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From Screen to Cart: Unpacking the Moderating Role of Sale Proneness in Product Placement-Driven Impulse Buying

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how product placement in short-form videos influences impulsive buying by integrating the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model with Trait Activation Theory (TAT). It investigates how product relevance, emotional appeal, and product-influencer fit enhance perceived enjoyment, which drives impulsive purchases. Sale proneness is introduced as a moderating trait that strengthens this relationship. Using survey data from 458 social media users and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the findings highlight the interaction between situational cues and individual traits. This research provides strategic insights for marketers on leveraging emotional content, influencer alignment, and trait-based targeting to drive engagement and impulsive buying behavior.

KEYWORDS

Product placement;
product relevance;
emotional appeal;
product influencer fit;
SOR model; Trait
Activation Theory;
impulse buying

Introduction

In recent years, short videos have become a prominent trend on the Internet due to their conciseness, significant entertainment value, and simplicity of production and dissemination (Liu et al., 2018). TikTok dominated the social media and short-form video platforms in the first quarter of 2024, with posts averaging 18,173 views. Instagram Reels came in second with 16,152 views, and Facebook Reels came in third (Laura Ceci, 2024). A short video is defined as a few seconds of video content that can be viewed in a brief amount of free time on a new media platform (Chen et al., 2024). Advertising spending on short-form videos within the Digital Video Advertising market is anticipated to reach approximately

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US\$99.43 billion by 2024 (Statista, 2024). Over the period from 2024 to 2029, this spending is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.64%, with the market volume projected to increase to US\$157.50 billion by 2029 (Statista, 2024). Short video marketing is a strategic tool for firms on social media platforms like TikTok and Douyin, transforming consumer engagement and enhancing brand communication as noted by Chen & Sharma. These short videos make shopping more enjoyable, influencing consumer behavior and buying intentions, making them essential in digital marketing and transforming consumer behavior (Thuy An Ngo et al., 2023)

Marketers are using storytelling to embed promotional messages through product placement in short-form video content to engage viewers without overt advertising (DeLorme et al., 2006). Short videos are entertainment-driven, so this approach organically grabs attention and boosts emotional resonance. Marketers can increase impulsive purchases by incorporating products into humorous, dramatic, or visually appealing narratives (Sinh Duc et al., 2024). Due to the volume of content competing for user attention, digital content platforms struggle to find strategies that increase viewer engagement and influence consumer behavior (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). The high-stimulation environment of short-form video platforms makes it crucial to study how emotional and contextual product placement factors affect consumer impulse behavior.

Our study aims to fill this gap by examining how product placement in short-form videos influences consumers' impulse buying behavior, with particular attention to the mediating role of perceived enjoyment and the moderating effect of sale proneness. Specifically, the study explores the psychological mechanisms through which emotionally engaging content triggers spontaneous purchasing decisions. Consequently, our research contributes to a deeper understanding of how impulse buying can be stimulated within short video. While prior studies have investigated impulse buying in traditional marketing context, the potential influence of product placement particularly in emotionally, product placement in short video has been relatively underexplored. The present study seeks to bridge this gap by analyzing the underlying mechanisms and boundary conditions through which product placement affects impulse-driven consumer behavior.

First, previous studies have examined the impact of product placement across various media formats, including television (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019), music videos (Davtyan et al., 2021), and video games (Kim & McClung, 2010), yet research focusing on product placement in short-form video content remains limited (Guo et al., 2024). Unlike traditional media, short videos often seen on platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts combine brevity with high entertainment value, creating unique psychological dynamics that influence consumer behavior. However,

traditional advertising and persuasion models primarily developed to explain consumer responses to explicit and direct marketing communications may be insufficient for capturing the nuanced, narrative-driven nature of product placements within short-form video content. Moreover, the underlying psychological mechanisms through which such placements elicit emotional responses and subsequently trigger impulsive purchasing behavior remain insufficiently explored in the existing literature.

Second, emotional appeal and immersive content have become increasingly important in digital marketing scholarship (Ahmed et al., 2024), but little is known about how they drive impulsive purchases and affective consumer responses in fast-paced and highly engaging short videos. Short videos, designed for instant gratification and emotional resonance, may encourage spontaneous consumer behavior. Current research has not sufficiently examined how storytelling techniques and emotional triggers in these contexts affect impulse-driven outcomes.

Third, perceived enjoyment is recognized as a fundamental element in impulsive buying, especially in stimulating and entertaining settings (Sinh Duc et al., 2024). However, research has predominantly neglected the impact of individual differences in sale proneness consumers' inclination to react favorably to discounts and promotional offers on the relationship between perceived enjoyment and impulse buying. This is a notable oversight, as sale susceptibility may intensify the emotional stimuli that prompt impulsive purchases, particularly in environments where emotional gratification is elevated. Addressing this gap is crucial for a more refined comprehension of consumer segmentation and for enhancing marketing strategies that integrate hedonic appeal with promotional incentives.

Building on the foundations of Trait Activation Theory (TAT) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, this study proposes a comprehensive framework to examine how product placement in short videos influences consumer behavior. According to TAT, individuals possess latent personality traits that are expressed when situational cues relevant to these traits are present (Tett et al., 2021). In this context, short-form video content provides an affective and immersive environment capable of activating traits such as impulsive buying tendencies when the content resonates with viewers' emotional or cognitive predispositions. Specifically, perceived enjoyment shaped by factors like product relevance, emotional appeal, and product-influencer fit serves as a key situational cue that elicits positive emotional responses and heightened engagement (Im & Ha, 2011). Complementing this, the SOR model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) provides a valuable framework for understanding how external stimuli (e.g., product placements) affect internal psychological states (e.g., emotional arousal, attentiveness), which in turn lead to behavioral responses such as impulse buying. In this framework, the short video acts as the

stimulus, perceived enjoyment functions as the organismic response, and impulsive purchase behavior represents the outcome. This layered understanding bridges environmental stimuli and internal dispositions, offering a fuller picture of the mechanisms driving consumer behavior in digital spaces (Figure 1).

These responses may, in turn, trigger impulsive buying behavior, particularly among consumers already predisposed to such tendencies. Furthermore, the study identifies sale proneness as a moderating factor, suggesting that individuals with higher sale proneness are more likely to act on perceived enjoyment through impulsive purchases (Goel et al., 2022). This framework offers valuable insights into the interaction between individual differences and media environments in shaping consumer behavior within the landscape of short video marketing.

This research makes a meaningful contribution to the literature on consumer behavior and social media marketing by investigating product placements within short-form videos, through an integrated framework combining SOR model and TAT. Specifically, it examines how key situational cues product relevance, emotional appeal, and product influencer fit function as stimuli that shape consumers' internal states (organism), particularly their perceived enjoyment, ultimately influencing impulsive buying behavior (response).

By integrating SOR, this study conceptualizes short-form video content as a rich source of stimuli that trigger emotional and cognitive responses in viewers, while TAT offers a deeper lens into how dispositional traits, such as sale proneness, moderate these responses. This dual-theoretical approach moves beyond linear stimulus-response models to capture the dynamic interplay between media stimuli, individual psychological traits, and emotional engagement within digital environments.

Importantly, the introduction of sale proneness as a critical moderating variable provides new insights into how personality traits shape the relationship between media enjoyment and consumer behavior. From a TAT perspective, consumers with high sale proneness are particularly receptive to contextual cues such as emotionally appealing content or promotional messaging making them more prone to impulsive purchases when experiencing high levels of enjoyment. This underscores the contextual activation of latent traits, enriching the organism layer within the SOR framework.

Finally, for practical implication, the findings offer valuable insights for organizations, brand managers, and marketers, providing them with a deeper understanding of the stimuli that trigger emotional responses in consumers. This knowledge can be instrumental in designing more effective marketing strategies that leverage short video content to drive consumer engagement and influence purchase decisions, particularly impulse buying.

Literature review

Impulsive buying driven by short videos

Impulse buying is a distinct form of consumer behavior that involves spontaneous, unplanned purchases made without prior intent or careful deliberation (Li et al., 2025). Unlike regular or planned purchasing behavior which is typically characterized by rational evaluation, information comparison, and decision-making aligned with specific needs impulse buying is driven by affective responses and an immediate desire for gratification (Beatty & Elizabeth Ferrell, 1998; Iyer et al., 2020; Rook, 1987). Emotional triggers such as excitement, curiosity, or even stress, along with situational stimuli like environmental cues or social influence, often prompt these rapid decisions (Achar et al., 2016).

In digital settings, particularly on short-form video platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, or YouTube Shorts, the characteristics of content brevity, visual appeal, and entertainment value can intensify users' emotional engagement (Oh et al., 2025). This immersive experience lowers cognitive defenses and fosters impulsive tendencies, making consumers more susceptible to unplanned purchases (Xiao & Nicholson, 2013). Product placement within such videos further amplifies this effect by subtly integrating promotional content into narratives that do not overtly resemble advertisements (Russell & Belch, 2005a). As a result, viewers may not engage in critical evaluation, perceiving the product as desirable due to its association with entertaining or relatable scenarios. This seamless blend of content and commerce fosters favorable attitudes toward the product and increases the likelihood of impulse purchases driven by emotional resonance rather than rational judgment.

Theoretical background and hypothesis

This study draws upon two complementary theoretical perspectives, which are TAT and the SOR model, to explain how product placement in digital environments influences impulse buying behavior, and how this relationship is moderated by individual differences in sale proneness. Together, these theories offer a comprehensive lens through which to examine the dynamic interplay between marketing stimuli, internal psychological states, and behavioral outcomes.

Trait Activation Theory posits that individual traits manifest in observable behavior when relevant situational cues are present, effectively activating those traits (Tett et al., 2021; Tett & Guterman, 2000). This framework emphasizes the interaction between stable personality traits and context-specific stimuli, suggesting that environmental factors can either enhance or suppress the expression of these traits. In the context

of consumer behavior, one such trait is the impulsive buying tendency, which refers to an individual's predisposition to engage in spontaneous and unplanned purchases with limited cognitive deliberation (Jones et al., 2003). This tendency is closely linked to emotional states, as prior research has shown that both positive and negative emotions can significantly influence impulsive purchasing behavior (Qu et al., 2023; Weinberg & Gottwald, 1982). Emotional arousal, particularly in high-stimulation settings, tends to reduce cognitive control, thereby increasing the likelihood of immediate, affect-driven consumption decisions.

In digital environments, especially on short-form video platforms, TAT provides a valuable framework for understanding how product placement can influence consumer behavior. Short videos are characterized by rapid pacing, strong visual appeal, and high emotional engagement, all of which serve as potent situational cues. These cues can activate latent traits such as impulsiveness, particularly in individuals who already possess a high impulsive buying tendency (Ngo et al., 2024). The seamless integration of product placements within entertaining or emotionally charged content functions as a psychological trigger that heightens emotional involvement while diminishing cognitive resistance (Balasubramanian et al., 2006). For consumers with elevated levels of sale proneness, this emotionally immersive context becomes especially influential, as their inherent tendency to respond to promotional cues is activated, increasing the likelihood of unplanned purchases.

Complementing this perspective, the SOR model, originally introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), explains how external environmental stimuli influences internal psychological processes, which in turn lead to specific behavioral outcomes. This model has been widely adopted in consumer research to explain the mechanisms behind consumer decision-making and behavior (Eroglu et al., 2001). Within this framework, product placement functions as the external stimulus that captures consumer attention. Upon exposure, consumers undergo various internal reactions, such as emotional arousal, attentiveness, and cognitive evaluations that represent the organism stage (Jacoby, 2002; Vieira, 2013). These internal states ultimately lead to a behavioral response, which in this study is conceptualized as impulse buying. The SOR model has been applied in numerous studies to illustrate how aspects like store atmosphere (Turley & Milliman, 2000), ambient music (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001), and visual merchandizing (Sherman et al., 1997) can influence consumer emotions and behaviors, including unplanned purchasing.

Integrating both theories, this study argues that product placement operates as an external stimulus that affects consumer responses through emotional and cognitive mechanisms, as described in the SOR model. At the same time, the extent to which these responses lead to impulse buying

is moderated by individual traits, in this case is sale proneness as described by TAT. This theoretical integration enables a richer understanding of how marketing strategies influence consumer behavior not just on average, but also in relation to personality-driven differences. Therefore, individuals with higher sale proneness are more likely to react strongly to product placements, especially when these placements are embedded within emotionally engaging and immersive content. This framework underlies the study's central hypothesis, that sale proneness moderates the relationship between product placement and impulse buying, making certain consumers more susceptible to promotional content in digital media environments.

Antecedents of perceived enjoyment in short video marketing

Social media marketing has become a powerful tool for businesses to engage with consumers and effectively impact on their buying choices (Ghoshal, 2019). Product placement can be categorized as either prominent or non-prominent (Kongmanon & Petison, 2022). Product placement is an especially successful method in this field since it helps companies introduce their products to consumers, thus offering the opportunity to reach more consumers (Russell & Belch, 2005b). Product placement is most effective when viewers find the integrated contents appealing (Gerhards, 2019). The presence of product placement advertising can lead to increased narrative enjoyment (Gillespie & Joireman, 2016). Enjoyment drives consumers' selection and consumption of media (Vorderer et al., 2004). Lin et al. (2020) defined perceived enjoyment as the pleasure and satisfaction derived from engaging in an activity, regardless of its functional outcomes. Trait Activation Theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000) suggests that specific environmental cues can elicit affective responses by aligning with an individual's internal dispositions or interests. In the context of short-form video content, product relevance serves as a powerful situational cue. When a featured product aligns with the viewer's personal preferences, lifestyle, or current needs, it enhances the meaningfulness of the content and captures attention (Yin et al., 2024). This alignment can elicit positive affective responses such as interest, satisfaction, and enjoyment, even before any personality traits are explicitly activated. In addition, the SOR model provides a broader explanation of how such external cues (stimuli) influence internal emotional states (organism), such as perceived enjoyment, which can subsequently shape behavioral responses. Together, TAT and SOR offer a comprehensive understanding of how short-form video marketing content engages young consumers on both dispositional and affective levels. Therefore, product relevance is expected to play a foundational role in enhancing perceived enjoyment among young consumers by making the content feel more relatable and engaging.

Second, according to Lee and Hong (2016), emotional appeal is a method of persuasion that was developed with the purpose of eliciting an emotional response to a message by means of content that is emotionally charged. From the lens of Trait Activation Theory, such emotional appeals function as trait-relevant stimuli that enhance affective arousal and increase the enjoyment of the content (Tett et al., 2021). While emotional responses are not inherently tied to stable personality traits, they can serve as precursors to trait activation, particularly in emotionally charged environments (Rusting, 1998). For young consumers, who often engage with content in search of entertainment and emotional resonance, emotionally appealing messages are likely to increase perceived enjoyment and receptivity (Lee & Hong, 2016). In addition, the SOR model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) reinforces this view by positioning emotional appeal as an external stimulus that elicits internal emotional states, such as enjoyment, which ultimately influence behavioral or attitudinal outcomes (Jacoby, 2002). Therefore, content with a strong emotional appeal is expected to contribute positively to perceived enjoyment.

Third, product influencer fit is a traditional advertising strategy that aligns an endorser's image or personality with the product they promote (Janssen et al., 2022; Kamins & Gupta, 1994). This alignment is crucial across various dimensions, including the endorser's expertise in relation to the product type (Till & Busler, 1998). According to Cinelli and LeBoeuf (2020) and Yang et al. (2021), a product-influencer fit that is well-matched increases the perceived authenticity of the advertisement, which in turn leads to stronger cognitive and emotional responses from consumers. In short-form video marketing, the perceived congruence between a product and the influencer endorsing it plays a vital role in shaping viewer responses (Belanche et al., 2021). When the influencer's persona, values, or lifestyle closely match the product they promote, it creates a credible and authentic context that enhances the persuasive power of the message. Trait Activation Theory posits that such social and contextual cues can enrich the viewing experience by establishing a more coherent and believable narrative (Cai et al., 2024). Complementing this, SOR model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) provides an additional perspective by conceptualizing product-influencer fit as a social stimulus that elicits affective reactions, such as trust and enjoyment (organism), which subsequently shape consumer engagement and behavior (Vinoi et al., 2025). For young consumers, who are often attuned to authenticity and social signals, this alignment fosters trust and engagement, thereby enhancing perceived enjoyment.

Hypotheses 1: Product relevance significantly enhances the perceived enjoyment of young consumers.

Hypotheses 2: Emotional appeal positively contributes to the perceived enjoyment of young consumers.

Hypotheses 3: The alignment between the product and the influencer positively influences the perceived enjoyment of young consumers.

Link between perceived enjoyment and impulse buying

Impulse buying, characterized as unplanned purchases executed without prior intention, is frequently motivated by emotional reactions rather than logical reasoning (Beatty & Elizabeth Ferrell, 1998; Djamhari et al., 2024; Xiao & Nicholson, 2013). Impulse purchasing is defined by an absence of rational decision-making and an overpowering influence of emotions (Verhagen & van Dolen, 2011). Consumers tend to display impulsive buying behavior when external stimuli evoke an emotional reaction, resulting in unplanned purchasing decisions (Iyer et al., 2020). For example, they exhibit emotional attraction to the products and seek immediate gratification (Hoch & Loewenstein, 1991). Moreover, the entertainment of social media marketing can provide a positive mood (enjoyment) encounter for viewers (Verhagen & van Dolen, 2011), which could lead to impulsive buying behaviors (Silvera et al., 2008; Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001). Perceived enjoyment significantly predicts consumer impulsive purchase behavior (Do et al., 2020). As young consumers experience greater enjoyment from online platforms, their inclination to make impulsive purchases significantly increases (Lee et al., 2023).

Social media marketing platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok seamlessly incorporate product placements into the user experience by utilizing visually engaging and compelling content to capture users' attention (Sinh Duc et al., 2024). Drawing on TAT, consumers' impulsive buying tendencies can be understood as trait-based predispositions that are activated in response to specific environmental cues. TAT posits that certain traits, such as impulsivity, are expressed more strongly when triggered by relevant situational stimuli. In this context, emotionally engaging content, especially short-form videos, serves as a trait-relevant cue that activates impulsive tendencies in consumers. For instance, Sohn and Lee (2017) highlight how emotional experiences significantly influence impulsive behavior. Similarly, Wang (2023) suggests that short video ads heighten emotional engagement and increase the likelihood of impulse purchases by exceeding consumer expectations. Complementing this view, the SOR model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) provides an additional lens through which to understand the process. In this framework, product placement acts as the stimulus (S), perceived enjoyment represents the internal affective state of the organism (O), and impulse buying behavior is the resulting

response (R). Emotional enjoyment elicited by entertaining or relevant content serves as the psychological mechanism that bridges the external marketing stimulus and the behavioral outcome (Jacoby, 2002). Therefore, perceived enjoyment functions as a key mediating variable in the relationship between product placement and impulse buying, as it both activates impulsive traits and reduces resistance to unplanned purchases.

Based on this theoretical lens, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypotheses 4: Perceived enjoyment plays a mediating role in the relationship between product placement and impulse buying behavior among young consumers

The moderation of sale proneness

Sale proneness denotes a consumer's inclination to acquire products or services predominantly during promotional discounts (Alford & Biswas, 2002; Moore & Carpenter, 2006). In research from Zhang and Kim (2013), it highlights that a pronounced inclination toward sales is a crucial factor influencing purchase intentions. Lichtenstein et al. (1993) propose that consumers motivated to make purchases are more likely to perceive greater value when the price is displayed as a discount rather than as an equivalent price without a sale promotion. Products with limited time offer flash sales, sale promotion or exclusive discounts, increasing the likelihood of impulsive purchases (Lamis et al., 2022; Mishra et al., 2024; Vannisa et al., 2020). Particularly among sale-prone consumers who appreciate promotions and discounts, which might lead to impulsive buying behavior. Consumers who exhibit a high level of susceptibility to sales are more responsive to promotions and discounts, which can further intensify their tendency toward impulsive purchasing behavior (Kacen & Lee, 2002; Yazdanparast & Kukar-Kinney, 2023).

Prior studies have shown that short videos often combine entertainment with subtle product placements, making viewers more susceptible to impulse purchasing decisions (Sinh Duc et al., 2024). This effect is even more pronounced among consumers exposed to discounts or sales promotions (Gupta, 1988). In the product placement context, we posit that when perceived enjoyment is coupled with a consumer's sale-proneness, it can further enhance the likelihood of impulse buying. For these consumers, the combination of perceived enjoyment and the presence of a sales promotion creates a powerful trigger, making them more likely to act on impulse and make a purchase.

Therefore, when consumers show a higher degree of sale-proneness, the relationship between perceived enjoyment and impulsive purchasing

behavior is significantly strengthened. To put it another way, customers who are more likely to make impulsive purchases are also more likely to find the content in short videos to be intensely enjoyable. Thus, we hypothesize that:

Hypotheses 5: Sale proneness moderates the relationship between perceived enjoyment and impulse buying.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative survey-based research design to investigate the influence of short-form social media videos on consumer purchasing behavior, with a particular focus on impulse buying tendencies among young consumers. The research aims to explore how platform engagement and emotional triggers embedded in video content shape unplanned purchase decisions. To ensure cross-cultural measurement reliability, a rigorous back-translation process was followed. The survey was initially developed in English, translated into Vietnamese, and then independently backtranslated into English by bilingual experts. This approach ensured semantic equivalence, cultural appropriateness, and improved the reliability of the instrument in the Vietnamese context.

Survey design and sampling

The study targeted individuals aged 18 and above who had prior experience purchasing products influenced by short-form video content. A non-probability sampling method was employed, and the survey was distributed *via* platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, and Vietnamese university forums using Google Forms. To ensure response relevance, participants were screened using two preliminary questions: (1) Have you watched short-form videos on social media in the past six months? and (2) Have you made a purchase after watching such videos? Only participants who responded “yes” to both were allowed to proceed. This approach ensured that only individuals with recent, relevant experiences participated, thereby minimizing recall bias and enhancing data validity.

Prior to full deployment, the questionnaire was evaluated by three academic experts in digital marketing and consumer behavior. A pilot test involving 20 participants was also conducted to assess clarity, structure, and wording. Based on feedback, minor modifications were made to improve item fluency and readability. Data collection occurred over a six-week period in 2024, yielding 458 valid responses. This sample size exceeds the minimum threshold recommended by Hair et al. (2014), who suggest

a ratio of at least 10:1 that is, ten respondents per parameter estimated to ensure sufficient statistical power for structural equation modeling or regression-based analyses. Given the number of indicators and latent constructs in the study model, a sample of 458 provides more than adequate statistical power and supports the robustness of the results. Of the 458 participants, 60.3% were female, 34.3% were male, and 5.5% were non-binary or preferred not to disclose their gender. All respondents had seen a short-form video. The most popular platform was TikTok (37.8%), followed by Facebook (24.9%) and YouTube (20.3%). Instagram and Twitter were less popular, with 9.2% and 7.9% of responses. 39.1% of participants watched short videos for more than two hours per day, 29.9% for one to two hours, 23.6% for 30 to 60 min, and 7.4% for less than 30 min. Most (91.7%) said they watch short videos daily. On enjoyment and engagement, 53.7% strongly agreed and 37.5% agreed that they enjoy watching short-form videos, indicating that over 90% of participants actively engage with such content daily. Only 4.4% were neutral and 3.9% strongly disagreed. These numbers show how important short-form video is to participants' daily media consumption. Table 1 details demographics.

Measurement

The second part of the survey measured key constructs using previously validated scales, all rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Product Relevance was assessed using items adapted from Davis et al. (1989), such as “I think the product showcased in the short video integrates seamlessly with the storyline.” Emotional Appeal was measured using items from Phua and Kim (2018), including

Table 1. Respondents' profile. (Source: Authors' own).

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Do you use any social media?	Yes	100	100%
	No	0	0
Gender	Female	276	60.26%
	Male	157	34.27%
	Other	25	5.45%
Have use ever watch any short video/ reels on social media?	Yes	458	100%
	No	0	0
Watched short video/reels from	Facebook	114	24.89%
	YouTube	93	20.30%
	TikTok	173	37.77%
	Twister	36	7.86%
	Instagram	42	9.17%
Number of hours using social media (to watch short video/ reels)	<30mins	34	7.425
	30mins to 1 hours	108	23.58%
	1hours to 2 hours	137	29.91%
	More than 2 hours	179	39.08%
Watching short video clip/reel has become a regular daily for me.	Strongly disagree	18	3.93%
	Disagree	20	4.36%
	Agree	174	37.99%
	Strongly agree	246	53.71%

“The short video is enjoyable,” to capture affective responses to video content. Product-Influencer Fit was evaluated with items adapted from Till and Busler (2000), such as “I believe the influencer is well-suited to promote the products featured in the short video’s storyline.” Impulse Buying was measured using items from Zhang et al. (2023), including “I frequently engage in impulsive purchasing behavior while viewing short videos on social media platforms.” To improve construct validity and address potential ambiguity, a clear definition of impulse buying was provided at the beginning of the survey, specifying it as “an unplanned, spontaneous purchase made shortly after exposure to a stimulus (e.g., short video) without prior intention,” thereby distinguishing it from planned behavior. Perceived Enjoyment was captured using items adapted from Meng et al. (2021), such as “I experienced a heightened sense of excitement while watching the product introductions.” Lastly, Sales Proneness was assessed using items from Lichtenstein et al. (1993), including “I am more likely to purchase brands when they are on sale.” All items were reviewed for contextual and cultural relevance and underwent back-translation to ensure linguistic consistency.

Data analysis and results

To analyze the data, this study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4. Unlike covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM), PLS-SEM is particularly well-suited for predictive and exploratory research, especially when the primary focus is on theory development and variance explanation rather than model fit (Hair et al., 2022). Its nonparametric nature makes it robust in handling issues such as non-normal data distribution and multicollinearity, which are common in behavioral studies involving self-reported data (Uzir et al., 2020). Given the complex interplay between emotional and cognitive factors in impulsive consumer behavior, PLS-SEM was deemed appropriate for testing the proposed relationships among constructs. In line with psychometric recommendations by Gerbing and Anderson (1988), the analysis proceeded in two stages. First, a measurement model assessment was conducted to evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs. This involved examining internal consistency (composite reliability), convergent validity (*via* average variance extracted), and discriminant validity (using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratio). Following this, the structural model was tested to analyze the hypothesized paths between independent and dependent variables within the proposed conceptual framework. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the mediating role of perceived enjoyment and the direct effects of video-related factors on impulse buying behavior.

Reliability and Validity

To assess the measurement model, the constructs were evaluated for convergent validity and construct reliability by examining factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). As recommended by Hair et al. (2020), factor loadings above 0.708, CR values above 0.70, and AVE values exceeding 0.50 indicate acceptable thresholds for construct validity and reliability. All constructs in this study met or exceeded these criteria. Product Relevance demonstrated strong convergent validity, with factor loadings ranging from 0.878 to 0.899, a CR of 0.916, and an AVE of 0.787. Emotional Appeal also showed robust internal consistency, with loadings between 0.813 and 0.859, a CR of 0.880, and an AVE of 0.711. For Product-Influencer Fit, factor loadings ranged from 0.839 to 0.868, with a CR of 0.899 and an AVE of 0.803, indicating high measurement quality.

Perceived Enjoyment showed consistently high item loadings between 0.862 and 0.868, resulting in a CR of 0.891 and an AVE of 0.748, confirming strong convergent validity. Similarly, the construct Impulse Buying demonstrated reliable measurement with item loadings from 0.839 to 0.856, a CR of 0.909, and an AVE of 0.714. Lastly, Sale Proneness exhibited factor loadings between 0.795 and 0.856, a CR of 0.896, and an AVE of 0.682, all within acceptable limits. These results collectively confirm that the measurement model demonstrates satisfactory construct reliability and convergent validity across all latent variables. Table 2 presents the detailed results of the factor loadings, CR, and AVE for each construct.

To ensure robust discriminant validity, the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion was applied. As shown in Table 3, the square root of the AVE for each construct (diagonal values) exceeded the corresponding inter-construct correlations (off-diagonal values), indicating satisfactory discriminant validity. For example, the AVE square root for Emotional Appeal (0.843) was greater than its correlations with other constructs, including Impulse Buying (0.528) and Perceived Enjoyment (0.472). Similarly, the square root values for all other constructs ranging from 0.826 to 0.896 were consistently higher than their respective correlations with other latent variables. These results confirm that each construct is empirically distinct from the others, thereby supporting discriminant validity in the measurement model (Table 3).

Table 4 shows the HTMT ratios for assessing discriminant validity among six constructs. All values are below the 0.85 threshold, confirming that each construct is distinct. The highest ratios are between IB and PE (0.719) and IB and PI (0.718), while the lowest is between SP and PI (0.380). These results indicate acceptable discriminant validity, supporting the reliability of the measurement model.

Table 2. Construct reliability and validity.

Construct	Items	Factor loading	CR	AVE
Product relevance	PR1: I think the product showcased in the short video integrates seamlessly with the storyline.	0.899	0.916	0.787
	PR2: I sense a clear and meaningful link between the product displayed in the short video and the scene being portrayed.	0.880		
	PR3: I feel that the product featured in the short video is appropriately matched to the characters within the narrative.	0.878		
Emotional Appeal	EA1: The short video is enjoyable.	0.813	0.880	0.711
	EA2: The short video is entertainingly humorous.	0.856		
	EA3: The short video is entertaining.	0.859		
Product Influencer Fit	PI1: I believe the influencer is well-suited to promote the products featured in the short video's storyline.	0.839	0.899	0.803
	PI2: I feel there is a strong alignment between the influencer and the product being advertised.	0.868		
Perceived Enjoyment	PE1: The short video made the shopping experience enjoyable for me.	0.868	0.891	0.748
	PE2: I felt a surge of excitement while watching the product introductions.	0.863		
	PE3: I found the captivating nature of the short video content truly engaging.	0.862		
	PE4: Watching short videos on social media makes time fly by, helping me momentarily forget my worries.	0.868		
Impulse Buying	IB1: I often find myself succumbing to impulsive buying habits while watching short videos on social media platforms.	0.845	0.909	0.714
	IB2: While watching short videos on social media, I have made spontaneous purchases without fully evaluating or considering the product.	0.856		
	IB3: Certain products that I had previously overlooked caught my attention after rewatching the short video, prompting me to make impulsive purchases.	0.841		
	IB4: After seeing a product featured in a short video, I suddenly recognized a need for it, which led me to purchase it on impulse.	0.839		
Sale proneness	SP1: A product being on sale can motivate me to purchase it.	0.856	0.896	0.682
	SP2: I am more inclined to purchase brands that are on sale.	0.815		
	SP3: Compared to others, I am more likely to choose brands that are on sale.	0.837		
	SP4: It is wise to take advantage of sales when purchasing brands.	0.795		

IB is strongly influenced by emotional and experiential factors such as Emotional Appeal (EA, $r=0.530$), Perceived Enjoyment (PE, $r=0.638$), as well as individual traits like Sales Proneness (SP, $r=0.550$). Product-Influencer Fit (PI, $r=0.580$) also contributes to enjoyment and spontaneous purchases, though its impact is less pronounced compared to these intrinsic motivators. Overall, the findings highlight the dominant role of emotional

Table 3. Measurement model: discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion) (Source: Authors' own).

	EA	IB	PE	PI	PR	SP
EA	0.843					
IB	0.528	0.845				
PE	0.472	0.635	0.865			
PI	0.425	0.578	0.468	0.896		
PR	0.510	0.556	0.470	0.432	0.886	
SP	0.387	0.548	0.500	0.305	0.446	0.826

Table 4. Measurement model: HTMT ratios for discriminant validity. (Source: Authors' own).

	EA	IB	PE	PI	PR	SP
EA						
IB	0.636					
PE	0.559	0.719				
PI	0.551	0.718	0.568			
PR	0.615	0.639	0.536	0.535		
SP	0.472	0.639	0.576	0.380	0.521	

Table 5. Correlation matrix (Source: Authors' own).

	EA	IB	PE	PI	PR	SP
Emotional Appeal (EA)	1.000	0.530***	0.475***	0.426***	0.512***	0.390***
Impulse Buying (IB)	0.530***	1.000	0.638***	0.580***	0.558***	0.550***
Perceived Enjoyment (PE)	0.475***	0.638***	1.000	0.470***	0.472***	0.502***
Product-Influencer Fit (PI)	0.426***	0.580***	0.470***	1.000	0.435***	0.307***
Product Relevance (PR)	0.512***	0.558***	0.472***	0.435***	1.000	0.448***
Sales Proneness (SP)	0.390***	0.550***	0.502***	0.307***	0.448***	1.000

Note: Significance levels.

*** $p < 0.001$.

** $p < 0.01$.

* $p < 0.05$.

Table 6. Structural model: goodness-of-fit (Source: Authors' own).

Fit Index	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.050	0.093
RMSEA	0.045	0.076
d_ULS	0.521	1.831
d_G	0.290	0.352
Chi-square	821.361	910.091
NFI	0.841	0.824

Notes: SRMR=Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA=Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; d_ULS=Unweighted Least Squares Discrepancy; d_G=Geodesic Discrepancy; NFI=Normed Fit Index. RMSEA values ≤ 0.05 indicate good fit, and ≤ 0.08 indicate acceptable fit.

engagement and personal tendencies in driving impulse buying, with all correlations being statistically significant ($p < .001$) (Table 5).

The structural model's goodness-of-fit indices indicate a marginal fit between the proposed model and the observed data, with several metrics highlighting areas for improvement. Table 6 presents the fit indices for both the saturated and estimated models. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) for the saturated model, which reflects the measurement model, is 0.050, indicating a good fit. However, the SRMR for

the estimated (hypothesized) model is 0.093, which is considered marginal ($\text{SRMR} \leq 0.08$ is typically good, ≤ 0.10 acceptable). The notable difference between the SRMR values (0.050 vs. 0.093) suggests that while the measurement model fits the data well, the structural model introduces additional discrepancies, potentially due to misspecification of paths or unmodeled relationships. For instance, the hypothesized paths (e.g., PR $\rightarrow$ PE, EA $\rightarrow$ PE, PI $\rightarrow$ PE, PE $\rightarrow$ IB) may not fully capture all relevant relationships, such as direct effects of PR, EA, or PI on IB, or additional mediators. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) provides additional insight, with an estimated value of 0.045 for the saturated model (based on SRMR alignment) and 0.076 for the estimated model, both within acceptable thresholds ($\text{RMSEA} \leq 0.05$ for good fit, ≤ 0.08 for acceptable fit). Regarding model discrepancy metrics, the saturated model's d_{ULS} (0.521) and the estimated model's d_{ULS} (1.831) indicate modest model-data mismatch, with the saturated model showing closer alignment. Similarly, the d_{G} values of 0.290 for the saturated model and 0.352 for the estimated model support structural validity, showing relatively

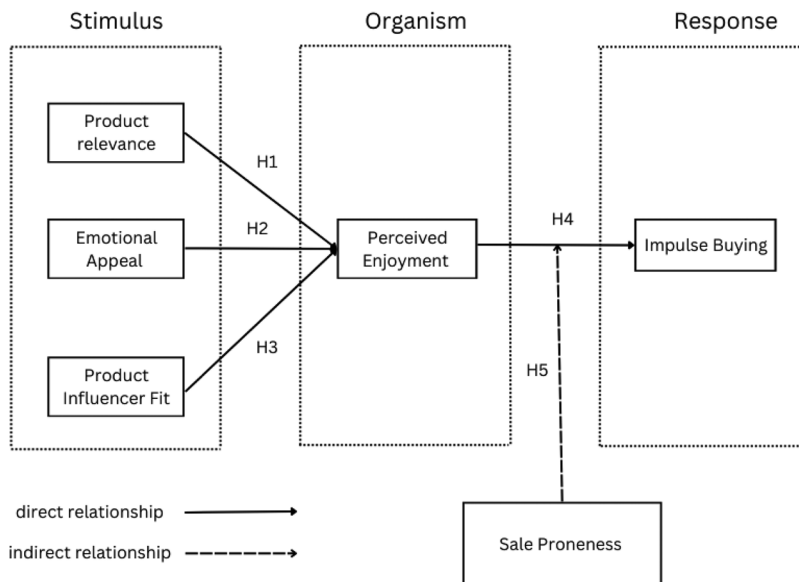


Figure 1. Research Model (Source: Authors' own).

Table 7. Summary hypothesis testing (Source: Authors' own).

Relationship	VIF	Path coefficient	f^2	t-value	Bias corrected CI		p-value	Supported
					2.5%	97.5%		
H1: PR $\rightarrow$ PE	1.463	0.233	0.057	5.488	0.149	0.315	0.000	Yes
H2: EA $\rightarrow$ PE	1.454	0.240	0.061	5.185	0.150	0.325	0.000	Yes
H3: PIF $\rightarrow$ PE	1.321	0.266	0.082	6.092	0.181	0.349	0.000	Yes
H4: PE $\rightarrow$ IP	1.420	0.454	0.281	11.111	0.375	0.530	0.000	Yes
H5: SP*PE $\rightarrow$ IP	1.236	0.077	0.016	2.285	0.130	0.016	0.010	Yes

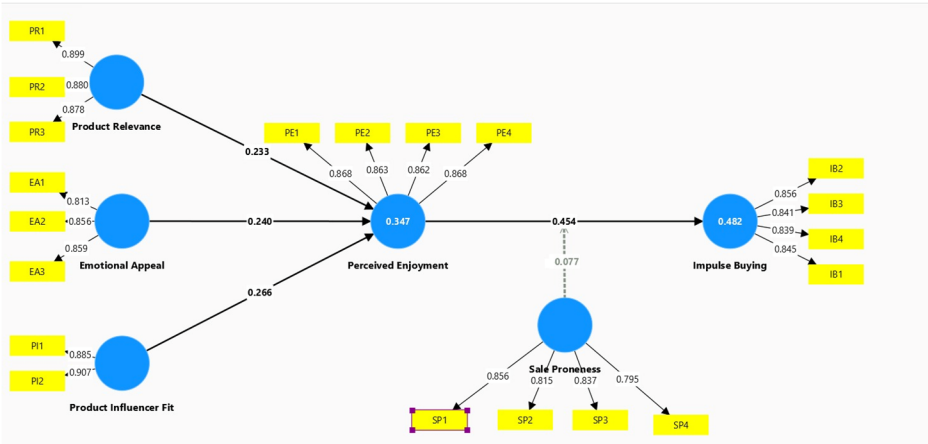


Figure 2. The structural equation model result (Source: Authors' own).

small differences between implied and observed correlation matrices. Chi-square values of 821.361 (saturated) and 910.091 (estimated) assist in model evaluation, though they should be interpreted with caution due to their sensitivity to sample size. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) scores of 0.841 (saturated) and 0.824 (estimated) fall below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.90, indicating a poor fit according to traditional standards. As PLS-SEM does not directly provide the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), we note that incremental fit indices like NFI and CFI are less emphasized in this methodology, which prioritizes predictive accuracy. Overall, while the measurement model demonstrates strong fit, the structural model's fit is marginal, and the difference in SRMR values highlights the need for future research to explore model respecification, such as including additional paths (e.g., direct effects of PR on IB) or mediators, to improve the structural fit.

Table 7 and Figure 2 present the results of hypothesis testing, indicating that all proposed relationships are statistically supported. Product Relevance (H1), Emotional Appeal (H2), and Product Influencer Fit (H3) each have a significant and positive effect on Perceived Enjoyment, with path coefficients of 0.233, 0.240, and 0.266, respectively, and p-values less than 0.001. Perceived Enjoyment (H4) strongly predicts Impulse Purchase behavior with a path coefficient of 0.454, a large effect size ($f^2 = 0.281$), and a highly significant t-value of 11.111. Additionally, Sales Proneness (H5) significantly moderates the relationship between Perceived Enjoyment and Impulse Purchase ($\beta = 0.077$, $p = 0.010$), although the effect size is small ($f^2 = 0.016$). All VIF values are below 2, indicating no multicollinearity concerns, and the bias-corrected confidence intervals do not include zero, further supporting the robustness of the model. Overall, the findings demonstrate meaningful relationships among the variables and validate the structural model's theoretical assumptions.

Discussion

The hypothesis testing results provide empirical support for the proposed theoretical framework, affirming the critical roles of content characteristics in shaping user enjoyment and subsequent behavior. The confirmation of H1 underscores the importance of Product Relevance in enhancing Perceived Enjoyment. This supports the notion that advertisements are more effective when the promoted product is meaningfully integrated into the content, thereby maintaining narrative consistency and minimizing consumer resistance (Xiao et al., 2023). In the context of short-form videos, relevance ensures that the product does not feel intrusive, but rather aligns with viewers' expectations and interests, ultimately increasing the overall appeal of the advertisement.

Similarly, H2 validates the influence of Emotional Appeal on enjoyment, resonating with the findings of Wang et al. (2023) and Long (2024), who emphasized the power of emotional storytelling in capturing attention and deepening engagement. Emotional appeals whether through humor, warmth, inspiration, or nostalgia enhance the affective experience of viewing and create memorable associations with the brand. These emotional connections enrich consumer experience, fostering not only enjoyment but also greater content sharing and brand affinity. Furthermore, H3 affirms the significance of Product-Influencer Fit in shaping viewer enjoyment. When influencers promote products that align with their personal brand or lifestyle, the content is perceived as more authentic and trustworthy (Jiang et al., 2019). This perceived congruence enhances processing fluency, making the message easier to understand and more persuasive, which in turn increases the entertainment value and credibility of the ad. These findings collectively highlight that enjoyment is not merely a function of entertainment, but a result of strategic alignment between message elements and consumer expectations.

By demonstrating the critical role that perceived enjoyment plays in promoting impulse buying, the results of H4 significantly strengthen the proposed theoretical model. This finding aligns with prior research by Xiang et al. (2016) and Raditya et al. (2020), which revealed that consumers' impulsive purchasing behaviors are strongly influenced by entertaining digital content, particularly short-form videos. Perceived enjoyment acts as a psychological catalyst heightening emotional arousal while simultaneously lowering cognitive resistance, thereby facilitating spontaneous decision-making. Engaging and captivating content captures viewers' attention, creates a sense of immersion, and often blurs the boundary between passive content consumption and active purchase intention. In today's fast-paced digital environments, consumers increasingly seek emotionally

rewarding experiences, especially when these experiences are seamlessly integrated with a product offering. Enjoyment enhances this effect by generating positive affective states that reduce the perceived risks associated with impulse buying. This emotional gratification serves as an internal justification for the behavior, making impulsive purchases feel instinctive rather than purely rational. Therefore, marketers aiming to stimulate impulse buying should prioritize the creation of content that is not only visually engaging but also emotionally resonant.

Hypothesis 5 (H5) confirms that sales proneness moderates the relationship between perceived enjoyment and impulse buying. While this moderating effect is statistically significant, its practical magnitude is relatively small ($f^2 = 0.016$), suggesting a limited real-world influence. This finding aligns with previous studies by Atulkar and Kesari (2018) and Haws et al. (2017), who observed that promotional sensitivity does shape consumer behavior, though the strength of its effect often depends on individual traits and contextual variables. A potential explanation for the modest effect observed in this study lies in the evolving digital landscape: consumers today are regularly exposed to a wide range of marketing tactics from flash sales to product placements on social media and e-commerce platforms. As these promotional strategies become more frequent and predictable, consumers may become desensitized, reducing the effectiveness of traditional sales triggers. In this way, frequent exposure may blunt the behavioral differences between high and low sales-prone individuals, resulting in weaker moderating effects than those reported in earlier research.

Although the moderating effect of sales proneness on impulse buying may exhibit a relatively small effect size, its contribution remains significant within the broader landscape of digital consumerism. This finding reflects an important shift: contemporary consumers, while still responsive to promotional stimuli, exhibit a more discerning impulsivity not because such tactics have lost their persuasive power, but because consumers have grown increasingly accustomed to these cues, especially in the saturated digital environment characterized by frequent promotional strategies. This changing dynamic indicates that simple promotional enjoyment may no longer be adequate to stimulate impulsive purchases among consumers predisposed to buying. It underscores the necessity for marketers to augment conventional discounts with innovative, immersive, and emotionally resonant marketing experiences. This insight underscores the necessity for brands to transition from price-centric incentives to personalized, content-oriented strategies that promote genuine consumer engagement and generate significant value.

Implication

Theoretical contribution

First, this study extends the SOR model to digital marketing by applying it to short-form video content, an area largely unexplored in SOR research. Traditionally, the SOR model has been employed to understand consumer behavior in physical retail and conventional media environments, with stimuli primarily conceptualized through sensory inputs like store layout or traditional advertising (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In this study, the "stimulus" component is redefined to include digital-specific elements such as product relevance, emotional appeal, and product-influencer fit. This is accomplished by applying the SOR framework to short-form video platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels. These attributes, unique to digital media, provide nuanced insights into how social media marketing can activate impulsive buying behaviors by engaging consumers in a format that is inherently brief yet highly interactive (Vorderer et al., 2004). Thus, this study contributes to the SOR literature by enhancing the model's applicability and relevance in digital marketing contexts, supporting its adaptability to new media forms.

Second, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of digital consumer behavior by applying TAT, which posits that personality traits are expressed when relevant situational cues are present (Tett & Burnett, 2003). In the context of short-form video platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels, digital marketing elements like emotional appeal, product-influencer fit, and product relevance serve as trait-relevant cues that can activate consumers' predisposition toward sale proneness. These platforms are inherently designed to be immersive and emotionally stimulating, creating an ideal environment for such traits to manifest. By demonstrating that sale proneness moderates the relationship between perceived enjoyment and impulsive buying, this study illustrates how digital content can elicit behavioral responses aligned with consumers' personality traits. This reinforces the core principle of TAT that traits are most influential when the environment provides cues that trigger their expression. Therefore, the study offers a deeper psychological explanation of impulsive buying in digital contexts and underscores the importance of tailoring marketing content to activate relevant consumer traits.

Third, a key contribution of this study is the introduction of sale proneness as a moderating factor between perceived enjoyment and impulsive buying. Sales proneness captures an individual's predisposition to be influenced by promotional cues and emotionally engaging content, positioning it as a critical personal trait within the consumer decision-making process. Although the statistical results indicate that this moderating effect is relatively modest, its significance provides valuable theoretical insight.

Specifically, it reinforces the notion that individual differences meaningfully shape consumer responses to emotionally stimulating digital experiences. While impulsive buying behavior has been widely examined across both offline and online settings, this study advances discourse by demonstrating how sales proneness can subtly but importantly amplify the influence of digital enjoyment on impulse purchasing tendencies. This finding is consistent with prior research emphasizing the importance of personal traits in consumer behavior (Youn & Faber, 2000) and enriches the impulse buying framework by illustrating that even small moderating effects can yield substantial explanatory power, particularly within the context of digital consumer environments.

Lastly, this study contributes a novel conceptual framework for understanding the dynamics of product placement in short-form video content, which differs considerably from traditional advertising methods. Unlike direct advertisements, product placements in short videos are seamlessly embedded within content that is primarily designed to entertain and engage viewers. This integration emphasizes the importance of factors such as product relevance, emotional appeal, and product-influencer fit in enhancing viewer satisfaction and driving impulsive buying decisions. This framework advances product placement theory by highlighting how the seamless blend of narrative content with promotional elements in short-form videos can trigger emotional responses that translate into purchasing behavior. Consequently, the research not only broadens the scope of product placement theory but also establishes a foundation for further investigation into how digital content features on social media platforms can influence consumer behavior in unique and profound ways (Bilandzic & Busselle, 2008).

Practical implications

This research offers several key practical implications for marketers aiming to leverage short-form video content to drive impulsive buying behavior.

First, strategic product placement within short-form videos can significantly enhance consumer engagement and trigger impulsive buying. By aligning products seamlessly within narrative-driven, entertaining content, marketers can create a viewing experience that feels natural rather than overtly promotional. This subtle integration encourages impulsive purchases as consumers are engaged on an emotional level, increasing their receptivity to product messages without interrupting the viewing experience. Such an approach underscores the potential of short-form videos to serve as highly effective platforms for indirect advertising strategies.

Secondly, targeting sale-prone consumers with promotional cues in short-form video content can significantly amplify impulsive buying

tendencies. The study's findings indicate that consumers predisposed to seeking sale opportunities are more likely to make purchases when their sense of enjoyment is heightened by sales cues. Marketers can leverage this by embedding limited-time offers or exclusive discounts directly into video content, effectively combining emotional engagement with persuasive promotional messaging. This strategy not only enhances the appeal of the buying experience but also drives higher conversion rates by tapping into the responsiveness of sale-prone consumers to time-sensitive and exclusive promotions.

Finally, ensuring product-influencer alignment is essential for fostering authentic consumer engagement. Product-influencer fit plays a critical role in shaping viewer perceptions and emotional responses to content. When brands partner with influencers whose people align closely with the products they endorse, the resulting content appears more credible and engaging to viewers, thereby strengthening the impact on impulse buying. This authenticity is particularly vital in digital spaces where consumers are increasingly discerning of promotional content. Selecting influencers with genuine relevance to the promoted products enhances trust, leading to stronger consumer engagement and higher likelihood of impulsive purchases.

Limitations and future research

This study has certain limitations. Firstly, the applicability of the findings to other media and industries may be constrained due to its focus on short video advertisements and specific product categories. In other digital formats such as live streaming, podcasts, or long-form video content, the moderating influence of sales proneness may not be relevant. Future studies should investigate a broader range of digital advertising formats to determine if similar trends continue across different media contexts. Secondly, the study's sample comprises solely Vietnamese consumers, thereby limiting the diversity of perspectives and potentially failing to accurately reflect consumer behavior across various age, socio-economic, or cultural demographics. Future research should include more diverse samples and cross-cultural comparisons to ascertain whether cultural factors influence the relationship between sales proneness, impulse buying, and perceived enjoyment, thereby enhancing external validity. Thirdly, methodological constraints, including the risk of common method bias and the inability to ascertain causal relationships, arise from the employment of a cross-sectional research design and dependence on self-reported data. These issues cannot be entirely eradicated, regardless of the statistical and procedural measures implemented to mitigate

them. Future research should employ experimental or longitudinal methodologies to enhance their rigor. They should also integrate objective behavioral data, such as purchase histories or social media engagement metrics, to provide a more comprehensive and precise understanding of customer responses.

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