1 Collaborative Governance Framework for Content E-commerce Platforms Based on “E-commerce Politeness”

5.1 Regulatory Authorities: Governance of Typical Violations and Refinement of Regulations

Regulatory authorities should attach great importance to the typical “impolite” behaviors and their potential risks revealed in this study. First, regarding credibility, the primary source of user dissatisfaction, and content appropriateness, which, although less frequently reported, carries high social harm (e.g., “using images of minors to convey inappropriate implications” or “public disclosure of personal privacy”), regulatory authorities need to improve specialized regulations in the field of content e-commerce. They should clarify the legal boundaries of video covers as commercial promotional media and establish more targeted standards for sensitive sectors such as health, education, and finance. Second, authorities should establish routine monitoring and rapid response mechanisms, leveraging technology to enhance the identification of typical violations such as “cover fraud” and “inconsistent text and image.” Verified cases should be subject to tiered penalties to strengthen deterrence, thereby protecting consumer rights, preventing substantive harm, and delineating clear legal red lines for healthy industry development.

5.2 Industry Organizations: Establishing Standards and Promoting Capacity Building

Industry organizations can play a key role in bridging policy and practice based on the study’s findings. First, to address issues such as insufficient **information clarity**, design homogenization, and limited professional competence among some creators, industry organizations can lead collaboration among platforms, experienced creators, and design experts to jointly develop *Guidelines for Content E-Commerce Video Cover Design*. These guidelines would provide professional references for information hierarchy, font size, and visual element coordination, thereby improving the efficiency of information delivery. Second, industry organizations should systematically conduct professional training and ethics education for creators. Training should cover how to balance visual appeal and information clarity, how to shape value expectation and content expressiveness without distortion, and how to uphold the long-term commercial value of credibility, reducing “impolite” designs caused by insufficient skills or short-term profit motives.

5.3 Platforms: Building Trust-Centered Mechanisms and Algorithmic Guidance As

the core of ecosystem governance, platforms should integrate the key issues reflected in the research data into their governance frameworks and product design. First, to address credibility, platforms must establish stricter mechanisms for verifying the authenticity of cover content, combining AI recognition with manual sampling audits to detect issues such as “using fake movie stills” or “excessive beautification distortion.” A creator credit evaluation system should be linked to these checks, making cover authenticity a key factor in account weighting and traffic allocation. Second, to improve information clarity, platforms can provide cover design assistance tools, such as template libraries, information hierarchy checks, and font clarity reminders, helping creators—especially novices—avoid common problems like text overload and chaotic layouts. Finally, platforms should explicitly incorporate multidimensional cover quality indicators, particularly credibility and information clarity, into recommendation algorithm weighting. This ensures that high-quality content adhering to principles of authenticity, clarity, and appropriateness receives greater exposure incentives, while systematically suppressing “clickbait” and “cover fraud,” guiding the ecosystem toward healthy competition.

5.4 Content Creators: Balancing Value Commitment and Content Authenticity

Content creators should reassess their strategies based on the research data, shifting from short-term click-seeking to long-term trust-building. Although **value expectation** is the primary driver of user satisfaction, its realization must rest on a solid foundation of credibility. Positive cases—such as “precise left-right comparison compositions” or “authentic food close-ups”—demonstrate that sincere value previews are far more enduringly attractive than exaggerated titles. Therefore, creators must first uphold the baseline of content authenticity, strictly avoiding any mismatch between covers and actual content, as a single deceptive experience can lead to permanent user loss. Second, creators should enhance content expressiveness and information clarity, using consistent colors, fonts, and layouts to build distinctive brand recognizability, enabling users to quickly identify and trust content amid information overload. Additionally, creators should actively learn and apply platform tools and industry guidelines to optimize information delivery efficiency, ensuring that core value points are instantly captured and understood by users, thereby achieving a sustainable balance between attracting clicks and safeguarding user experience.

5.5 User Groups: Leveraging Feedback Rights to Promote Ecosystem Optimization

As the ultimate perceivers and experiencers of “e-commerce politeness,” user groups play a vital role in driving ecosystem optimization through active feedback. The study finds that users’ strong focus on credibility provides the clearest direction for platform governance. Users should fully and rationally utilize platform functions such as reporting, rating, and commenting to provide specific and accurate feedback on “impolite” covers, especially issues like “cover fraud” and “inappropriate content.” This feedback offers valuable data support for platforms to identify problematic content and implement precise governance. Furthermore, users can actively support creators who adhere to principles of authenticity, clarity, and professionalism through positive interactions such as likes, favorites, shares, and sustained following, thereby fostering a healthy content ecosystem that emphasizes long-term value and social responsibility. Users may also participate in user experience surveys initiated by platforms or research institutions, transforming their perceptions and expectations of “politeness” in video covers into constructive input for product design and community rule optimization.

Summary In conclusion, governance of the “politeness” experience in content e-commerce video covers is a systemic project involving technology, regulation, ethics, and culture. Through regulatory authorities setting red lines and strengthening enforcement, industry organizations establishing standards and empowering individuals, platforms building mechanisms and guiding algorithms, creators upholding authenticity and enhancing professionalism, and users providing active feedback and rational choices, a collaborative governance system can be formed based on the specific issues and data insights revealed in this study. This system can effectively resolve the core contradictions in current cover design, systematically enhance users’ perception of “politeness” in their experiences, and ultimately drive the content e-commerce industry from extensive traffic competition toward a high-quality, trust- and experience-centered path of sustainable development.

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