

**The Impact of Short-Form Video Content on Brand
Engagement: A Systematic Literature Review Using
Engagement Theory and the S-O-R Framework**

1. Introduction / Background / Research Problem

In the last ten years, the digital marketing has experienced a major change that is instigated by the high rate of technological innovation, higher smartphone penetration, and faster growth of social networking sites. Conventional forms of digital marketing that used to rely on still-images, text-based updates, and banners have slowly been overtaken by newer and more interactive and visually engaging types of marketing. Short-form video content on these recent formats, especially on apps like Tik Tok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, has emerged as one of the most powerful communication channels that companies can use in extremely competitive digital spheres to attract the interest of consumers. They operate on the basis of advanced algorithm-based recommendation engines in which interesting content is of greatest priority, allowing users to rapidly consume it and interact, promoting user engagement (likes, comments, shares, and number of views).

The scholarly knowledge of short-form video content is rather fragmented and descriptive in nature, despite the fact that it is extensively applied in marketing practice. The current literature is inclined to concentrate on the visible performance variables like the rate of engagement, but not to investigate psychological and theoretical processes that underlie the impact of short-form video consumption on consumer behaviour and brand attitudes. As a result, a sharp disparity exists between practice and theory in the industry, as well as restricting the possibility of scholars and practitioners to create a holistic picture of the strategic value of short video marketing.

To overcome this weakness, the current research paper takes the theory-based approach by incorporating a number of foundational models and theories, such as Consumer Engagement Theory, Media Richness Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model. All these theoretical approaches present a strong perspective to understand how short-form video features, including the visual richness, emotional storytelling, and the interactive features influence the way consumers think, respond emotionally and behave towards brands.

Thus, the research will be based on the systematic review of the scholarly literature in order to critique how and why short-form video content improves brand engagement on the social media platform.

2. Research Aim, Objectives and Research Questions

2.1 Research Aim

To critically determine whether short-form video content is effective in increasing brand engagement in the social media in a theory-based systematic literature review.

2.2 Research Objectives

To investigate the functionality of short-form video content as a digital marketing communication tool.

1. To find out the central content features that determine engagement.
2. To study the effect of short-format videos on behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement.
3. To integrate theoretical approaches to explain video engagement on the short-form.
4. To analyse managerial implications to digital marketing strategy critically.

2.3 Revised Research Questions

1. What is the impact of short-form video contents on brand engagement on social media platforms? Why and how?
2. What are the theoretical mechanisms that lie behind the results of engagement in short-form video marketing?
3. What content elements bring about cognitive, emotional and behavioural involvement?
4. What are the strategic consequences of short-form video marketing to brand managers?

These research questions not only offer a concise direction on the analytical path that the study aims to take, but also guarantee that the study is focused on researching short-form video not as a trending format, but as a strategically important and theoretically understudied digital marketing tool.

3. Preliminary Literature Review and Identification of Research Gap

3.1 Consumer Engagement Theory

The Consumer Engagement Theory (Kozinets et al., 2010) is a theoretical framework that helps in explaining the interaction of consumers with the brands in the digital landscape. This view holds that engagement is a multidimensional construct comprising elements of cognitive, emotional and behavioural responses that are cumulative indicators of the intensity of

relationships with a brand by a consumer. Cognitive engagement can be described as the amount of attention and mental processing that is given to brand contents, emotional engagement can be defined as the perceptions that include trust, enjoyment and attachment and behavioural engagement consists of the actions observed like liking, commenting, sharing and content creation.

The content displayed in short forms of video fits this theoretical model perfectly since it is capable of triggering all three dimensions of engagement simultaneously. The brevity and visual contact of the short-form video content boost the level of cognitive processing, as it draws the attention in a brief period and relieves the load on information. Storytelling techniques, music, humour and relatability, enhance emotional appeal and create emotional resonance between consumers and brands. The design features of the platform, which enable behavioural engagement, are interactive buttons, algorithmic visibility and user-generated content participation. The short-form video marketing can in turn turn passive consumers into active brand participants and hence the long-term brand relationship and customer loyalty.

3.2 Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) Model.

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974) model provides a complex approach to the explanation of the effect of environmental stimulus on consumer behaviour due to the effect of internal psychological processes. This model is applied in digital marketing when the stimuli are stimulated by the marketing activities and the stimuli result in cognitive as well as emotional responses which eventually influence the consumer responses.

The stimulus element in the short-video marketing involves video traits like visual quality, storytelling, authenticity, presence of influencers, and algorithmic suggestions. These stimuli affect the organism, which indicates the internal psychological conditions of consumers, which are attention, emotional arousal, perceived value, and brand perception. These intrinsic responses then translate to a response that is manifested as engagement behaviours liking, commenting, sharing, following and purchase intention.

The S-O-R framework is especially helpful in the sense that it considers the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural aspects of engagement as one explanatory framework. It underscores the fact that short-form video contents are not only attention grabbing but also trigger higher level of psychological processing which eventually results in significant brand engagement behaviours. The theoretical view is therefore a wholesome insight into the processes by which short-form video marketing influences the consumer behaviour.

3.3 Revised Research Gap

In spite of the fact that the power of short form video content in digital marketing is well recognized, the literature is still scattered and largely descriptive. The majority of the research focuses on the surface-level measures of performance, such as likes, views, and shares, and little of the synthesis is produced based on the theory behind the psychological and engagement processes. Moreover, studies are more likely to study each platform separately, which does not provide cross-platform comparative information. The lack of qualitative research into the effects of the short-form video on the process of cognitive and emotional engagement is also under-researched. Notably, the literature identifies little discussion of strategic managerial implications especially in marketing investment decisions, content strategy and allocation of resources. This paper has filled these gaps by way of theory-based literature review.

3.4 Theoretical Review Conclusion.

In general, the Consumer Engagement Theory is integrated with the Media Richness Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, the S-O-R model, and they offer a solid conceptual framework on which the effectiveness of short-form video content use in digital marketing can be explained (Hazari and Sethna, 2023). All these frameworks explain the impact of the features of short-form video on consumer attention, emotional responses, psychological motivations, and involvement in behaviour in as much as they provide a solid theoretical justification of exploring short-form video marketing as a strategic mechanism of improving brand engagement.

4. Research Methodology (Including Ethics)

4.1 Research Design

The approach taken in this research is the systematic literature review (SLR) to present an extensive and theory-focused synthesis of the current research on the issue of short-form video content and brand engagement (Wulansari *et al.* 2025). It is proposed that a systematic review is suitable as it allows to conduct a structured and transparent and replicable process of identifying, evaluating, and synthesising scholarly literature. The systematic approach in comparison to traditional narrative reviews is more selective and subjective where there are prescribed procedures which reduce bias and enhance reliability of research.

The Preferred Reporting Items of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) will direct the review. The PRISMA guidelines provide an adequate methodological rigour as it

provides distinct steps of literature identification, screening and eligibility assessment and the ultimate inclusion. This framework would improve the transparency of the selection process and increase the believability of the results.

4.2 Data Sources

In order to secure the quality and reliability of the literature, the study will limit itself to the high-quality academic databases only. The main sources of data are Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar. The choice of these databases is that the databases index peer-reviewed journal articles in reputable academic publishers and allow a wide scope of marketing, communication, and digital media research coverage (Javed *et al.* 2025).

The search terms will consist of such combinations of keywords as short-form video, TikTok marketing, social media engagement, brand engagement, and digital marketing strategy. The search results will be refined by use of the Boolean operators (AND, OR) that will make the search results relevant. This is the method of structured search which will enable encompassing the research topic fully without wandering out of the scope of the study aim.

4.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.

In order to take control of consistency and to ensure academic rigour, there will be definite inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria include the requirement that the studies be peer reviewed journal articles published within the period of 2015 to 2025, be in English language and address directly the content of short-form videos in the context of digital marketing or brand engagement activities. This period was chosen so as to reflect the recent events in the short-form video platforms and at the same time ensure the validity of the findings in the present-day marketing process.

The studies will be ruled out in case they are conference papers, dissertation, non-academic reports, and opinion-based articles without being empirical or theoretical. Further, studies that do not have the specific reference to video content, but only the general social media marketing will be left out to ensure thematic relevance (Doan *et al.* 2025).

4.4 Study Selection Process

The PRISMA flow process will be used in the process of selecting it. First, all the records that are identified by the searches of the database will be gathered and duplications eliminated. Abstracts and titles shall then be filtered to determine their relevancy to the topic of the

research. Articles that pass the initial screening criteria will then be assessed against the inclusion criteria. The final review sample will only include the studies that specifically involve short-form video engagement or the associated theoretical concepts.

4.5 Data Analysis Method

The chosen studies will be analysed with the help of the thematic analysis that is a qualitative method of identifying patterns and themes in the textual data. This is the right approach since categorisation of research findings can happen in a systematic way and theory integration is promoted (Raut, 2025). The process of analysis will be divided into various steps that will be the familiarisation with the data, coding of key concepts, grouping of codes into themes, and the interpretation of relationships between themes.

The analytical themes that are anticipated are engagement drivers, platform nature, algorithmic effects, emotional and cognitive involvement procedures, and management implications. Thematic analysis will also facilitate in establishing the research gaps, inconsistency and emerging trends among studies (Hasyim and Ash-shiddiqi, 2026). The research will offer a deeper and theoretically informed idea on the impact of short-form video content on the brand engagement by synthesising results using a systematic coding framework.

5. Risks and Limitations

Even though this paper follows a systematic and structured method of secondary qualitative research, there are a number of limitations that should be noted.

To begin with, the study uses only secondary data; hence, it does not have direct control over data generation and interpretation. The research relies on the breadth, research approach, and depth of scholarly literature. Any possible bias and methodological limitation of the studies reviewed could have an impact on the general synthesis. Moreover, the lack of primary empirical evidence implies that the perception of the audience in real-time or up-to-date algorithmic processes cannot be tested and validated (Dibda and Ahmad, 2025).

Second, the short-form video platforms are changing rapidly, which poses a time constraint. The platform algorithms, interaction options, and user behaviour are dynamic. Therefore, the results obtained using the existing literature can be partly obsolete as the digital ecosystems keep on changing (Vire, 2025). It is especially applicable to the situation with such a platform as Tik Tok and Instagram Reels, where the updates made to the platform influence the visibility of content and its engagement trends significantly.

Third, a significant part of the current research is concentrated on younger populations, specifically, on Generation Z, which can decrease the extrapolation of results to the larger consumer groups. Moreover, most studies also define engagement based on observable metrics (likes, shares, comments), which may not be the most accurate representation of more emotional or relational brand outcomes.

6. Timeline

The research study will take place within a 16 weeks period as per MBA dissertation timeline. The time schedule will provide a certain order of the development of the proposal to the final submission and proper time to complete the literature review, thematic analysis, drafting, revision and incorporating supervisor feedback. Since the proposed study is using a secondary qualitative methodology, no time is needed in the collection of primary data, but considerable time will be spent in the screening of critical literature and thematic coding so as to maintain analytical rigour.

It will require ethical approval before undertaking the detailed data analysis, as it is required by the university. The data analysis and the literature review stages will be overlapping in order to enable the synthesis of themes in a repeated manner. The last weeks will be devoted to the refinement, proofreading, formatting following the UWTSD standards and supervisor feedback integration that will assure academic quality and adherence to submission requirements.

The deadline of submission of the dissertation is 13 May 2026.

7. Gantt Chart (Word-Ready Table)

Task	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Proposal Finalisation & Ethics Approval	✓✓			
Comprehensive Literature Search	✓✓	✓		
Literature Screening & Selection		✓✓		
Thematic Coding & Analysis		✓✓	✓	
Chapter Drafting (Intro, LR, Methodology)		✓	✓✓	
Findings & Discussion Drafting			✓✓	
Revision & Supervisor Feedback Integration			✓	✓
Final Editing, Formatting & Submission				✓✓

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