

# ***How Short Video Platforms Influence the Purchasing Habits of Young Consumers: Mechanisms, Challenges, and Emerging Trends***

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the transformative impact of short video platforms on young consumers' purchasing habits. By integrating theories of consumer behavior, such as the AIDA model, and examining short video marketing models, this study reveals the mechanisms by which these platforms capture attention, stimulate interest, and drive purchase decisions. Through personalized content recommendations and the roles of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and Key Opinion Consumers (KOCs), short videos leverage social trust and emotional connections to influence consumer behavior. Case studies of successful and unsuccessful campaigns further highlight the factors contributing to effective short video marketing, such as creative content design, precise targeting, and interactive user experiences. The paper also identifies emerging trends, including technological innovations like augmented reality and the increasing digitization of consumer behaviors. Challenges such as attention fragmentation, information fatigue, and ethical concerns around data privacy are discussed, along with future prospects for more personalized and community-driven strategies. This research provides practical insights for brands aiming to optimize their short video marketing strategies, offering a comprehensive understanding of this rapidly evolving field.

**Keywords:** Short video marketing, consumer behavior, young consumers, social trust, digital marketing

## **1. Introduction**

With the rapid development of social media and mobile internet, short videos have become one of the most popular forms of digital content worldwide. Platforms such as Douyin, TikTok, and Instagram Reels, with their concise, targeted, and creative content formats, have attracted a large number of young users. These platforms not only have changed the way people engage in entertainment and socializing but also profoundly influenced consumer behavior, especially among young consumers. The rise of short videos has provided brands with unprecedented marketing opportunities and has sparked widespread attention to changes in the purchasing patterns of younger generations. Young consumers, as digital natives of the internet era, are increasingly influenced by social platforms in their shopping behaviours [1]. Unlike traditional advertising formats, short videos combine product information with entertainment in a lively, interactive, and real-time manner,

successfully capturing attention and engagement. At the same time, novel business models such as algorithm-driven recommendations, social sharing, and influencer-driven sales on short video platforms have further promoted instant and impulse purchasing decisions. In this sense, short videos have not only transformed the way brands interact with consumers but have also reshaped young people's purchasing habits [2]. This paper aims to explore how short videos, through various channels and mechanisms, are changing the purchasing habits of young consumers [3]. First, the paper will analyze the pathways through which short videos influence purchasing decisions, based on relevant theories. Next, it will delve into the specific mechanisms by which short videos affect young consumers' buying behaviors, supported by real-world case studies. Finally, the paper will discuss trends, future challenges, and offer valuable insights for brand marketing strategies.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

In understanding how short videos are changing the purchasing habits of young consumers, it is essential to explore the relevant theoretical frameworks. This section will examine several theoretical perspectives, including consumer behavior theory, social influence theory, and behavioral economics, to analyze how short videos trigger changes in purchase motivation among young consumers [3].

### **2.1. Consumer Behavior Theory**

Consumer behavior theory explores the psychological, social, and economic processes consumers go through when making purchasing decisions. Traditional consumer behavior models often emphasize factors such as the product's functional attributes, price, and advertising influence [4]. However, short videos, as an innovative form of advertising, succeed not only by promoting products rationally but also by engaging emotions and interactivity to connect with consumers. For example, short videos attract viewers' attention through striking visuals and creative content, integrating product information in an entertaining way, which reduces consumer resistance and simplifies the decision-making process [5]. This marketing approach, which appeals to emotions and a sense of connection, allows consumers to make purchasing decisions in a shorter time, even driving impulse buying behavior.

### **2.2. Social Influence Theory**

Social influence theory highlights that individual behavior is often influenced by others or social groups. The social attributes of short video platforms mean that viewers' purchasing decisions are influenced by their social circles, influencers, and even virtual communities [6]. Through social interactions such as likes, comments, and shares, consumers not only obtain product information from watching short videos but also engage with their social networks, increasing their likelihood of making a purchase. For instance, when a young consumer sees a product recommended by a friend or a beloved influencer on TikTok or Douyin, this social influence often persuades them more than a direct advertisement would, increasing the likelihood of purchase [7]. Moreover, the "word-of-mouth effect" on social media enables brands to gain massive exposure in a short time, influencing potential consumers.

### **2.3. Behavioral Economics**

Behavioral economics proposes that consumer purchasing decisions are driven not only by rational factors but also by emotions, habits, and immediate needs. The immediacy and entertainment value of short videos are key to stimulating impulsive buying behavior. Short video platforms' personalized recommendations and instant purchase features enable consumers to make decisions quickly after

seeing a product, overcoming the delays associated with traditional advertisements [8]. Consumers' purchasing behavior often results from a need for "instant gratification" triggered by watching short video content. In this context, short video marketing is often more effective and efficient than traditional advertising, as it can evoke strong emotional resonance in a short time, leading to a purchase [9].

#### **2.4. AIDA Model and Short Video Marketing**

The AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) is a classic model in marketing that explains the consumer decision-making process. In short video marketing, the AIDA model can effectively explain the purchase path: first, short videos capture the consumer's attention through creative and attractive content; next, they spark interest through humor, emotional appeal, or personalized approaches; then, they generate desire by showcasing the product or leveraging celebrity endorsements; finally, through the platform's "one-click purchase" functionality, they quickly trigger action. The high entertainment value and precise personalized recommendations of short videos make this process smoother and more efficient than traditional advertising methods [10].

### **3. Influence Mechanism**

The rise of short video platforms has provided new ways for brand marketing and has profoundly impacted the purchasing habits of young consumers [11]. Short videos are not only a medium for showcasing products but also alter consumer decision-making paths through their entertainment value, social interactivity, and highly personalized content recommendations. This section will analyze how short videos change young consumers' purchasing behavior through various mechanisms, including content presentation, social influence, personalized recommendations, instant purchasing, and impulsive buying, from psychological, social, platform functionality, and economic perspectives [2].

#### **3.1. Creative Content and Emotional Resonance**

One of the most significant features of short videos is their creativity and entertainment value. This characteristic allows brands to directly reach consumers' emotions through unconventional advertising methods [8]. Unlike traditional advertisements, short videos quickly capture the viewer's interest and emotional connection through visual impact, humor, dynamic music, storytelling, and emotional expression. Research shows that emotional resonance can significantly enhance advertising effectiveness, particularly among younger consumers, for whom emotional advertising is more likely to trigger a purchase motive.

Short videos, through a few seconds or minutes, can cleverly integrate brand messages and use storytelling techniques to align products with consumers' life scenarios and emotional needs. For example, some brands show real-life scenarios of young people, such as gatherings with friends or travel situations, creating a connection with consumers [11]. This emotional marketing approach not only leaves a deep impression on viewers but also creates subtle brand recognition, thereby enhancing brand loyalty.

#### **3.2. Social Interaction and Word-of-Mouth Effect**

Short video platforms themselves are highly social, and viewers are not just passive recipients of information but also active participants in content creation. Through likes, comments, and shares, users not only express their opinions but can also directly engage in brand marketing [12]. This greatly boosts the brand's viral marketing effect. When short video content is shared and spreads across social networks, brand messages expand rapidly, forming widespread social influence. This mechanism is

similar to traditional word-of-mouth marketing, but due to the interactivity and immediacy of social platforms, the spread of short videos is much faster than traditional ads [6].

Moreover, the "UGC" (user-generated content) phenomenon on social platforms further promotes brand exposure and influence. After watching short videos, consumers may imitate the behavior depicted in the content, leading them to purchase the product and create related content themselves. This process is often called "brand self-propagation," where consumers share their experiences or create content related to a brand, deepening its influence [4]. For instance, many young consumers post TikTok videos featuring challenges related to brands or share their experiences with certain products, which sparks interest among other users. The interactive and self-propagating nature of social media allows brands to gain high exposure and recognition in a short amount of time.

### **3.3. Personalized Recommendations and Precision Marketing**

The personalized recommendation system on short video platforms leverages powerful algorithms to analyze user behavior, preferences, and historical data, suggesting content that aligns with their interests. This data-driven, AI-powered precision targeting significantly increases the relevance and effectiveness of advertisements [13]. When a user watches content related to a particular brand, the platform recommends more similar ads or products based on their viewing history and preferences. This type of personalized recommendation not only reduces wasted ad exposure but also increases consumer acceptance of ads.

Another significant aspect of personalized recommendations is its ability to dynamically adjust content suggestions based on real-time user behavior. For example, if a user views a product review video on a short video platform, the platform may recommend promotional offers or purchasing links for that product, encouraging a quicker purchasing decision. As short video platform algorithms continue to improve, the precision of personalized recommendations will increase, further influencing consumers' purchasing decisions.

### **3.4. Instant Purchasing and Impulse Buying on Short Video Platforms**

Short video platforms are not just a channel for information dissemination; they are increasingly becoming consumption platforms. Many short video platforms have deepened their cooperation with e-commerce platforms by launching "one-click purchase" features, allowing consumers to shop directly while watching videos [14]. This instant purchasing function significantly reduces decision-making time and shopping costs, making it easier for consumers to make quick purchasing decisions after watching product showcases.

The concept of "live-streaming e-commerce" has been particularly effective in this regard. During live-streaming sessions, viewers can see products demonstrated in real-time while interacting with the host. This not only enhances consumer participation and purchasing desire but also increases the sense of urgency. Consumers often make impulse purchases when they see limited-time discounts or promotional offers during live streams, without extensive consideration [15]. The convenience and spontaneity of instant purchasing have led to more frequent online shopping, especially among younger consumers, for whom impulsive buying behavior is more prevalent.

### **3.5. Social Influence and Imitation Behavior**

The purchasing decisions of young consumers are often influenced by their peers or online celebrities, and short video platforms amplify this social influence through social circles and group dynamics. Especially when a product is recommended by a well-known influencer or online celebrity, its impact on their follower base is enormous. Studies have shown that young people often base their purchasing decisions on recommendations from social media figures they follow, or from their peer groups. This

"social influence" significantly reduces the rationality of the consumer's purchasing decision-making process and is replaced by imitation behavior and group affiliation [16].

Furthermore, the "social interaction" mechanism on short video platforms strengthens this imitation effect. For instance, popular challenges or hashtag-driven campaigns often guide users to imitate behaviors seen in the videos, particularly among younger consumers. When a short video challenge or activity becomes viral, many young users are likely to purchase related products and join in, aiming to integrate into their social circles and gain recognition [14].

### 3.6. Consumer Psychology and Behavioral Economics

Behavioural economics suggests that consumer purchasing decisions are often influenced by irrational factors, and short videos capitalize on these psychological triggers to drive purchasing behavior. Short videos trigger immediate gratification, emotional resonance, and social validation, leading consumers to make purchase decisions based on their immediate emotional responses rather than rational thought. Especially on short video platforms, users often watch content that resonates with their daily lives, which can trigger emotional recognition and accelerate their purchasing decisions, bypassing considerations such as price or product quality.

Short video platforms emphasize showcasing immediate results and social proof (e.g., influencer recommendations), strengthening the "bandwagon effect" and "instant gratification" consumer psychology. Consumers tend to make quick purchasing decisions based on their immediate perceptions and emotional responses to products in short videos, often disregarding other rational factors.

## 4. Case Study

In recent years, short video platforms such as Douyin (TikTok) and Kuaishou have rapidly emerged and become important channels for brand marketing [17]. To better understand how short videos influence the purchasing habits of young consumers, this section examines two typical cases: the "live-streaming sales" case on Douyin and the "Hashtag Challenge" case on TikTok. These two cases showcase how short video platforms change consumer purchasing behavior through innovative marketing methods.

### 4.1. Douyin Live-Streaming Sales Case

"Live-streaming sales" has become one of the most typical shopping methods on Douyin, especially among young consumers, where it has a profound impact. By collaborating with popular hosts or Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), brands can showcase their products during live streams, offer discounts, and interact with viewers to stimulate their desire to purchase. This model breaks the boundary between traditional advertising and e-commerce, combining "entertainment + shopping" to create a more immersive shopping experience [17].

For example, during the 2020 "Double 11" shopping festival, top live-streaming influencers like Li Jiaqi and Wei Ya on Douyin achieved sales of billions of yuan, significantly influencing the purchasing decisions of young consumers. In these live streams, hosts not only demonstrate and try out products but also use time-limited discounts, gift bundles, and other promotional tactics to create strong purchase impulses. For instance, Li Jiaqi's live streams featured "flash sale" discounts and free gifts that encouraged viewers to make quick purchase decisions. More importantly, live-streaming sales enhance consumer engagement by allowing real-time interaction. Many viewers engage with the hosts through comments and likes during the stream, forming a participatory consumption experience, which is especially attractive to young people.



This case illustrates how short video platforms have integrated live-streaming sales to connect brand messaging and consumer purchases directly [18]. Consumers can acquire product information in real-time and make purchase decisions, all while engaging with the host and other viewers. This real-time feedback and social interaction increase the sense of urgency and entertainment, ultimately driving frequent purchases among young consumers.

#### **4.2. TikTok Hashtag Challenge Case**

The "Hashtag Challenge" on TikTok is another way that short video platforms have profoundly altered consumer purchasing behavior. By launching challenges with specific hashtags (#Hashtag), brands encourage users to participate by creating and sharing videos related to the brand. This activity not only increases brand visibility but also stimulates user creativity and engagement, thus driving product purchases [19].

Take Nike's "#NikeSquad" challenge on TikTok as an example. Nike encouraged users to showcase their sporting activities while wearing Nike shoes and share related short videos. The challenge quickly went viral on the platform, attracting a large number of young people to participate, with users mimicking the moves in the challenge video and uploading their own creations. Through this campaign, Nike not only raised brand awareness among young consumers but also successfully triggered purchase intentions. Many participants were influenced by others' creative videos and sporting performances, leading them to desire to buy Nike products.

This case highlights how short video platforms can push consumer purchases through social and creative engagement. Brand challenges provide a channel for broad brand exposure while also motivating young consumers to participate and feel a sense of belonging. The "bandwagon effect" and "social recognition" significantly boost purchase intentions, particularly among young people who are seeking personalization and social validation.

### **5. Trends of Change**

With the rapid growth of short video platforms, the purchasing habits of young consumers have undergone profound changes. Initially, short videos were purely tools for entertainment and social interaction, but they have evolved into a crucial part of consumer decision-making. Currently, short videos not only transform shopping behaviors but also lead to significant changes in marketing, brand communication, and product promotion. Looking ahead, short videos will continue to shape the purchasing habits of young consumers, with several emerging trends:

#### **5.1. Deepening Integration of Short Videos and E-commerce**

The trend of integrating short videos with e-commerce will continue to intensify. In recent years, platforms like Douyin (TikTok) have introduced "live-stream shopping," "one-click purchasing," and other features, dramatically reducing the time consumers take from viewing to purchasing. As e-commerce and social functions strengthen further, short video platforms are likely to focus on providing seamless shopping experiences. For example, platforms may optimize the "social commerce" model, enabling consumers to complete purchases directly through links embedded in the videos, without leaving the platform. This kind of seamless shopping experience will not only enhance user experience but also trigger more impulsive and immediate purchases.

#### **5.2. Further Development of Personalization and Precision Marketing**

With the advancement of artificial intelligence, short video platforms' personalization algorithms will become even more precise and intelligent. Platforms will be better able to understand users'

preferences, purchasing behaviors, and latent needs, allowing them to deliver more relevant content and advertisements. For example, based on users' social circles, interest tags, and viewing history, platforms can continuously update and optimize content recommendations, improving the relevance of ads and conversion rates [15]. This precise marketing approach will help brands capture potential consumers more effectively, leading to higher purchase conversion rates.

### **5.3. Diversification of Short Video Content and Enhanced Interaction**

In the future, short video content will become more diversified. In addition to traditional video ads and live-stream shopping, platforms will introduce more interactive and creative content formats. For instance, virtual try-ons and augmented reality (AR) features will allow consumers to interact with and experience products while watching short videos, making purchasing decisions more intuitive and engaging. Furthermore, the social interaction features of short video platforms will be further strengthened, allowing consumers to engage with brands, influencers, and other users via comments, likes, and shares [7]. This will create a tighter social circle effect, which will further drive purchase behavior.

### **5.4. Promoting "Green Consumption" and Social Responsibility**

With increasing concern among younger consumers about sustainability and social responsibility, brands are starting to place more emphasis on these values in their short video content. Many brands are using short video ads to communicate their eco-friendly practices, social responsibility, or involvement in charitable causes. For example, some brands highlight the use of sustainable materials or participation in social programs within their short video content, appealing to young consumers who value environmental and social causes. This trend not only influences consumers' purchase decisions but also drives brands to incorporate these values into their marketing strategies.

### **5.5. Globalization and Diversification of Short Video Platforms**

As short video platforms continue to globalize, especially with TikTok's expansion, the market for short video marketing will continue to grow. In the future, brands will not only target domestic markets but will also tailor content to meet the demands of global consumers. Cross-border e-commerce features on platforms will continue to evolve, making it easier for consumers to purchase products from all around the world. Additionally, brands will focus more on multilingual and multicultural content creation to appeal to young consumers in different regions, further expanding their market reach.

## **6. Challenges and Future Outlook**

As short video platforms continue to gain influence among young consumers, the impact on their purchasing habits has been profound. However, this development is not without its challenges. While the growth of short video platforms offers numerous opportunities, there are significant challenges spanning technology, market dynamics, and ethical considerations [20]. Looking ahead, the potential of short video platforms to shape young consumers' purchasing behavior remains vast, but these platforms must address and overcome several key challenges.

### **6.1. Pressure for Continuous Innovation**

As short video platforms become more competitive, content creators and brands face constant pressure to innovate. Initially, short video platforms attracted large audiences through simple entertainment content and interactive features. However, as the user base diversifies and the market

matures, how to maintain user engagement and attract new consumers has become a critical issue. Brands and platforms will need to continuously innovate their marketing strategies. For example, new technologies like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) could be used to enhance user experience, or deeper social interactions could be created to increase engagement and purchase intent. Therefore, short video platforms and brands must invest heavily in content creativity and technological innovation to keep users engaged and loyal [16].

## **6.2. Ad Fatigue and User Resistance**

With the rapid increase in the volume of short video ads, consumers are experiencing ad fatigue, especially among younger audiences. Many users are frequently interrupted by ads while browsing short videos, leading to a decline in their tolerance for ads. As a result, some users resort to ad-blocking behaviors. This growing ad resistance poses a challenge for brands relying on traditional advertising methods. The future of short video marketing must shift from overt advertising to more valuable and engaging content. For example, user-generated content (UGC) or collaborations with influencers (KOLs) can create more entertaining and participatory brand narratives, which could better resonate with consumers and drive purchasing decisions.

## **6.3. Data Privacy and Platform Compliance**

As data-driven marketing becomes more prevalent on short video platforms, consumer data—such as personal information and behavior patterns—plays a pivotal role in enabling precise targeting. However, ensuring data privacy and compliance with increasingly stringent regulations remains a major challenge. Over the past few years, data privacy laws have become more rigorous worldwide, including the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and China's Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL). These regulations require platforms and brands to handle consumer data with more caution. Therefore, short video platforms and brands must strictly adhere to privacy laws and ensure that data collection and usage practices are transparent and secure to avoid legal repercussions and consumer distrust.

## **6.4. Social Responsibility and Brand Image**

With young consumers becoming more socially and environmentally conscious, brands marketing on short video platforms must also consider their social responsibility and brand image. Consumers no longer just care about product features; they are increasingly attracted to brands that align with their values, especially those promoting sustainability, ethical production, and social causes. In response, many brands are using short video content to communicate their commitment to social responsibility, such as promoting eco-friendly products or supporting charitable causes. The ability to convey these values will become an essential factor in driving consumer loyalty and purchase decisions in the future. Brands that fail to address these concerns may risk losing credibility and trust among younger, value-driven consumers.

## **6.5. Future Outlook**

Looking ahead, short video platforms will continue to play a crucial role in shaping young consumers' purchasing habits. Technological advancements will further deepen the integration of short videos with e-commerce, providing a seamless and personalized shopping experience. Artificial intelligence, big data, and machine learning will make content recommendation algorithms more accurate, allowing brands to deliver highly targeted marketing campaigns [10]. In addition, with the continued



development of AR and VR technologies, consumers will have more immersive and interactive shopping experiences through short videos, such as virtual try-ons or product demonstrations.

Furthermore, the global expansion of short video platforms, especially with platforms like TikTok becoming increasingly international, will open up new opportunities for brands to reach a global audience. Brands will need to adapt their marketing strategies to meet the needs of diverse cultural contexts and regional markets. Cross-border e-commerce will also become a key feature of short video platforms, allowing consumers to access products from around the world with ease.

In conclusion, the future of short video marketing is full of potential. To succeed, brands will need to keep pace with technological advancements, innovate their marketing approaches, and address challenges such as ad fatigue, data privacy, and social responsibility. By doing so, they can stay relevant and effectively capture the attention and loyalty of young consumers in the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper explores how short videos have transformed the purchasing habits of young consumers. The rapid rise of short video platforms like TikTok, Douyin, and Instagram Reels has revolutionized how brands engage with young audiences. Through content creativity, social interaction, and personalized recommendations, short video platforms have effectively captured the attention of younger consumers and influenced their purchasing decisions. This paper highlights that short video marketing's appeal lies in its ability to combine entertainment, social proof, and instant gratification, all of which cater to the impulsive nature of modern consumption. However, the influence of short videos on purchasing behavior is not without challenges. Issues like ad fatigue, data privacy concerns, and the need for constant innovation pose significant hurdles for brands. Moreover, as young consumers become more socially conscious, brands must integrate social responsibility into their marketing strategies to maintain relevance. Looking ahead, short video platforms will continue to evolve, integrating new technologies such as augmented reality and artificial intelligence to enhance user experience and drive even more personalized marketing. While challenges remain, the continued innovation and adaptability of short video platforms ensure their dominant role in shaping the future of consumer behavior. As this dynamic field progresses, further research will be essential to explore its long-term impacts and refine strategies for effective engagement with younger audiences.

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