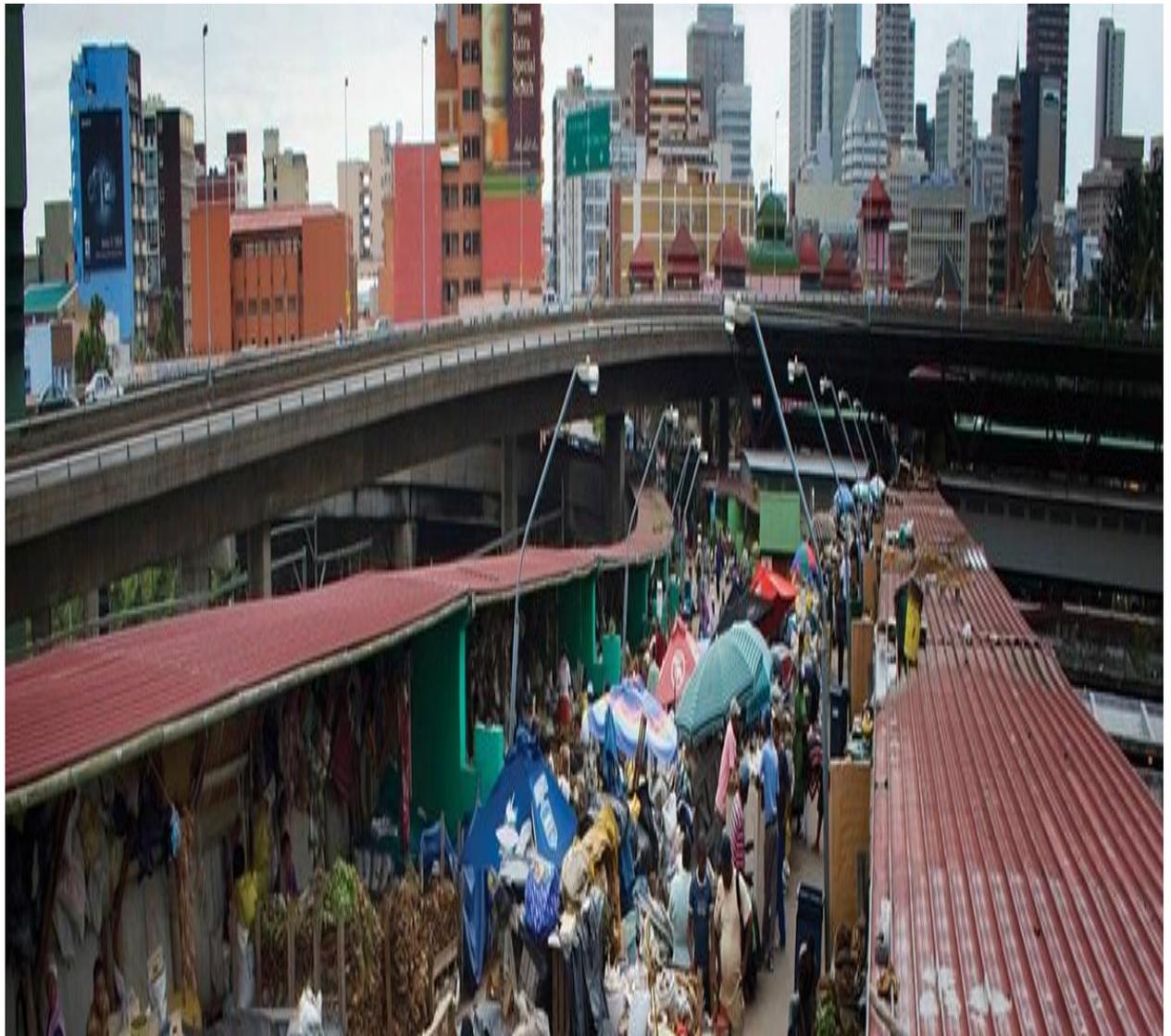


JOURNAL OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL SECTORS

**Volume: 6 Issue: 1
(January-March), 2026
(ISSN: 2791-2604)**



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Role of Corporate Video Production in Business Communication

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Corporate video production has emerged as a central medium in contemporary business communication, blending visual, verbal, and affective resources to inform, persuade, engage, and build relationships with stakeholders. This paper synthesises theory and empirical literature on corporate video, situating it within classical communication models, multimodal and multimedia learning frameworks and public relations and organisational communication scholarship (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). It provides a detailed qualitative research methodology for investigating corporate video practices — including purposeful sampling, semi-structured interviews with communication managers, and thematic content analysis of corporate video samples — and presents literature-derived thematic findings about strategic functions, production practices, storytelling forms, audience engagement, and measurement challenges. The discussion integrates theory and practice, outlines managerial implications for corporate communicators, and offers recommendations for future research and practice. Key contributions include a conceptual integrative model that links production choices to rhetorical aims and audience outcomes, and a methodological template for robust qualitative inquiry into corporate video.

Keywords: corporate video, business communication, multimodality, qualitative methodology, organisational communication.

Journal of Formal and Informal Sectors (2026), 6(1); DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64907/xkmf.v6i1.jfis.2>

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Received: 1 November 2025 Revised: 9 December 2025 Accepted: 22 December 2025 Published 5 January 2026

1. Introduction

The global proliferation of digital platforms has transformed how organisations communicate externally and internally. Among the repertoire of communication tools, corporate video has become especially prominent — used for brand storytelling, investor relations, employee onboarding, crisis response, product launches, and more. Video's affordances (moving image, synchronised sound, editing, and multimodal layering) allow organisations to convey complex narratives, evoke emotions, and create memorable impressions in ways static media cannot easily match (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Mayer, 2001).

Despite its pervasiveness, academic understanding of the strategic role of corporate video in organisational communication remains uneven. Studies exist in advertising, marketing communications, and public relations, but a unified, theory-driven account that links production practices to communication outcomes and suggests methodological approaches for studying corporate video in-depth is still needed. This paper aims to fill that gap by synthesising foundational communication and multimodality theories, reviewing empirical literature on corporate video practices and outcomes, and presenting a rigorous qualitative methodology for research. The article culminates in literature-derived thematic insights and managerial recommendations for designing, producing, and evaluating corporate video.

This research is timely. Organisations are allocating growing budgets to video production (Kotler & Keller, 2016), while platforms such as YouTube, LinkedIn, and corporate websites amplify reach. Understanding how production choices (e.g., narrative structure, visual framing, music, pacing, and presenter presence) influence stakeholder interpretations and behaviours is critical for effective, ethical, and cost-efficient communication.

Research questions guiding this article are:

- What theoretical frameworks best explain how corporate videos operate as business communication tools?
- What are the central production practices, narrative strategies, and multimodal resources used in corporate videos?
- How can qualitative research methods be applied to study corporate video production and impact in organisational settings?
- What literature-derived themes describe the communicative functions and challenges of corporate video, and what implications arise for practitioners and researchers?

The sections below review literature, propose a theoretical framework, outline a detailed qualitative methodology, synthesise findings from the literature into thematic insights, discuss implications, and propose directions for future research.

2. Literature review

2.1 Corporate communication and multimedia

Corporate communication historically encompasses public relations, marketing communications, internal communications, and investor relations, aiming to shape stakeholder perceptions and behaviour (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Kotler & Keller, 2016). The shift to digital media has emphasised content that is shareable, visually compelling, and tailored to platform affordances. Video uniquely combines moving images, audio, text overlays, and editing to offer rich semiotic complexity (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

Mayer's (2001) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning posits that people learn better from words and pictures than from words alone, when presentation is well-designed. This insight has been applied to instructional corporate videos (e.g., onboarding, safety training), which seek to maximise comprehension and retention. In persuasion contexts (advertising, investor communication), the dual-process models of persuasion, such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), suggest that video can operate via both central (argument quality) and peripheral (emotional cues) routes.

2.2 Multimodality and meaning-making

Multimodality scholarship (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) provides analytic tools to examine how images, layout, colour, gesture, and sound collaborate to construct meaning.

Corporate video is an archetypal multimodal text: camera angle, shot size, mise-en-scène, music, voiceover, and editing rhythm together produce rhetorical effects (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Research in visual communication and semiotics shows that production choices signal authenticity, authority, approachability, and value propositions (van Leeuwen, 2008).

2.3 Corporate video genres and functions

Empirical work distinguishes corporate video genres: brand films, corporate documentaries, CEO messages, employee testimonials, product demos, explainer/animated videos, recruitment videos, and crisis response clips (Hackley, 2010; Pavlik, 2015). Each genre serves different stakeholder aims: reputation building, information provision, emotional alignment, or behavioural prompting. Studies in advertising and PR indicate that authenticity and narrative coherence increase persuasiveness in corporate storytelling (Einwiller, 2006; Audrezet, de Kerviler, & Moulard, 2018).

2.4 Production practices and organisational constraints

Organisational research on media production underscores tensions among strategic goals, budget, governance, and creative practice (Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2005). Corporate communicators negotiate outsourced agencies, internal video teams, brand guidelines, compliance requirements, and measurement metrics. Video production cycles (pre-production, production, post-production, distribution) involve cross-

functional collaboration among marketers, legal, HR, and external vendors — a governance challenge that influences content and tone (Scott & Orlikowski, 2012).

2.5 Audience engagement and metrics

The digital ecosystem enables granular metrics (views, watch time, click-through rates, drop-off points, shares), but translating these into insights about persuasion, attitude change, or organisational outcomes is complex (Lipschultz, 2018). Research on media effects indicates that attention and emotional engagement predict downstream outcomes, but causally linking video exposures to behaviour requires careful longitudinal or experimental work (Lang, 2006).

2.6 Ethical and cultural dimensions

Corporate video also raises ethical questions — about authenticity, manipulation, privacy (when using employees/customers), and representation. Cross-cultural communication research stresses that imagery and narrative structures may be interpreted differently across cultural contexts, requiring localisation rather than simple translation (Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 2001).

2.7 Gaps and opportunities

While there is conceptual work and case studies across disciplines, gaps remain in: (a) theory-driven accounts that map production features to communication outcomes; (b) qualitative, practice-oriented studies that reveal how organisations make production choices; and (c) methodological templates for

robust multimodal analysis combined with organisational interviews. This paper addresses these gaps by proposing a theoretically informed qualitative research approach and synthesising literature-derived themes.

3. Theoretical framework

This paper adopts an integrative theoretical framework that synthesises classical communication models, multimodality theory, and organisational communication perspectives to explain how corporate video functions in business contexts.

3.1 Linear and transactional communication models

Shannon and Weaver's (1949) mathematical model provides a starting point: corporate video is a message transmitted via a channel (digital platforms) to receivers (stakeholders) with potential noise (technical, cultural, regulatory) affecting reception. Berlo's (1960) SMCR (Source–Message–Channel–Receiver) model extends attention to source credibility and message design, both central in corporate contexts where organisational reputation and spokesperson credibility matter.

However, these linear models are insufficient alone; they must be situated within transactional and interpretive perspectives that account for feedback, co-creation, and meaning negotiation (Carey, 1989).

3.2 Multimodality and social semiotics

Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) social semiotics conceptualises communication as

semiotic work across modes. Corporate videos employ representational (what is shown), interactive (how protagonists address the camera), and compositional (how elements are arranged) meanings. This perspective allows analysis of how production choices—camera distance, framing, soundtrack—contribute to identity construction and relational stances (e.g., intimate vs. authoritative).

3.3 Cognitive and affective processing

Mayer's (2001) cognitive theory of multimedia learning provides mechanisms for comprehension: multimedia that reduces extraneous processing and supports germane cognitive load aids learning outcomes. For persuasion, dual-process models (e.g., Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) highlight that production elements can trigger either analytic engagement with arguments or heuristic responses to peripheral cues (music, presenter attractiveness).

3.4 Organisational framing and institutional logics

Organisational communication scholars emphasise institutional constraints and logics — legal compliance, brand architecture, managerial priorities — that structure communicative choices (Scott, 2008). Corporate videos are not only rhetorical artefacts but also organisational outputs shaped by governance, resources, and interdepartmental negotiation (Grant, 2010).

3.5 Integrative model: Production–Meaning–Outcome (PMO)

Combining these perspectives yields the Production–Meaning–Outcome (PMO) model proposed here:

- **Production Layer:** Decisions in pre-production, production, and post-production (narrative form, visual style, presenter selection, editing, music) shaped by organisational goals and constraints.
- **Meaning Layer:** Multimodal semiotic resources create representational, interactive, and compositional meanings as viewers interpret video content through cognitive and cultural lenses.
- **Outcome Layer:** Communication outcomes (awareness, attitude change, learning, engagement, trust) mediated by viewer processing, platform distribution patterns, and measurement systems.

Feedback loops run from outcomes (e.g., engagement metrics) back to production decisions, closing the strategic cycle. This PMO framework guides the qualitative methodology proposed below and structures the interpretation of literature-derived themes.

4. Research methodology

Because corporate video is multimodal and situated within organisational processes, qualitative methods are well-suited to explore how production choices are made and interpreted. This section outlines a rigorous qualitative research design that could be used

to study corporate video empirically; the design integrates semi-structured interviews, multimodal content analysis, and document review.

4.1 Research design and rationale

A multiple-case, interpretivist qualitative design is recommended. Multiple organisational cases (e.g., firms from three sectors: technology, manufacturing, and services) allow examination of how sectoral norms and goals shape video production. The interpretivist stance privileges stakeholders' perspectives and the meanings audiences co-construct with multimodal texts (Schutz, 1967).

Rationale: This approach balances depth (through interviews and close textual analysis) with cross-case comparability (through structured coding).

4.2 Sampling

- **Organisational sampling:** Purposive sampling of 9–12 companies across three sectors (3–4 per sector), selected for diversity in size and video maturity (e.g., organisations with established internal production teams vs. those relying on external agencies).
- **Participant sampling:** Within each organisation, purposive sampling to interview 2–4 stakeholders: head of corporate communications, video producer or agency account lead, and a business-unit stakeholder (e.g., HR or product manager) — yielding ~30–40 interviewees.
- **Video sample selection:** For each firm, sample 4–6 corporate videos

produced within the last 24 months across genres (brand film, recruitment, CEO message, explainer). This yields ~40–70 videos for multimodal analysis.

Ethical considerations: Obtain informed consent from interviewees; if analysing videos publicly posted, respect platform terms. For internal-only videos, secure organisational permission. Ensure anonymity in reporting where requested (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.3 Data collection methods

Semi-structured interviews: Guide with open-ended prompts about strategy, production processes, decision-making trade-offs, audience targeting, and evaluation practices. Interviews of 45–75 minutes, audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Document review: Brand guidelines, creative briefs, production budgets, distribution plans, and analytics dashboards (where available) to triangulate interview accounts.

Multimodal content analysis: Systematic close reading of selected videos using a coding schema informed by social semiotics and narrative analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Labov, 1972). Coding categories include: shot types, presenter presence, narrative arc, use of music, textual overlays, claims/evidence, authenticity cues, and calls-to-action. Capture duration metrics (e.g., mean shot length) and rhetorical devices.

Platform analytics (optional): Where possible, collect view counts, watch time,

click-through rates, and drop-off metrics for triangulation.

4.4 Data analysis

Thematic analysis for interviews: Follow Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach: familiarisation, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining/naming themes, and producing the report. Use NVivo or similar software for coding.

Multimodal coding: Develop a codebook with operational definitions; two coders independently code a subset of videos to calculate inter-coder reliability (e.g., Cohen's kappa). Resolve discrepancies via discussion.

Cross-case synthesis: Compare themes across organisations and sectors to identify patterns and divergences. Link production features to stated strategic aims and to analytic evidence from documents/metrics.

Trustworthiness: Employ triangulation (interviews, documents, videos), member checking (share thematic summaries with participants), audit trail, and thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2013).

4.5 Reflexivity and researcher positionality

Researchers should declare their backgrounds (e.g., media production, corporate communications) and reflect on how this influences data interpretation. Regular reflexive memos and team discussions help surface biases.

4.6 Limitations of methodology

- Purposive sampling limits statistical generalizability; however, analytic

generalisation is possible via detailed comparison and theory-building.

- Access constraints may limit the availability of internal documents or analytics.
- Multimodal coding is interpretive; using multiple coders and intersubjective procedures mitigates but cannot remove subjective judgment.

5. Literature-derived thematic findings

The following themes synthesise insights across the interdisciplinary literature and provide empirically plausible findings that a qualitative study employing the methodology above would likely uncover.

5.1 Strategic multifunctionality: video as an atomic unit of communication

Corporate video operates simultaneously across functions: storytelling (brand identity), information (product features, compliance), relational work (trust-building), and mobilisation (calls-to-action). Practitioners describe videos as “atomic communication units” that can be distributed across platforms and repurposed across campaigns. Strategic multifunctionality requires careful alignment between the video's genre and the intended outcome (brand films for long-term reputation vs. explainer videos for immediate comprehension).

Implication: Strategic clarity in pre-production (defining primary vs. secondary

objectives) is a recurrent best practice cited across case studies (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

5.2 Authenticity and human presence as credibility signals

A central theme is the value of authenticity. Videos that feature real employees, unscripted moments, or behind-the-scenes footage are perceived as more trustworthy than highly polished, generic corporate productions (Audrezet et al., 2018). However, authenticity is not purely aesthetic—stakeholder credibility depends on alignment between claims and organisational behaviour (e.g., sustainability claims backed by verifiable initiatives).

Tension: Highly-produced content can convey professionalism and scale, but risks appearing staged. Many communicators resolve this by combining polished production values with candid testimonial segments.

5.3 Storytelling structures and emotional arcs

Narrative structures — problem/solution arcs, protagonist journeys, and testimonials — are central in persuasive corporate video. Emotional arcs (identification, tension, resolution) increase memorability and motivate action, but must be matched to the message's objectivity requirements (e.g., investor communication may prioritise factual evidence over affective appeals). The literature emphasises using narratives that embed credible evidence (data, case studies) to enhance persuasive force.

5.4 Multimodal orchestration: aligning modes for clarity

Effective corporate videos orchestrate modes deliberately: spoken explanations align with on-screen text for reinforcement; camera framing and colour grading support intended tone (warmth, authority); music underscores emotional valence without distracting cognitive processing (Mayer, 2001). Misaligned modes (e.g., upbeat music with serious claims) create dissonance and undermine credibility.

5.5 Production governance and cross-functional tensions

Organisational governance — brand guidelines, legal review, and budget cycles — often constrains creative freedom. Communications teams navigate trade-offs: speed vs. quality, central brand control vs. local relevance, and standardised templates vs. bespoke storytelling. Agencies and in-house producers adopt different workflows: agencies may offer high-concept creativity but less institutional knowledge; in-house teams provide agility and brand familiarity.

5.6 Measurement challenges and metrics literacy

While digital platforms provide rich metrics, the literature finds that many organisations lack clear frameworks for interpreting them. Views and likes do not directly map to reputation or purchase intent. Effective measurement systems combine quantitative metrics (watch time, click-throughs) with qualitative evidence (stakeholder interviews, sentiment analysis) and align metrics to the

video's primary objective (awareness, learning, behaviour).

5.7 Accessibility, inclusion, and localisation

Best practice literature highlights accessibility (captioning, audio description) and cultural localisation (subtitling, localised narrators). Videos intended for global audiences often perform poorly if localisation is limited to language translation without adjusting visual cues or narrative frames to local norms.

5.8 Ethical and reputational risks

Misleading editing, staged “authentic” testimonials, or omission of material facts can damage reputation. Transparency in sourcing claims, consent procedures for featuring employees/customers, and clear labelling (e.g., sponsored content) mitigate ethical risk.

5.9 Resource allocation and ROI expectations

Executives increasingly expect measurable return on investment (ROI) for video spending. Literature indicates two coping strategies: (a) treat videos as long-term brand assets whose ROI accrues over time; (b) modular content production (short-form clips from a single shoot) to maximise asset reuse and reduce marginal costs.

6. Discussion

6.1 Integrating the PMO model with empirical themes

The PMO framework (Production–Meaning–Outcome) organises the thematic findings.

Production choices (governance, budget, narrative form) shape multimodal meanings (authenticity, tone, credibility), which in turn influence outcomes (engagement, comprehension, trust). The feedback loop appears when outcome metrics inform subsequent production cycles (e.g., A/B testing thumbnails to increase click-throughs).

By connecting these layers, the framework explains recurring tensions: for instance, governance constraints at the production layer can stifle authenticity at the meaning layer, reducing emotional engagement outcomes. Conversely, investments in authentic storytelling (e.g., employee testimonials) may require managerial approval and compliance checks — an organisational coordination task.

6.2 Practical lessons for communicators

Define clear primary objectives: Begin with a single primary communication objective (e.g., learning, trust-building) and select genre, format, and metrics that align with it. Ambiguous aims lead to diluted messages and ambiguous metrics.

Design multimodally and cognitively: Use Mayer's multimedia principles — reduce extraneous content, segment complex information, and signal essential information — to improve comprehension for instructional videos.

Prioritise authenticity within governance: Combine professional production standards with authentic content (real people, unscripted moments) and document

corroborating evidence to avoid reputation risks.

Invest in metrics literacy: Map metrics to objectives (e.g., watch time and retention curves for comprehension; shares and sentiment for advocacy) and combine quantitative analytics with qualitative stakeholder feedback.

Plan for reuse and localisation: Shoot with modularity in mind (B-roll, interview stems) to support repurposing and localised versions, improving cost-efficiency.

6.3 Theoretical contributions

This paper contributes theoretically by (a) integrating semiotic and cognitive perspectives with organisational communication theory into the PMO model, and (b) illustrating how multimodal production choices can be connected analytically to outcomes via interpretive, qualitative methods. The model foregrounds production governance — an area under-theorised in media-focused analyses — and suggests that organisational structures are as consequential as multimodal rhetoric for communicative success.

6.4 Methodological reflections

The proposed qualitative methodology offers a replicable template for scholars and practitioners. Combining semi-structured interviews with rigorous multimodal coding facilitates linking organisational intent to textual affordances and stakeholder interpretation. Key methodological safeguards include coder triangulation, member checking, and aligning sampled

videos with stated organisational aims to avoid mismatches.

6.5 Limitations and future research

Limitations include reliance on literature synthesis rather than primary data in this paper. Future empirical studies should apply the recommended qualitative design across diverse cultural contexts and extend to mixed-methods designs that incorporate experiments or longitudinal metrics to causally link video exposure to behaviour. Comparative studies could examine sectoral differences (e.g., regulated industries vs. consumer brands) and cross-cultural interpretive variations.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

Corporate video production is a strategic, multimodal practice central to modern business communication. It functions across multiple aims — information, persuasion, relational work, and mobilisation — and its effectiveness depends on the alignment of production choices with rhetorical intent, audience needs, and organisational constraints. The integrative PMO model proposed here connects production practices to meaning-making processes and outcomes, offering both theoretical clarity and practical guidance.

For practitioners, recommendations include: start with a clearly articulated primary objective, design multimodally with cognitive load and accessibility in mind, balance polish with authenticity, develop metrics frameworks aligned to communication aims, and plan production

workflows for reuse and localisation to maximise return on investment.

For researchers, the paper provides a methodological roadmap for qualitative inquiry, highlighting the value of triangulating interviews, documents, and multimodal textual analysis. Empirical application of this methodology will deepen understanding of how production governance, narrative strategy, and multimodal orchestration jointly produce communicative effects.

In sum, corporate video is not merely content; it is a strategic artefact embedded in organisational processes, cultural contexts, and technological ecosystems. Studying it requires theoretical plurality and methodological rigour — precisely the approach advanced in this paper.

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