A Meta-analysis of Visual Marketing Communication

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Abstract：

Visual marketing communication (VMC) is essential for marketing strategy, yet creating effective visual content and design remains a significant challenge for marketers. This meta-analysis, synthesizing 883 effect sizes from 176 studies, presents empirical generalizations on the effectiveness of VMC. Results show that visual content exerts a stronger overall effect than visual design, with emotional content driving the highest consumer engagement and informational content boosting the highest business performance. Additionally, analysis reveals that perceptual structure positively influences consumer engagement and business performance more than visual complexity. Meta-analytic structural equation modeling indicates that processing fluency fully mediates the positive effects of perceptual structure, while visual complexity's impact is mediated negatively by processing fluency and positively by affective response. A hierarchical linear meta-analysis identifies several key contextualized moderators, e.g., platform type, brand positioning, product tangibility, visual format, and consumer demographics. These findings offer actionable insights for marketers to optimize VMC strategies.