

ALGORITHMS, ENGAGEMENT, AND SALES: SHORT-FORM VIDEO METRICS AS PREDICTORS OF PURCHASE INTENTION

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Abstract

The rapid growth of short-form video platforms has reshaped digital marketing practices and consumer purchasing behavior. This research explores how algorithmic recommendation and content engagement influence purchase intention through perceived arousal within the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework. A quantitative survey approach was employed and analyzed using regression analysis. The findings indicate that algorithmic recommendation and content engagement significantly affect perceived arousal, which subsequently influences purchase intention. The results highlight the importance of emotional arousal as a key mechanism in transforming digital stimuli into consumer behavioral responses. The study suggests that optimizing recommendation systems and developing engaging content can enhance conversion outcomes in short-form video marketing environments.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital media has fundamentally transformed the way consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. In recent years, short-form video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts have emerged as a dominant global phenomenon that integrates entertainment with consumption oriented activities. These platforms are characterized by their reliance on algorithmic recommendation systems that curate and personalize content based on users' preferences, interaction history, and behavioral patterns. As a result, users are exposed to highly individualized content streams that increase relevance, immersion, and exposure to product related information, thereby reshaping how consumers process marketing messages and evaluate purchase options.

A growing body of empirical research demonstrates that algorithm driven content significantly influences consumer behavior. Grabowska et al. (2025), in their study of TikTok users in Poland, find that algorithmic recommendations exert a strong influence on purchase intention, particularly among Generation Z users. Their findings indicate that personalized content delivery enhances user engagement, stimulates positive emotional responses, and increases the likelihood of purchasing products featured in short-form videos. These results suggest that recommendation algorithms do not merely function as technical tools for content distribution but actively shape user experience and decision making processes. By continuously refining content relevance, algorithms amplify exposure to persuasive stimuli and reinforce consumption oriented behaviors.

Previous studies also emphasize the critical role of content engagement and emotional mechanisms in digital marketing contexts. Fan et al. (2024) demonstrate that user interactions with short-form video content, including likes, comments, and viewing duration, significantly influence perceived value and purchase intention. In addition, Liu et al. (2024) highlight the role of perceived arousal, showing that engaging and visually appealing short-form videos can induce feelings of excitement, enthusiasm, and heightened alertness, which subsequently drive purchase intention. Zhao et al. (2024) further confirm that emotional engagement serves as a mediating mechanism between visual promotional stimuli and consumer purchasing responses, reinforcing the importance of internal emotional states in shaping behavioral outcomes.

Despite the growing body of literature on short-form video marketing, most previous studies tend to examine algorithmic recommendation systems and content engagement as separate determinants of consumer responses. Consequently, limited attention has been given to how these two mechanisms operate simultaneously within the same behavioral framework and how they jointly stimulate emotional reactions that lead to purchasing decisions. This gap is particularly relevant in the context of short-form video platforms, where personalized algorithms and highly engaging content operate together to shape user experience.

Therefore, this study aims to examine how algorithmic recommendation and content engagement influence consumers' purchase intention through perceived arousal. Specifically, this research investigates whether personalized content delivery and user interaction with short-form video content function as key stimuli that trigger emotional arousal and ultimately influence purchase-related behavioral responses. By integrating these variables into a single model based on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, this study provides a more comprehensive explanation of how algorithm-driven environments affect consumer decision-making on short-form video platforms.

This study contributes to the existing literature in two important ways. First, it integrates algorithmic recommendation and content engagement within a unified theoretical framework to better capture the interactive nature of short-form video platforms. Second, it explores the role of perceived arousal in explaining the relationship between short-form video stimuli and purchase intention. In doing so, this research extends prior studies on digital consumer behavior by highlighting the psychological mechanisms underlying algorithm-based marketing environments.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical perspectives and empirical findings on short-form video platforms and consumer purchase behavior are reviewed by integrating algorithmic, behavioral, and emotional factors within the Stimulus Organism Response framework.

2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Background

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) paradigm, developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), explains how environmental factors influence human emotions and behaviors through internal psychological processes. The model posits that external stimuli first affect an individual's internal state, referred to as the organism, which then leads to a behavioral response. These internal processes may occur consciously or unconsciously and involve perception, interpretation, and emotional reactions that shape decision-making. Because of this structure, the SOR framework has been widely used to understand how environmental cues influence affective states and subsequent behavioral outcomes.

Originally rooted in environmental psychology, the SOR model has been extended to various research domains, including consumer behavior, branding, and digital marketing. Mehrabian and Russell (1977) emphasize that environmental stimuli do not directly cause behavior but operate through internal emotional and cognitive mechanisms. Later studies in management and organizational behavior further confirm that external inputs are filtered through internal evaluations before resulting in observable actions (Parkinson & Turner Schenk, 1980). In consumer research, this perspective is particularly relevant for analyzing how marketing environments influence emotions and purchasing decisions in technology-mediated settings.

Within the SOR framework, stimuli refer to external cues originating from the environment that influence individuals' psychological processing. In the context of short-form video platforms, stimuli include algorithmic recommendation systems and content-related features such as visual presentation, interactivity, and engagement mechanisms. Algorithmic recommendation acts as a critical stimulus by personalizing content exposure based on users' preferences, past behaviors, and interaction patterns. This personalization enhances perceived relevance and reduces information overload, increasing users' attention to product-related content. In parallel, content and engagement elements such as likes, comments, shares, and viewing duration intensify users' interaction with videos and amplify the impact of marketing messages.

The organism component represents internal states that mediate the relationship between stimuli and behavioral responses. In digital consumption contexts, perceived arousal has been widely examined as a key organismic response. Perceived arousal reflects the degree of excitement, stimulation, or emotional activation experienced by users when interacting with engaging or personalized content. Short-form video formats, characterized by rapid pacing, dynamic visuals, and immersive storytelling, are particularly effective in eliciting arousal responses. As an affective state, perceived arousal enhances emotional involvement and attentional focus, shaping how consumers evaluate and respond to marketing stimuli.

The response component of the SOR framework refers to the behavioral outcomes resulting from internal processing. In consumer behavior research, purchase intention is commonly used to represent response, reflecting an individual's willingness or readiness to purchase a product after exposure to marketing stimuli. Purchase intention is influenced not only by cognitive evaluation but also by emotional states generated during content consumption. Within short-form video environments, purchase intention emerges from the combined effects of personalized

algorithmic exposure, engaging content, and heightened perceived arousal. Therefore, the SOR framework provides a coherent theoretical foundation for examining how digital stimuli translate into consumer decision-making in algorithm-driven platforms.

2.2 Empirical Review and Hypothesis

Algorithmic recommendation systems play a crucial role in shaping users' emotional reactions on short-form video platforms by continuously tailoring content to individual preferences and viewing behavior. Prior studies demonstrate that highly personalized recommendations increase content relevance, which intensifies users' emotional activation when exposed to product-related videos. Grabowska et al. (2025) found that algorithm-driven personalization on TikTok significantly enhances users' emotional responses, which subsequently influence purchasing-related attitudes. Similarly, Liu et al. (2024) reported that exposure to algorithmically curated short videos stimulates excitement and enjoyment, indicating heightened perceived arousal. Yu et al. (2023) further confirmed that accurate recommendation systems strengthen emotional engagement by reducing content mismatch and increasing users' attentional focus. Within the S-O-R framework, algorithmic recommendation functions as a stimulus that activates users' internal emotional states. So, this study hypothesizes:

H1: Algorithmic recommendation has a significant effect on perceived arousal.

Content quality and engagement metrics are also key stimuli that influence users' emotional experiences when consuming short-form product videos. Empirical evidence suggests that visually appealing content, clear product demonstrations, and high engagement indicators such as likes, comments, and shares enhance users' emotional immersion. Zhao et al. (2024) demonstrated that engaging promotional short videos generate stronger emotional arousal by increasing viewers' involvement and perceived entertainment value. Fan et al. (2024) showed that interaction intensity with short-form content significantly elevates emotional activation, which reinforces users' attention toward the promoted products. In addition, Nagano et al. (2023) found that rich audiovisual elements and interactive features increase excitement and stimulation during video consumption. These findings support the role of content and engagement as external stimuli that intensify emotional arousal. So, this study hypothesizes:

H2: Content and engagement have a significant effect on perceived arousal.

Perceived arousal represents a critical organism state that translates emotional stimulation into behavioral outcomes in digital consumption contexts. Research consistently indicates that emotionally arousing content increases impulsivity and strengthens consumers' motivation to purchase. Fan et al. (2024) reported that heightened emotional arousal during short-form video exposure significantly increases purchase intention by reducing cognitive resistance. Liu et al. (2024) similarly found that feelings of excitement and pleasure elicited by short videos directly influence consumers' willingness to buy. Moreover, Li et al. (2025) confirmed that perceived arousal serves as a strong predictor of purchase intention, particularly in fast-paced and visually driven digital environments. In line with the S-O-R framework, perceived arousal mediates the relationship between exposure to stimuli and consumers' behavioral responses. So, this study hypothesizes:

H3: Perceived arousal has a significant effect on purchase intention.

Based on the preceding empirical studies, it is evident that algorithmic recommendation and content engagement function as external stimuli that shape users' emotional responses, which subsequently influence their purchasing intentions. Drawing on the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework, this study integrates Algorithmic Recommendation and Content & Engagement as stimuli, Perceived Arousal as the organism, and Purchase Intention as the response. Accordingly, a conceptual model is proposed to illustrate the hypothesized relationships among these constructs and to provide a structured foundation for the empirical analysis.

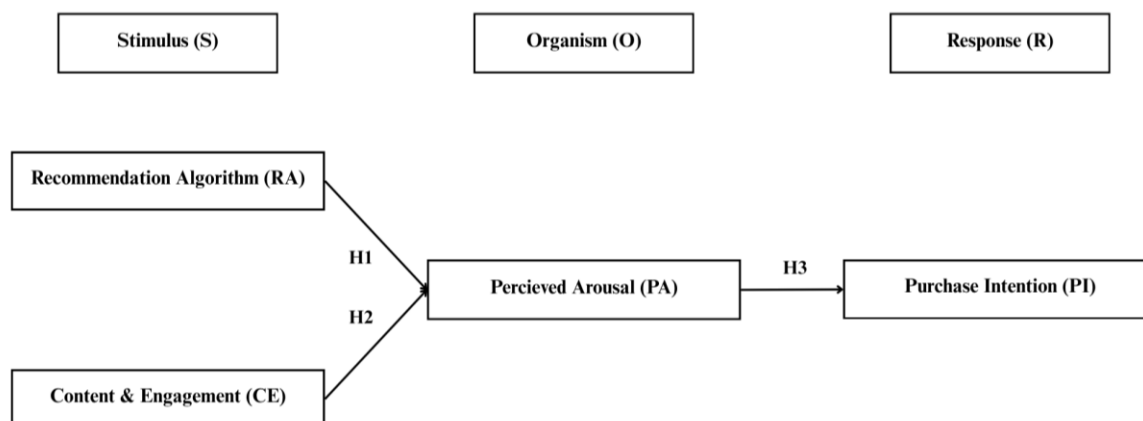


Figure 1. Theoretical Model

Source: Authors (2025)

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the relationships between algorithmic recommendation, content and engagement, perceived arousal, and purchase intention in the context of short-form video platforms. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to individuals who actively consume short-form video content. A total of 108 responses were initially obtained. Prior to conducting statistical analysis, a data screening process was implemented to ensure that the collected responses met the predefined research criteria. The screening procedure involved evaluating respondent eligibility as active users of short-form video platforms, verifying the completeness of responses, and assessing response consistency. Based on this screening process, 35 responses were excluded due to incomplete information or failure to meet the specified criteria. Consequently, 73 valid responses were retained and used for subsequent statistical analysis.

The valid responses were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. The analytical procedure began with data coding and the transfer of the dataset from Microsoft Excel to SPSS. Subsequently, validity and reliability tests were conducted to evaluate the adequacy of the measurement items. Items that met the required statistical criteria were retained, while indicators that did not satisfy the validity threshold were excluded from further analysis. The remaining indicators for each construct were then aggregated by calculating their mean scores to represent the variables in the model. Finally, multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the relationships among the research variables and to evaluate the effects of algorithmic recommendation and content and engagement on perceived arousal, as well as the influence of perceived arousal on purchase intention within the proposed research framework.

Question	Dimension	Frequency	Percentage %
How old are you?	18-22	43	39.8
	23-27	10	9.3
	28-32	6	5.6
	33-37	12	11.1
	38-42	17	15.7
	None of the above	20	18.5
	Total	108	100
What's your Gender?	Male	29	26.9
	Female	79	73.1
	Total	108	100
How often do you watch short-form videos?	Every day	74	84.1
	2-3 times a week	10	11.4
	Less than once a week	3	3.4
	Never	1	1.1
	Total	88	100
Have you ever purchased a	Yes	73	83

product because you were influenced by a short-form video in the last three months?

No	15	17
Total	88	100

Table 1. Sample Characteristics
Source: Authors (2025)

The measurement instrument was developed based on constructs and indicators adapted from prior empirical studies to ensure conceptual relevance and content validity. All variables in this study were measured using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The indicators used to operationalize each construct are summarized in **Table 2**. Latent and Manifest Variables in the Model, along with their respective sources. Since the measurement items are presented in detail in the table, this section focuses on outlining the analytical procedure rather than repeating indicator descriptions.

Data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis began with data preparation, in which questionnaire responses were transferred from Microsoft Excel to SPSS. Subsequently, validity and reliability tests were performed to ensure the quality of the measurement instrument. Item validity was assessed using corrected item-to-total correlation, while construct reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. Items that did not meet the required criteria were excluded from further analysis. After retaining valid and reliable items, composite scores for each variable were calculated using mean values. These composite variables were then employed in regression analysis to test the proposed hypotheses and examine the relationships among independent, explanatory, and dependent variables in the research model.

Latent Variable	Manifesting Variable	Source
Recommendation Algorithm	RA1 "I often find new products through recommended short videos."	Grabowska et al. (2025)
	RA2 'The platform recommends product videos based on my previous activity.'	Grabowska et al. (2025)
	RA3 "The videos I see on my feed usually match my interests."	Grabowska et al. (2025)
	RA4 "The platform seems to understand what kind of products I like."	Grabowska et al. (2025)
	RA5 "Recommended videos make it easier for me to decide which products to consider."	Grabowska et al. (2025)
Content & Engagement	CE1 "I usually watch product-related short videos until they end."	Fan et al. (2024)
	CE2 "I often like, comment on, or share short videos about products."	Fan et al. (2024)
	CE3 "Short videos provide useful information about the products shown."	Liu et al. (2024)
	CE4 "The way short videos are presented keeps me interested."	Fan et al. (2024)
	CE5 "Discounts or promotions in short videos catch my attention."	Liu et al. (2024)
Perceived Arousal	PA1 "Watching engaging short videos creates a positive feeling."	Zhao et al. (2024)
	PA2 "Watching interesting short videos makes me feel more alert."	Liu et al. (2024)
	PA3 "I feel excited when watching short videos about products."	Zhao et al. (2024)
	PA4 "Short-form videos make watching products more enjoyable."	Liu et al. (2024)
	PA5 "I feel more interested in the product while watching short-form videos."	Zhao et al. (2024)

Purchase Intention	PI1	"I would consider buying a product after seeing it in a short-form video."	Jiang et al. (2022)
	PI2	"After watching a product video, I want to look for more information about the product."	Grabowska et al. (2025)
	PI3	"Short-form videos make me interested in trying the product."	Fan et al. (2024)
	PI4	"Watching short-form videos increases my likelihood of purchasing the product."	Jiang et al. (2022)
	PI5	"I feel ready to buy a product after watching short-form video content."	Grabowska et al. (2025)

Table 2. Latent and Manifest Variables in the Model
Source: Authors (2025)

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Result

Before testing the structural relationships among the proposed constructs, this study first evaluated the measurement model to ensure the reliability and validity of the research instruments. This step is essential to confirm that the indicators accurately represent their respective latent variables and are suitable for further analysis. The assessment focused on examining factor loadings, eigenvalues, cumulative variance explained, item-to-total correlations, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The results of the reliability and validity testing are presented in

Table 3. and provide the foundation for evaluating the proposed theoretical model and hypothesis testing.

Items	Factor Loading	Eigen Value	Cumulative Explained	Item-to-total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha	
Recommendation Algorithm		3.357	67.136		0.876	
RA1	0.870			0.685		Valid
RA2	0.867			0.773		Valid
RA3	0.807			0.778		Valid
RA4	0.790			0.670		Valid
RA5	0.756			0.628		Valid
Content & Engagement		2.844	56.871		0.809	
CE1	0.869			0.535		Valid
CE2						Deleted
CE3	0.754			0.734		Valid
CE4	0.728			0.682		Valid
CE5	0.600			0.574		Valid
Perceived Arousal		3.873	77.460		0.923	
PA1	0.928			0.807		Valid
PA2	0.922			0.812		Valid
PA3	0.889			0.665		Valid
PA4	0.886			0.872		Valid
PA5	0.767			0.873		Valid
Purchase Intention		4.092	81.844		0.943	

PI1	0.918	0.834	Valid
PI2	0.909	0.843	Valid
PI3	0.907	0.854	Valid
PI4	0.895	0.870	Valid
PI5	0.895	0.848	Valid

Table 3. Reliability and Validity Testing

Source: Authors (2025)

This study first examined the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments, as presented in Table 3. The results indicate that all constructs demonstrate satisfactory reliability and validity. The factor loading values for the retained items exceed the recommended threshold of 0.60, confirming adequate convergent validity. In addition, the eigenvalues for Recommendation Algorithm, Content & Engagement, Perceived Arousal, and Purchase Intention are all greater than 1, with cumulative variance explained ranging from 56.871% to 81.844%, indicating that the extracted factors adequately represent the underlying constructs. Item-to-total correlation values are consistently above 0.50, while Cronbach's alpha coefficients range from 0.809 to 0.943, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. One indicator from the Content & Engagement construct (CE2) did not meet the validity criterion and was therefore removed, while the remaining indicators were confirmed to be valid and reliable for subsequent analysis.

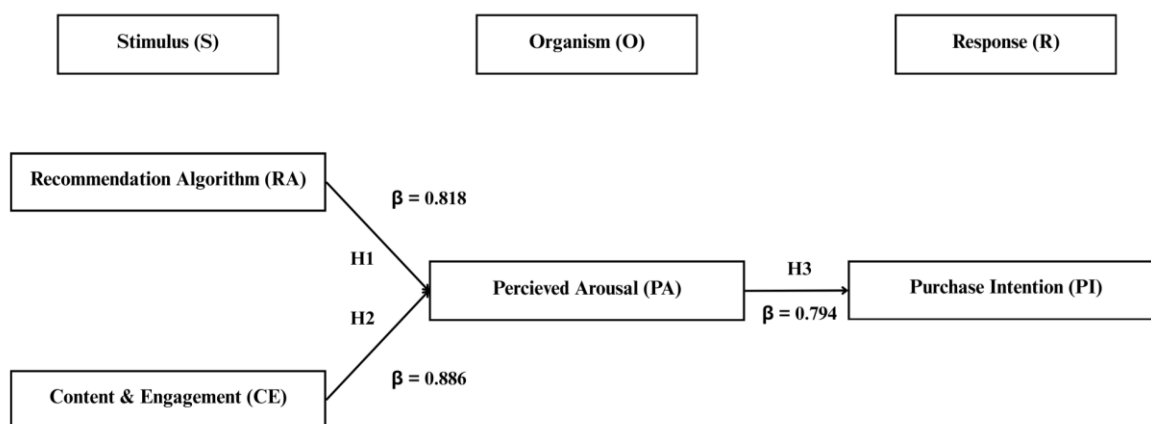


Figure 2. Result for the Theoretical Model

Source: Authors (2025)

The structural relationships among variables were evaluated using the theoretical model shown in Figure 3. The results indicate that Recommendation Algorithm and Content & Engagement, as stimulus variables, have significant positive effects on Perceived Arousal, which in turn positively influences Purchase Intention. The standardized path coefficients show that Content & Engagement has the strongest effect on Perceived Arousal ($\beta = 0.886$), followed by Recommendation Algorithm ($\beta = 0.818$), while Perceived Arousal significantly affects Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.794$), supporting the proposed Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework.

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Recommendation Algorithm → Perceived Arousal	0.818	13.412	0.000	Yes
H2	Content & Engagement → Perceived Arousal	0.886	13.692	0.000	Yes
H3	Perceived Arousal → Purchase Intention	0.794	13.412	0.000	Yes

Table 4. Confirmation Results of Hypotheses

Source: Authors (2025)

Hypothesis testing results are summarized in Table 4. All proposed hypotheses are empirically supported, as evidenced by high t-values and p-values below the 0.05 significance level. Specifically, Recommendation Algorithm has a significant positive effect on Perceived Arousal (H1), Content & Engagement significantly enhances Perceived Arousal (H2), and Perceived Arousal significantly increases Purchase Intention (H3). These findings confirm that both technological and content-related stimuli play a critical role in shaping consumers' emotional responses, which subsequently drive their purchase intentions.

Hypothesis	Path	R ²
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H1	Recommendation Algorithm → Perceived Arousal	0.656
H2	Content & Engagement → Perceived Arousal	0.725
H3	Perceived Arousal → Purchase Intention	0.717

Table 5. R² Coefficients

Source: Authors (2025)

Finally, the explanatory power of the model was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R²), as reported in **Table 5**. The R² value for Perceived Arousal indicates that Recommendation Algorithm and Content & Engagement jointly explain a substantial proportion of variance in this construct. Similarly, the R² value for Purchase Intention demonstrates that Perceived Arousal accounts for a high level of explanatory power. Overall, these results suggest that the proposed model exhibits strong predictive capability, reinforcing the importance of emotional arousal as a key explanatory mechanism between digital stimuli and consumer behavioral intentions.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study provide empirical support for the application of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework in the context of short-form video marketing. The results demonstrate that algorithmic and content-based stimuli play an important role in shaping consumers' emotional responses, which subsequently influence purchase intention. Recommendation Algorithm and Content & Engagement were found to have positive and significant effects on Perceived Arousal, indicating that users tend to experience higher emotional activation when exposed to personalized recommendations and engaging short-form video content. These findings confirm that short-form video platforms operate not only as information delivery systems but also as environments that stimulate affective reactions through algorithmic and content-related mechanisms.

The significant effect of Recommendation Algorithm on Perceived Arousal suggests that personalization mechanisms enhance emotional engagement by increasing content relevance and reducing information overload. When recommended videos are aligned with users' preferences and past viewing behavior, users experience greater interest and excitement during content consumption. This condition encourages users to pay closer attention to product-related messages embedded in short-form videos. The result supports previous studies emphasizing that algorithmic accuracy strengthens emotional responses by improving perceived relevance and attentional focus in digital environments, particularly within highly dynamic and visually driven platforms.

Content & Engagement was found to have the strongest influence on Perceived Arousal, highlighting the importance of content quality and interaction intensity in shaping users' emotional experiences. Visually appealing presentations, clear product demonstrations, and engagement features such as likes, comments, and promotional cues contribute to emotional stimulation during video consumption. These elements enhance users' involvement and increase the affective value of the content. This finding indicates that emotional responses are strongly influenced by how content is presented and experienced, reinforcing the role of short-form videos as emotionally immersive marketing media rather than purely informational tools.

The results also confirm that Perceived Arousal has a significant positive effect on Purchase Intention. Emotional activation experienced while watching product-related short-form videos increases users' motivation to purchase and reduces hesitation in decision-making. Users who feel excited, interested, and emotionally engaged are more likely to develop intentions to purchase the featured products. This finding supports prior research suggesting that emotional mechanisms play a central role in translating exposure to digital stimuli into behavioral responses. Perceived arousal functions as a key psychological mechanism that links algorithmic recommendation and content engagement to purchase intention within short-form video environments.

5. CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical support for the proposed hypotheses by demonstrating that algorithmic recommendation and content engagement significantly influence purchase intention in short-form video environments, with perceived arousal playing an important role in explaining users' behavioral responses. The findings confirm the theoretical assumption of the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework that consumer behavior in algorithm-driven platforms is not merely a direct reaction to technological or content-based stimuli, but is closely associated with internal emotional processes. The evidence indicates that emotional arousal represents a crucial psychological factor linking personalized content exposure and interactive video engagement with purchasing intention, reinforcing the importance of affective responses in digital consumer decision-making. From a scientific standpoint, this research contributes to the literature by extending the application of the SOR framework to algorithm-driven short-form video platforms, where technological personalization and dynamic content interactions operate simultaneously. Unlike prior studies that examine algorithmic systems or content characteristics separately, this study

integrates both stimuli within a unified explanatory structure and positions perceived arousal as an essential explanatory construct, thereby strengthening the theoretical foundation of digital marketing research in algorithm-based environments.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce perceptual bias, while the cross-sectional research design limits the ability to capture behavioral and emotional dynamics over time. In addition, the scope of the sample and platform context may constrain the generalizability of the results across different industries or demographic groups. Future studies are therefore encouraged to adopt longitudinal research designs, incorporate additional psychological constructs such as trust, impulsive buying behavior, or perceived risk, and extend the investigation to other digital platforms and market contexts. From a practical perspective, the results suggest that digital marketing strategies and platform governance frameworks should consider emotional engagement as an important evaluative dimension. Recommendation systems and content performance metrics may benefit from being assessed not only in terms of engagement volume but also in their ability to stimulate emotional responses that encourage meaningful behavioral intentions in algorithm-driven digital ecosystems.

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