

Swipe, Watch, Buy: Unraveling the Power of Product Placement in Short Videos on Youth Impulse Purchasing

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Abstract: Drawing from the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, this research aims to assess the dynamic impact of short-video product placement on the impulse buying behavior of young consumers. A structured survey was administered to a sample of 328 young consumers, aged between 18 and 30, who regularly engage with short video content on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Reels. The findings reveal that product relevance significantly enhances enjoyment, thereby improving engagement with narratives that incorporate product placements seamlessly. Emotional appeal in content markedly increases this enjoyment, underlining the effectiveness of emotionally resonant narratives and visuals. The study further demonstrates that a robust product-influencer fit amplifies the authenticity of the advertising message, leading to greater content enjoyment for viewers. Crucially, it confirms that the perceived enjoyment derived from engaging with short videos has a positive correlation with impulse buying behavior among young consumers. These insights underscore the importance of emotional and experiential elements in short-video content, shaping the purchasing decisions of younger audiences. This research contributes to the understanding of effective marketing strategies in the evolving digital realm, emphasizing the necessity for content creators and advertisers to prioritize narrative integration, emotional connectivity, and authenticity of influencer endorsements to effectively captivate and influence the youth market.

Keywords: Product placement, Short video, Impulse buying, Young consumer, Stimulus-Organism-Response

1. Introduction

The increasing prominence of short-video advertisements on social media platforms, especially TikTok, is revolutionizing the global marketing landscape, marking a significant shift in the mobile internet advertising sector (van der Bend et al., 2023). This trend is propelled by the platforms' extensive reach and inherently engaging content, which resonates with the fast-paced content consumption preferences of contemporary audiences worldwide. Short-video advertisements have become a leading marketing strategy globally, effectively blending entertainment with product promotion (Wang et al., 2023). Influencers and short-video bloggers across various cultures and regions are adeptly capitalizing on this trend, integrating product endorsements into their content to create a more authentic and immersive viewer experience (Ong et al., 2022). This fusion of entertainment and advertising underscores the need for short-video platforms to innovate and develop new e-commerce models. Such models are essential for creating a self-sustaining business ecosystem that attracts and retains top-tier internet celebrities, ensuring a consistent supply of engaging content for global audiences and a dynamic advertising medium for brands. This paradigm shift in digital marketing strategies positions short-video platforms at the forefront of the advertising industry in the mobile internet era, representing a significant evolution in how brands interact with consumers worldwide (Yin et al., 2024).

In the realm of modern social media platforms such as Douyin, Reels, and TikTok, a significant number of online influencers are effectively engaging audiences through the use of humorous and plot-driven short videos, a method that adeptly captures viewer attention (Wang, 2020). These influencers employ a strategic approach by incorporating products into their video narratives, subtly directing their substantial follower base's attention towards these products and fostering a propensity for purchase. This technique of product placement, historically utilized in films, television, and variety shows, is now being innovatively applied to the short-video format (Wang & Chen, 2019). Unlike traditional short-video advertisements that explicitly market products, these narrative-driven placements are more engaging and less intrusive, offering a refined viewer experience. Furthermore, when compared to the more overt product endorsements on older social platforms like Instagram, Facebook, these story-centric product placements in short videos are perceived as less aggressive in their marketing intent. The subtlety of this approach, coupled with its entertainment value, presents a compelling and innovative model for advertising in the dynamic world of short video content, striking a balance between commercial promotion and creative storytelling (Allal-Chérif et al., 2024).

The recent research by (Olayemi, 2022) reveals that the daily routines of the youth demographic, specifically those aged 16 to 24, are significantly influenced by social media, with a staggering 90% of them engaging with these platforms every day and averaging over three hours of usage time. This extensive interaction with social media, particularly platforms like TikTok, has profound implications for their consumer behavior patterns. Notably, there is an emergent propensity for impulse purchasing among young users, influenced by the content they encounter in short videos on TikTok (Zhang et al., 2023). The immediacy, visual appeal, and influencer-driven content of these videos are identified as primary catalysts for impulsive buying decisions. Allal-Chérif et al., (2024) highlights that the persuasive influence of TikTok content creators, coupled with the platform's algorithmically tailored content feeds, significantly elevates the propensity for impulse purchases among this demographic. Brüns & Meißner (2023) further elucidate that the platform's algorithm enhances the relevance and persuasive power of product placements, thereby intensifying their impact. Thus, the pervasive engagement of youth with social media, especially in the context of short video content, is not merely shaping their media consumption habits but is also markedly influencing their purchasing decisions.

Despite the burgeoning trend of marketing through short-video platforms, this approach is still in its nascent stages, with significant challenges in capturing and sustaining audience engagement through product placement (van der Bend et al., 2023). It is crucial for these advertisements to not only capture the attention of viewers but also to persuade them, fostering a deeper interest and inclination towards purchasing the featured products. To acquire a more comprehensive understanding of how viewers perceive and interact with these short-video product placements, and to identify the critical factors influencing their decision-making processes, a detailed empirical research study has been conducted. This study aims to bridge the gap in understanding impulse buying among young consumers in response to product placements in short videos, providing insights into effective marketing strategies in this evolving digital landscape.

2. Literature Review

Product relevance, within the sphere of short video product placement advertising, refers to the degree of alignment between the featured product and the narrative of the video (Deng & Xie, 2022). For product placements to be effective, the products must be interwoven into the storyline seamlessly, so that their presence feels natural and pertinent to the unfolding plot. This congruence ensures that the viewer perceives the product as an organic element of the scenario, which in turn enhances the viewer's receptiveness to the advertising message. When the intrinsic attributes of the product resonate with the context of the plot, the product placement is seen as appropriate and is more likely to be well-received by the audience. Conversely, a mismatch between the product and the plot can lead to viewer dissonance, diminishing the credibility of the placement and potentially resulting in an adverse reaction to both the product and the advertisement itself.

Emotional appeal, in the field of marketing and consumer behavior, refers to the capacity of content to establish a deep emotional connection with the audience (Mogaji et al., 2018). The connection is established by strategically employing narratives, visuals, music, and messaging that strongly resonate with the emotions, principles, and aspirations of the viewers. The emotional appeal is crucial in capturing and maintaining the attention of young consumers who watch short videos on platforms such as TikTok. TikTok content, characterized by its rapid pace and visually captivating nature, effectively elicits a wide array of emotions, including joy, humor, empathy, and inspiration, through its personal and relatable storytelling. These emotions not only stimulate involvement but also shape the viewers' attitudes and behaviors towards the content and any related products or messages. The effectiveness of short videos on TikTok for young consumers, who are primarily motivated by entertainment and emotional experiences, depends greatly on their capacity to elicit emotional responses, thus generating a memorable and influential viewer experience.

The concept of product-influencer fit is defined on the congruence between a product's characteristics and the personal brand of the endorsing influencer (Rayasam & Khattri, 2022). The optimal alignment between a product and an influencer occurs when there is a harmonious relationship between the influencer's well-established image, encompassing their lifestyle and the characteristics of their audience, and the fundamental nature and attributes of the product being promoted. For example, a well-known influencer who is known for promoting a fitness-focused lifestyle would effortlessly promote products related to health. The combination of these factors enhances the genuineness of the endorsement, thereby bolstering the trust and approval of the audience. Conversely, if there is a discrepancy between the influencer's image and the product, it can result in a lack of connection with the audience, which may diminish the effectiveness of the advertisement and potentially harm the reputation of both the product and the influencer. The influencer's portrayal in the story serves as a crucial representative for the product, and their compatibility greatly influences audience perceptions of both the

advertisement and the product. When elements are in harmonious alignment, it makes it easier for the audience to accept the message. On the other hand, a stark contrast can disrupt the flow of communication and have a negative impact on how the audience perceives the message.

Perceived enjoyment, in the context of online shopping, is defined as the extent to which a consumer finds pleasure and satisfaction in the shopping experience, independent of the instrumental outcomes of the activity (Ashfaq et al., 2019). This concept, rooted in the intrinsic motivation theory, posits that the enjoyment derived from an activity itself, rather than any external rewards it may bring, can be a powerful motivator for consumer behavior. In online shopping environments, perceived enjoyment is characterized by feelings of fun, pleasure, and entertainment experienced during the browsing and purchasing process. It is a critical factor influencing consumer attitudes towards online shopping, their intention to revisit e-commerce platforms, and their overall satisfaction with the online shopping experience. Perceived enjoyment has been recognized as a significant determinant of online consumer behavior, affecting both the decision to engage in online shopping and the impulse buying behavior (Chan et al., 2022).

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model is a psychological framework that explains how individuals react to external stimuli. In this model, a stimulus triggers an internal change within the organism, leading to a behavioral response (Murray & Häubl, 2007). The 'Organism' is the individual's internal processing, encompassing emotional, cognitive, and attitudinal mechanisms, which mediate between the stimulus and the response.

Based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, the presence of product placement in short videos is identified as a notable stimulus for young consumers (Kim et al., 2021). Primary stimuli in this context include factors such as the product's relevance to the viewer's interests, the emotional impact of the content, and the alignment between the influencer and the product. These factors are intentionally crafted to stimulate the cognitive and emotional processes of young viewers. The organism in this model, specifically the consumer's internal state, is exemplified by perceived enjoyment, which is a combination of entertainment and interest sparked by the video content. The state of enjoyment plays a crucial role by acting as a mediator between external stimuli and the resulting behavioral response (Hoang et al., 2023). The resulting reaction is frequently marked by impulsive purchasing, where the immediate gratification obtained from the captivating viewing experience leads to a spontaneous decision to buy. The motivation behind this behavior is primarily derived from the emotional satisfaction gained from acquiring a product that is associated with enjoyable and captivating content, rather than being driven by the product's practical necessity. Based on the arguments presented above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Product relevance has a positive effect on perceived enjoyment of young consumer.

H2: Emotional appeal has a positive effect on perceived enjoyment of young consumer

H3: Product Influencer Fit has a positive effect on perceived enjoyment of young consumer

Impulse buying behavior refers to the spontaneous, unplanned decision to purchase a product or service, made just before a purchase (Pradhan, 2018). This behavior is characterized by an immediate, powerful urge to buy something instantly, often triggered by external factors such as advertising, store layout, or promotions, as well as internal states like emotions or mood. In the context of young consumers, impulse buying tends to be more prevalent due to their higher susceptibility to emotional and social influences. Young shoppers, often driven by a desire for instant gratification and influenced by trends and peer behaviors, are more likely to make purchases on a whim. This tendency is further amplified in the digital age, where social media platforms and online shopping provide constant exposure to tempting products and easy, one-click purchasing options. The combination of these factors means that impulse buying among young consumers can be both a frequent and emotionally charged behavior, significantly influenced by the evolving dynamics of modern consumer culture.

Perceived enjoyment in watching short videos plays a pivotal role in driving impulse purchases among young consumers (Siew Chein Teo et al., 2023). This phenomenon can be attributed to the immersive and emotionally engaging nature of short video content, which heightens the viewers' emotional state and lowers their decision-making guard. When young viewers find enjoyment in a video, particularly on platforms like TikTok or Instagram, it creates a positive emotional connection with the content and, by extension, any products featured within it. This heightened emotional state can lead to impulsive decision-making, as the pleasure derived from the video experience translates into a spontaneous desire to purchase related products. The immediacy and ease of online shopping further facilitate this impulse buying behavior. Young consumers, already inclined towards instant gratification and influenced by digital trends, find it easy to act on these impulses, often with just a few clicks.

Thus, the perceived enjoyment of short videos acts as a catalyst, converting the momentary emotional high and the associated desire for a similar experience into an immediate purchase decision.

H4: Perceived enjoyment has a positive effect on impulse buying of young consumer.

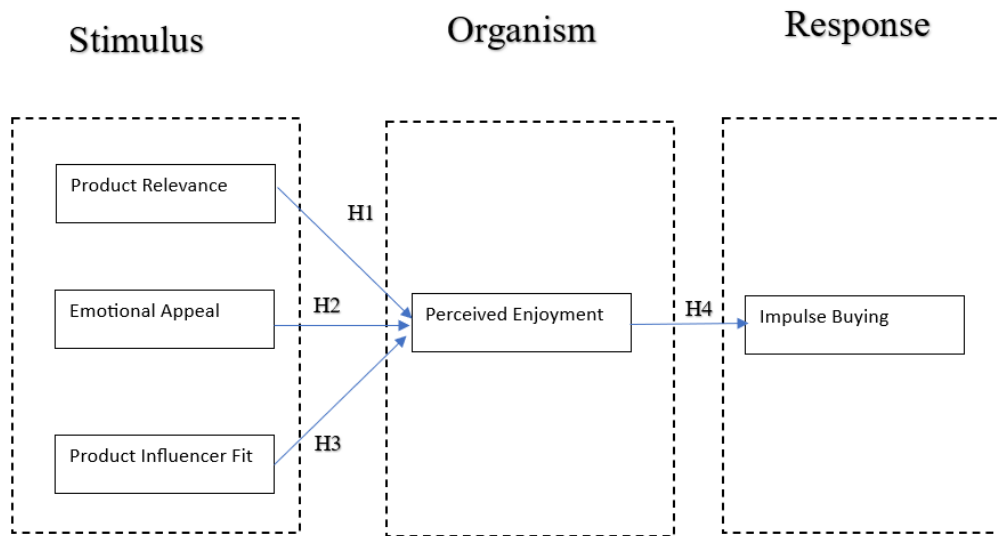


Figure 1: The conceptual framework

3. Methodology

For the empirical aspect of this study, data was gathered using a structured survey. This survey was organized into two sections. The initial section introduced the research scenario to respondents, laying out various measures for each variable under consideration. It prompted participants to think back to their most recent encounter with product placement in a short video advertisement before responding to the subsequent questions. The latter section of the survey was designed to gather demographic information of the individuals. The survey items were carefully crafted, drawing inspiration from established scales and adapting them to the unique context of short video advertising. These items were subject to extensive theoretical scrutiny and validation in line with the objectives of the research, ensuring a high level of academic rigor. The finalized set of survey items can be found detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Construct measurement

Construct	Items	Sources
Product relevance	PR1: I believe the product featured in the short video closely aligns with the storyline	(Davis et al., 1989)
	PR2: I perceive a strong connection between the product shown in the short video and the depicted scene.	
	PR3: I feel that the product in the short video is well-suited to the characters involved in the narrative.	
Emotional Appeal	EA1: The short video is fun	(Phua & Kim, 2018)
	EA2: The short video is humorous	
	EA3: The short video is amusing	
Product Influencer Fit	PI1: I believe that the influencer is appropriate for promoting the products featured in the short video's storyline.	(Till & Busler, 2000)
	PI2: I feel that there is a good fit between the influencer and the product being advertised.	
Perceived Enjoyment	PE1: The short video evoked a sense of enjoyment in the shopping experience for me	(Meng et al., 2021)
	PE2: I experienced a sense of excitement during the product introductions	

Construct	Items	Sources
	PE3: The captivating nature of the short video content was fascinating to me.	
	PE4: Viewing short videos on social media platforms causes time to pass quickly, making me forget all my concerns.	
Impulse Buying	IB1: I frequently notice that I give in to impulsive purchasing habits while watching short video on social media platform	(X. Zhang et al., 2023)
	IB2: While watching short video on social media platform, I made a spontaneous purchase without thoroughly thinking through and assessing the product.	
	IB3: Some products had previously gone unnoticed by me, but after watching the short video again, I ended up making impulsive purchases of them.	
	IB4: After discovering the product in short video, I suddenly became aware of my need for a specific product, leading me to buy it impulsively	

In this research, a 5-point Likert scale was utilized for quantitative measurement, with the scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The survey was disseminated through both online and offline mediums across various age demographics. Participants who completed the survey were offered a nominal compensation as a token of appreciation. The duration for collecting responses spanned from January 12, 2023, to February 12, 2023. Within this one-month period, a total of 562 responses were gathered. However, after removing responses that were either invalid or from individuals who had not encountered product placement ads in short videos, or those outside the 18-30 age range, the final count of valid questionnaires stood at 328.

Table 2 presents the fundamental statistics of the sample population. The data indicates a relatively balanced distribution between male and female participants. The majority of respondents have an undergraduate level of education. A significant portion of the participants reported using short video apps for more than 2 hours a day.

Table 2: Demographic of participants

Variables	Items	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	161	49.08
	Female	167	50.92
Level of education	High school	46	14.02
	Undergraduate	156	47.56
	Postgraduate	126	48.42
Daily engagement with short video app	Below 30 min	67	20.42
	30 min – 1 hour	73	22.25
	1-2 hours	87	26.52
	More than 2 hours	101	30.81

4. Result

In this research, the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method from SmartPLS 3.3 was applied to assess the measurement model's reliability and validity. The reliability of the model was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) values, while its overall validity was determined by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) with the absolute correlation coefficients between the variable in question and other variables. The model's reliability, overall validity, and discriminant validity are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

According to Table 3, the model demonstrates strong reliability, as evidenced by all item outer loadings exceeding 0.8, CR values surpassing 0.8, and α values ranging from 0.744 to 0.915. The average extracted (AVE) values for all variables, ranging from 0.654 to 0.816, indicate strong overall validity. Table 4 demonstrates the model's strong ability to distinguish between variables, as indicated by the correlation coefficients between variables (values below the diagonal line in columns) being smaller than the square root of each variable's AVE value (values on the diagonal line).

Table 3 Consistency reliability and Convergent validity

Constructs and Relevant Indicators		Convergent validity		Internal consistency reliability		
		Loadings ≥0.70	AVE >0.50	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A
Product Relevance (PR)	PR1	0.860	0.654	0.848	0.744	0.848
	PR2	0.891				
	PR3	0.856				
Emotional Appeal (EA)	EA1	0.824	0.732	0.891	0.818	0.836
	EA2	0.883				
	EA3	0.858				
Product Influencer Fit (PI)	PI1	0.898	0.816	0.899	0.774	0.776
	PI2	0.909				
Perceived Enjoyment (PE)	PE1	0.868	0.748	0.922	0.887	0.889
	PE2	0.821				
	PE3	0.881				
	PE4	0.889				
Impulse Buying (IB)	IB1	0.884	0.798	0.940	0.915	0.917
	IB2	0.844				
	IB3	0.883				
	IB4	0.959				

Table 4: Discriminant validity

	EA	IB	PE	PI	PR
EA	0.855				
IB	0.478	0.893			
PE	0.443	0.564	0.865		
PI	0.425	0.515	0.479	0.903	
PR	0.448	0.546	0.597	0.671	0.809

The estimated model based on the result is shown in Figure 2

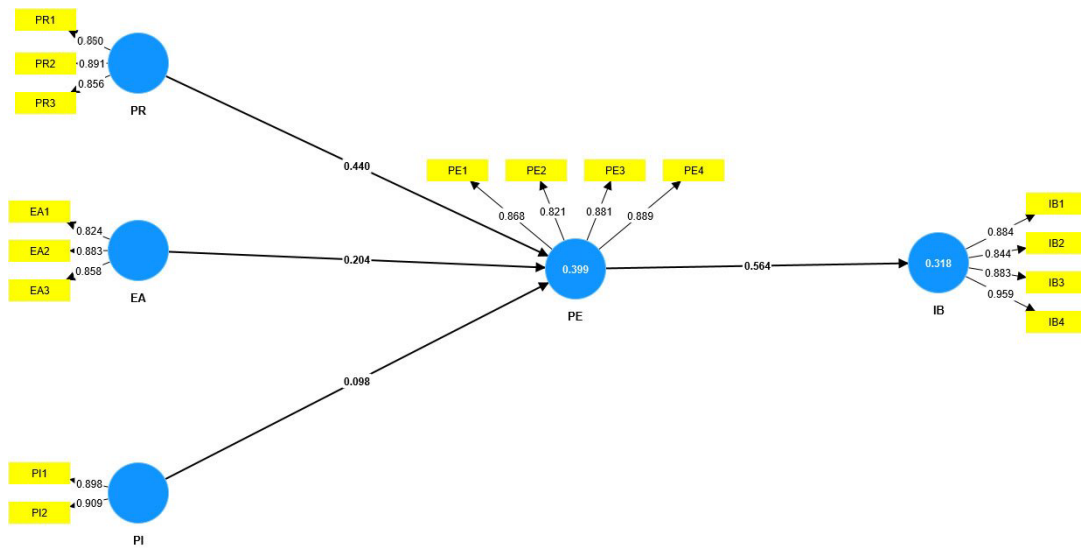


Figure 2: The estimated model

The bootstrapping method will serve as the basis for conducting significance testing in order to assess the extent to which predictors have a substantial impact on target constructs in conceptual models (Hair et al., 2017). This study employs the bootstrapping method, utilizing 5,000 samples at a significance level of 5%, as recommended by Hair et al. (2017), with the assistance of SmartPLS. The findings are succinctly presented in the Table 5

Table 5: Summary of hypothesis testing

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
EA -> PE	0.204	0.206	0.062	3.305	0.001
PE -> IB	0.564	0.566	0.049	11.621	0.000
PI -> PE	0.098	0.098	0.070	5.451	0.001
PR -> PE	0.440	0.441	0.051	8.666	0.000

5. Discussion

The findings provide evidence in support of H1, which suggests that the relevance of a product has a positive impact on the perceived enjoyment of young consumers in short video advertising. This finding aligns with established theories in marketing, advertising psychology, and consumer behavior, suggesting that when products are seamlessly integrated into narratives that resonate with the intended audience, it greatly enhances the viewer's enjoyment of the content (Hewei, 2022). It emphasizes that young consumers experience greater enjoyment and fulfillment from brief video content when product placements are seamlessly integrated into the storyline. This observation highlights the importance of having relevant advertising content, particularly in the context of the ever-changing preferences and consumption habits of young consumers. This confirmation suggests that young viewers are more likely to be interested in and value content that demonstrates genuineness and relatability. In such content, product placements are seamlessly incorporated, enhancing the plot instead of interrupting it.

The validation of H2 indicates that the inclusion of emotional appeal in short video advertisements greatly amplifies the perceived pleasure of young consumers, in accordance with contemporary consumer psychology and digital marketing theories. This supports the notion that content that contains a significant amount of emotional elements has a stronger impact on its audience, particularly among younger viewers. The endorsement of H2 suggests an increased inclination among young consumers to appreciate and interact with content that successfully elicits emotional reactions. This trend can be attributed to the significant impact of emotions on the formation of attitudes and the process of decision-making. The utilization of emotionally charged narratives, compelling visuals, and evocative music proves to be a vital element in captivating the young audience, thus enhancing their overall content enjoyment. This highlights the crucial significance of emotional appeal in crafting content that not only captures the attention but also deeply engages young viewers (Akpinar & Berger, 2017).

The findings strongly support H3, which highlights the important influence of product-influencer fit on the perceived enjoyment of young consumers in short video advertising. This emphasizes that the alignment between a product's attributes and the influencer's personal brand is crucial in enhancing the audience's viewing experience. This validation demonstrates that young viewers experience higher levels of enjoyment when the attributes of a product closely align with the influencer's image and lifestyle. This congruency enhances the authenticity and relatability of the advertising message. The seamless alignment between the influencer's image and the endorsed product amplifies the authenticity of the endorsement, thus increasing the audience's involvement and satisfaction with the content (Tian et al., 2022).

The support for H4 confirms that perceived enjoyment from engaging with short video content on platforms like TikTok or Instagram positively influences the impulse buying behavior of young consumers, aligning with key concepts in consumer psychology and behavioral economics (Pradhan, 2018). This validation emphasizes the essential importance of emotional and experiential factors in the digital domain. In this context, the pleasure and emotional involvement offered by such content play a significant role in driving impulsive buying decisions. The captivating quality of these videos engrosses the viewers and elicits instant emotional satisfaction, resulting in impulsive urges to buy the products showcased or linked to the content. This discovery emphasizes the powerful impact of engaging brief video content on shaping the purchasing behaviors of young consumers in the current digital environment.

6. Conclusion

This study has explored the intricate dynamics of short-video product placement and its influence on impulse buying behavior among young consumers, guided by the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model. Our findings shed light on the significant role of product relevance, emotional appeal, and product-influencer fit in enhancing perceived enjoyment, which in turn fosters impulse purchasing among the youth demographic. By seamlessly integrating product placements within engaging narratives that resonate on an emotional level, advertisers and content creators can significantly amplify viewer engagement and spur on-the-spot purchasing decisions.

The evidence suggests that young consumers are not merely passive recipients of advertising content; rather, they are actively engaged by content that is relevant, emotionally resonant, and authentic. This engagement is crucial in a digital age where attention is fragmented and competition for viewer interest is fierce. The study underscores the necessity for marketers to craft strategies that align with the interests and emotional landscapes of their target audience, leveraging the persuasive power of influencers who share a genuine connection with the products they endorse.

Moreover, the positive correlation between perceived enjoyment and impulse buying behavior highlights the importance of creating enjoyable and immersive viewing experiences. In the realm of digital marketing, where the line between entertainment and advertising is increasingly blurred, the ability to entertain becomes as crucial as the ability to persuade.

Implications for Practice

For practitioners, these insights underscore the need to invest in content that not only showcases products but does so in a way that is engaging, emotionally appealing, and authentic. Marketers should prioritize collaborations with influencers whose personal brand aligns with their product values, ensuring a natural and credible integration of product placements into content that captivates and resonates with young audiences.

Future Research Directions

While this study offers valuable insights into the effectiveness of product placement in short videos, future research could explore the long-term impact of such marketing strategies on brand loyalty and consumer behavior. Additionally, investigating the differential impact of various types of emotional appeal and narrative styles across diverse cultural contexts could further enrich our understanding of global consumer behavior in the digital age.

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