

# How Content Attributes of Short Video Influence Online Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Perceived Value

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## Abstract

In today's digital landscape, short videos have become a dominant form of visual communication, captivating millions on social media and platforms like "TikTok." As the short video sector flourishes, increasing businesses are turning to these platforms for marketing purposes. Despite this trend, there's a noticeable gap in comprehensive understanding and research on the elements that drive consumer purchases through short video platforms. A survey exploring the impact of short video content attributes on consumer buying intentions was conducted to address this problem. The survey received input from 342 Chinese users of short video platforms. SEM was run to analyse data. The results of this study have shown that consumers tend to have both a better understanding and a more favourable impression of the product after watching clear and informative short videos. Additionally, the impact of clarity, practicality, and promotional prices on purchasing intentions is indirectly affected by the lens of the perceived value. The research offers insights into short video marketing and purchasing behaviour by providing valuable information regarding the Chinese market, but results may not apply elsewhere due to cultural and market differences. It is essential to explore in the next stage if the obtained outcomes are applicable to different cultures. Moreover, the study is based on self-reported data that can be influenced by social desirability bias and memory bias. Further studies might equip themselves with behavioral data, such as real purchase records, to complement the information from subjects to make up for the constraints of such self-reporting.

**Keywords:** Short Video, Promotional Discount, Perceived Value, Purchase Intention.

## 1 Introduction

According to the latest data by the China Internet Network Information (Center, 2022), by June of 2022, the Chinese online video audience reached 995 million, within which 962 million were attracted by

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video platforms other than regular online videos. The huge growth of social e-commerce, which invented short video content in a very potent and direct manner, as well as a media platform for shopping online, has made this content more engaging for consumers (Fang & Fang, 2022). This short video domain is now the most popular among users and advertisers, as noted (Hood et al., 2022). Usually, in less than five minutes, these videos deliver condensed texts that are so rich that they can leave a mark in one's mind for quite a while and are in a perfect vertical format to fit mobile screens. Interactivity, which has been used in the addition of advanced artificial technologies like facial recognition, creates excitement and entertainment. Liu et al., (2023) highlight the inherently fast-paced and interactive nature of short videos, which continuously offer users fresh and stimulating experiences. Improved algorithmic technology allows platforms to create more precise user profiles. Liu et al., (2019) contend that short videos have emerged as favourites in the digital realm owing to their brevity, entertainment value, ease of production, and shareability. Increasingly, businesses are leveraging these platforms for brand marketing, as identified by (Hewei, 2022). These mobile apps cater not only to social interaction but also to the shopping needs of consumers, making them a key marketing channel. However, previous studies have primarily examined the impact of traditional mobile videos, video settings, and hosts on consumer behaviour, with less focus on the psychological mechanisms linking short video content attributes to purchasing intentions (Wu & Ding, 2023).

This paper delves into the effects of clarity, utility, and promotional discounts on consumer behaviour, examining these factors within the framework of the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model. It aims to add new insights to the existing body of research on short video marketing, with a focus on the consumer purchase decision process. Data for this study was collected through a survey, aiming to unravel the intricate mechanisms influencing consumer decisions in short video marketing. This research is significant both theoretically and practically: it not only enriches the academic discourse on short video marketing but also serves as a valuable guide for businesses in executing effective short video marketing strategies. Although this research will give us valuable information regarding the Chinese market, it is however likely that the results cannot be used directly on other regions due to cultural and market variations. It is essential to explore in the next stage if the obtained outcomes are applicable to different cultures.

## 2 Literature Review

The study of psychological research could not be complete without the concept of the S-O-R framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The S in this model denotes the external environment; the O is for the individual's internal mental state, while the R stands for behavioural response (Zhang et al., 2023). This theory explains the mechanism of how environmental factors could have an influence on the internal state of an individual, through which behaviour is mediated. Anisah et al., (2023) represent the first prominent researchers to integrate this model in the context of online shopping. Since then, the S-O-R framework has become a valuable asset for theorists in understanding the interactions in shopping situations online; thus, the external triggers, perception of the mind and behavioural outcomes are intertwined independent of the consumer type. This paradigm defines the fundamental concept in the paper's study that will be discussed in the following text. Accordingly, this study applies the S-O-R model to identify the short video content attributes that predict customer purchases and behaviours.

In recent years, short video platforms have emerged as a prominent new media format, gaining widespread societal attention (Chen & Liu, 2023; Dong et al., 2023). Nabity et al., (2020) emphasised

that content creation, especially during the pandemic, has significantly fulfilled public needs. In the digital age, mere text and images no longer suffice to capture consumer attention. Instead, dynamic, comprehensive, and multi-dimensional marketing content is increasingly preferred (Ngo et al., 2023; Wu & Lai, 2023; Yin et al., 2024). This trend sets higher standards for product content presentation. This paper posits that clarity, usefulness, and promotional discounts are three crucial attributes of short video content.

### **Clarity and Perceived Value**

Xiao et al., (2019) emphasised the significance of content quality in short video marketing for businesses aiming to effectively transmit advertising messages within a brief timeframe. The concept of clarity is multifaceted, encompassing the sharpness of the video image, audio clarity, and the transparency of product information. A video must first and foremost be clear, as this clarity facilitates a better understanding of the products for consumers. It has been observed that consumers show a heightened interest and sustained engagement with videos that not only have clear visuals but also possess a certain aesthetic appeal, thereby boosting their inclination to make purchases. Yang et al., (2023) revealed that the use of high-quality information could cultivate optimism among consumers and make them trust the information provided by technology companies. These findings can be summarised in the statement that the short visuals blur users' perception of the product value and influence their desire to buy it or not. Thus, the paper presents the following hypothesis theses, which need to be further investigated.

H1: The clarity of short videos has a positive impact on consumers' perceived value.

H4: The clarity of short video content has a direct positive influence on consumers' intention to make a purchase.

H8: In the relationship between the clarity of short videos and consumers' intention to purchase, perceived value acts as an intermediary.

### **Usefulness and Perceived Value**

In order to be effective, information has to be beneficial to consumers; it has to be able to tell a story in an engaging way that will be entertaining for the consumer. Such considerations may involve material benefits, informational consultation, psychological needs, and functional services as well. What draws a reader is the content that either solves everyday issues or adds new skills or information to his treasure. When, however, the information provided is attuned to their interests, people will not only like it but will also remain engaged by it; ultimately, their buying decisions will be affected. Rahman & Huh, (2023) have proved that a video can be useful in achieving higher user participation. Alam et al., (2023) showed that perceived usefulness powerfully influenced customers' attitudes towards shopping online. In their research, Abbasi et al., (2023) noted that individuals often turn to mobile devices during their free time; as a result, such content is not only informative but also entertaining. This emphasises the significance of the utility of short videos in shaping the users' experiences. Wang et al., (2023) identified a positive correlation between the practicality of a video and user engagement in their regression analysis. Therefore, this paper suggests that the practical value of short videos can boost users' perceived value, leading to the following proposed hypotheses.

H2: The utility of short videos is positively related to the perceived value as assessed by consumers.

H5: The usefulness of the content in short videos positively drives consumers' intentions to purchase.

H9: Perceived value serves as a mediator in the relationship between the usefulness of short videos and the consumers' intention to purchase.

### **Promotional Discount and Perceived Value**

Vries & Zhang, (2020) highlighted the superior effectiveness of online product promotion compared to traditional marketing media. They noted that one of the key motivations for people shopping online is to save time and energy, and another is the prospect of obtaining better products at lower costs, essentially seeking more substantial sales discounts. The impact of promotional discounts has been a subject of previous research. Gardner, (2022) demonstrated that price discounts play a significant role in shaping consumers' final purchase intentions. Büyükdag et al., (2020) observed that specific discount patterns in price promotion have a significant effect on perceived price attractiveness and purchase intention. Most prior studies have focused on discounts in offline marketing contexts. While it is clear that promotional discounts influence consumer purchasing intentions, findings regarding the exact impact of discount rates on these intentions have been inconsistent. This paper, therefore, explores the effect of promotional discounts on purchase intention within the realm of new media marketing, particularly through the lens of short video content marketing incentives. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are presented for further investigation.

H3: Promotional discounts offered in short videos positively contribute to the perceived value from a consumer's perspective.

H6: The presence of promotional discounts in short videos positively influences the consumers' intention to purchase.

H10: Perceived value mediates the effect of promotional discounts on consumers' intentions to purchase.

### **Perceived Value and Purchase Intention**

Understanding perceived value is essential in analysing consumer buying patterns. Zhang, (2023) described perceived value as the comprehensive evaluation a consumer makes of a product or service's usefulness, weighing the perceived benefits against the costs of acquisition. With the progress of time and with changing consumer sentiments, perceived value has come around to include psychological aspects. It is not only about the choice of products but also about how it affects the customer's own perception (Rabaai et al., 2024). This means that companies start to develop customer-specific products and services to meet the specific needs of consumers. Like the 8848 titanium mobile phone and tailor-made luxury dresses, individually designed products offer satisfaction through personalisation, and consumers relate such products to unique consumption experiences and the non-killing urge, influencing consumer behaviour. Brands with high perceived value were seen to influence brand loyalty and intent to purchase intentionally. Escobar & Bonsón, (2017) addressed the value perceived as one of the major determinants of online fashion buying. It often comes along with trust and innovation in fashion. Rathnasiri & Silva, (2023) observed that sensory experiences can induce happiness, influencing satisfaction with the product. In light of these findings, this paper puts forward the following hypothesis for detailed examination.

H7: There is a positive correlation between the perceived value and the purchase intentions of consumers.

Reflecting on the above discussion, the research model for this study has been formulated and is illustrated in Figure 1.

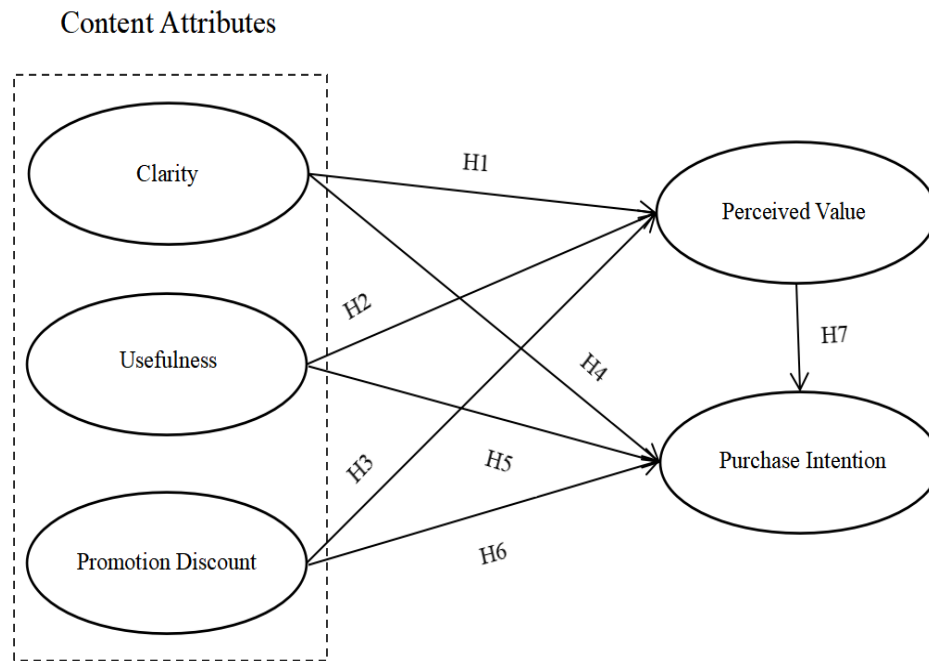


Figure 1: Illustration of the Proposed Research Model

### 3 Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional survey methodology and was conducted in China, where the use of short-form video marketing is notably prevalent. The data collection process was carried out using Questionstar, an online survey platform, and relied on a snowball sampling approach. Respondents were primarily active users of social media and instant messaging applications, with experience in purchasing through short-form video platforms. The survey was designed to ensure complete anonymity and voluntary participation for all respondents. A total of 342 valid responses were ultimately obtained. The respondents' demographic information is detailed in Table 1. Based on prior research, a sample size of 200 or more is generally considered adequate for providing stable parameter estimates and sufficient model testing power (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1990; Hoelter, 1983). Thus, the sample size in this study is regarded as appropriate and sufficient for research purposes. This study is based on self-reported data that can be influenced by social desirability bias and memory bias. Further studies might equip themselves with behavioral data, such as real purchase records, to complement the information from subjects in order to make up for the constraints of such self-reporting.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=342)

Field	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	216	63%
	Female	126	37%
Age (years old)	Under 18	105	31%
	18-30	101	29%
	30-40	75	22%
	Over 40	61	18%
Level of Education	High school and below	68	20%
	Diploma	103	30%
	Bachelor	120	35%
	Master and higher	216	63%
Monthly Income	Less than 3000	126	37%
	3000-5000	105	31%
	5000-8000	101	29%
	More than 800	82	24%
Watch Frequency	Daily	143	42%
	Once every 2-3 days	113	33%
	Weekly	51	15%
	monthly or less	35	11%
Time Spent per Day	Less than 30 minutes	65	19%
	30 minutes to 1 hour	66	19%
	1 hour to 2 hours	131	38%
	More than 2 hours	80	23%
Total		342	100%

In this research, all the measurement tools were derived from scales that have been validated in prior studies, with necessary modifications implemented to suit the unique context of this study, as outlined in Table 2. The evaluations were conducted using a five-point Likert scale. A pre-test was carried out to ensure the effectiveness and appropriateness of the research instruments before conducting the main survey. For the data analysis, structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed as the principal method. SEM is a well-established and widely used technique in data analysis, allowing for the simultaneous modelling and examination of complex interrelations among multiple variables. For the purposes of this study, SPSS 26.0 was utilised to evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurement tools, while AMOS 22.0 was applied to perform the SEM analysis.

Table 2: Measurement Items of Constructs

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Measurement item</b>	<b>References</b>
Clarity	1. The clarity of short video quality is very important.	Alkhwaldi (2023) and Lien and Cao (2014)
	2. The audio clarity in short videos is crucial.	
	3. It is essential for short videos to be clear and understandable.	
Usefulness	1. Short videos offer a more direct and fresh approach compared to static images or graphics.	Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1989)
	2. Short videos significantly assist in my purchasing process.	
	3. Short videos aid in making more informed purchasing decisions.	
	4. The information conveyed through short videos is highly beneficial to me.	
Promotional discount	1. In the short video, the discount promotion made by the merchants attracted my attention.	Yee-Kwong Chan (1997)
	2. When a merchant makes a discount promotion, I will carefully check select goods.	
	3. the promotional activities made by the merchants made me have a strong desire to buy.	
Perceived value	1. I perceive the products featured in short videos as offering good value for money.	Lin and Lu (2011) and Shen, Huang, Chu, and Liao (2010)
	2. I find the products showcased in short videos to be reliable.	
	3. The products presented in short videos seem very practical and useful.	
Purchase intention	1. I am inclined to buy products featured on short video platforms.	Kim, Ferrin, and Rao (2008)
	2. I am likely to recommend a short video to my friends.	
	3. If needed, I am open to making repeat purchases from the same platform.	

## 4 Results

### 1) Reliability and Validity

At the outset, this study concentrated on evaluating the reliability and validity of its data. Reliability was evaluated by measuring the consistency and stability through Cronbach's Alpha value given to every latent variable. Validity assessment was working with the analysis of the standardised factor load coefficient and the average variance extracted (AVE) for each test item. Table 3 provides the latent variables' alpha Cronbach values, with the results showing all the alpha Cronbach values are above 0.80. This means that the model constructed is reliable because of the high degree of internal consistency it has. The scales were also assessed for the reliability of test items, with all test items in the scale recording a standardised factor load coefficient above 0.7 and all the AVE values for the latent variables above 0.6. Such results provide evidence that the scale perfectly met the prefixed criteria for reliability methodology.

Table 3: Test Results of Reliability and Validity of Table Variables

Construct	Code	Standard load	Cronbach's $\alpha$	CR	AVE
Clarity (Cla)	Cla 1	0.80	0.834	0.750	0.631
	Cla 2	0.75			
	Cla 3	0.83			
Usefulness (Usf)	Usf 1	0.80	0.892	0.797	0.677
	Usf 2	0.81			
	Usf 3	0.85			
	Usf 4	0.83			
Promotion discount (PD)	PD 1	0.83	0.841	0.750	0.641
	PD 2	0.76			
	PD 3	0.81			
Perceived value (PV)	PV 1	0.85	0.850	0.747	0.654
	PV 2	0.84			
	PV 3	0.73			
Purchase intention (PI)	PI 1	0.77	0.863	0.749	0.675

### 2) Structural Model

Confirmatory factor analysis was found to be a valid approach to the assessment of the proposed model in this study. The model's fit was judged based on a set of criteria: a chi-square to the degree of freedom ratio less than 5.00, RMSEA value less than or equal to 0.08, GFI value at or above 0.90, TLI value at or greater than 0.90, and CFI value of 0.90 or greater. In Table 4, all these indices were noted to be above the agreed level. The overall goodness-of-fit thus suggests that the research model is acceptable, thereby validating its applicability in assessing the hypotheses. The findings presented in Table 5 support all the hypotheses, but one - hypothesis number 6 has received full support.



Table 4: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Adaptability index	Threshold	Test result	Adaptation judgment
CMIN/DF	< 3.000	1.729	Yes
NFI	> 0.900	0.954	Yes
GFI	> 0.900	0.941	Yes
CFI	> 0.900	0.980	Yes
NNFI	> 0.900	0.974	Yes
CFI	> 0.900	0.980	Yes
RMSEA	< 0.050	0.046	Yes

Table 5: Structural Equation Model Results

Hypotheses	Path	Path Coefficients	Z value	P value	Supported or not
H1	Cl <sub>a</sub> →PV	0.344***	4.235	<0.001	Yes
H2	Usf→PV	0.299***	3.908	<0.001	Yes
H3	PD→PV	0.196*	2.450	0.015	Yes
H4	Cl <sub>a</sub> →PI	0.340***	4.321	<0.001	Yes
H5	Usf→PI	0.268***	3.739	<0.001	Yes
H6	PD →PI	0.109	1.510	0.132	No
H7	PV→PI	0.224**	3.163	0.002	Yes

Note: \*\*\* significance level is 0.001, \*\* significance level is 0.01, \* significance level is 0.05.

### Mediation Effect

In this paper, the researcher used Bootstrap with 2,000 iterations as the method to examine the mediation effect (Table 6). Analysis outputs suggest perceived value to be a part-mediator of the link between each of the three antecedent variables and purchase intention.

Table 6: Test Results of the Mediation Effect

Path	Total effect (c)	a	b	a×b (boots)	a×b (z-value)	a×b (p-value)	a×b (95% BootCI)	Direct effect	Mediation effect	Mediation type	Effect proportion
Cl <sub>a</sub> →PV→PI	0.361**	0.292**	0.210**	0.001	44.227	0.0001	0.020 ~ 0.120	0.300**	0.061	Partial mediation	16.971%
Usf→PV→PI	0.315**	0.293**	0.210**	0.001	48.764	0.0001	0.024 ~ 0.115	0.254**	0.061	Partial mediation	19.493%
PD→PV→PI	0.177**	0.192**	0.210**	0.001	39.838	0.0001	0.009 ~ 0.083	0.137**	0.040	Partial mediation	22.743%

Note: \*\* significance level is 0.01.

## 5 Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study align with previous research indicating that promotional discounts in short-form video marketing significantly influence consumers' purchase intentions. This is particularly notable given the prevalence of short-form video platforms like TikTok and DouYin in China, where such marketing strategies are increasingly utilized.

Promotional discounts have long been recognized as a powerful tool to enhance consumer purchase intentions. This study reaffirms that discounts presented within short-form videos positively affect consumers' perceived value and purchase intentions. Specifically, discounts create a sense of urgency and value, compelling consumers to act quickly to take advantage of the deal. These findings are consistent with the results from Wang et al., (2023), who noted that intelligent recommendations and live streaming promotions significantly boost users' purchase intentions in online courses via short-form video platforms like TikTok.

The concept of perceived value plays a crucial role in the consumer decision-making process. The findings show that perceived value mediates the effect of promotional discounts on purchase intentions. Consumers weigh the benefits of the discount against the cost, leading to an enhanced perception of value which, in turn, increases their intention to purchase. This mediation effect aligns with the research by Zhang, (2023), which highlighted the importance of perceived product value in the live-streaming context.

The psychological impact of promotional discounts cannot be understated. Discounts often trigger positive emotions, such as happiness and satisfaction, which are significant drivers of purchase behavior. Rathnasiri & Silva, (2023) found that sensory experiences can induce happiness and satisfaction, further supporting the notion that emotional responses play a crucial role in consumer behavior.

Short-form videos offer a dynamic and engaging platform for presenting promotional discounts. The visual and auditory elements of these videos can create a more immersive experience, making the promotional offers more appealing. This method of marketing leverages the power of storytelling and visual appeal, making the discounts not only more noticeable but also more memorable. Wu & Ding, (2023) discussed how the type of content in tourism short videos can inspire potential tourists, highlighting the effectiveness of visual content in influencing consumer decisions.

This article is a thorough investigation of short video marketing, especially what elements and characteristics significantly affect consumers' purchase decisions in a flash environment. While the study intricately assesses the impact of the clarity and utility of the short video content on the consumer's decision to buy, it also looks into what the consumer search patterns are precisely—and where they make the purchase decision. In particular, it was found that the videos being helpful and meaningful greatly influence consumers' purchase intentions, but the discounts' effectiveness in dissuasion is remarkably weaker. This result may show the reality of e-commerce trading in China, where consumers have often been inundated with a variety of discounting techniques on several platforms that might decrease their response to similar price-based initiatives.

Moreover, the research highlights the significant part that perceived value plays as a moderator in the link between short video content characters—specifically, clarity, usefulness, and promotional prices—and the purchase intentions of consumers. This accentuates the importance of the consumer's perception of value in the consumer buyer behaviour decision-making context within the short video marketing scene. The suggestion is that it is not only the obvious attributes that the study is talking about but also how the attributes are perceived in terms of the user experience as they add value. This subtlety is an important point for marketers to take into consideration as they plan for content creation in short app formats.

By examining these relationships, the paper contributes significantly to the understanding of consumer behaviour in the context of new media marketing, particularly in an era where short videos

have become a predominant mode of communication and advertising. This analysis provides a foundation for the subsequent sections on implications, limitations, and directions for future research, which delve into the practical applications of these findings, the boundaries of the study, and the potential avenues for further exploration in this dynamic field of marketing.

## 6 Implications

Applying the S-O-R model, this research investigates the relationship between short video content and consumers' purchase intentions from the perspectives of clarity, usefulness, and promotional discounts. Theoretically, this enriches the study of short video content, extends the theory of content marketing in short videos, and enhances the framework for analysing consumer purchase intentions using short videos.

The rise of e-commerce has diversified marketing purchase methods. With the COVID-19 threat, an increasing number of consumers are turning to online shopping. The advent of new media marketing techniques like short videos offers businesses a variety of new ways to showcase their products. However, as short videos in e-commerce are relatively new, many businesses are unaware of their content attributes, leading to suboptimal results. Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed.

Firstly, the research suggests that video clarity significantly influences consumer perceived value and, subsequently, their purchase intentions. Therefore, for effective short video creation, professional shooting and audio equipment should be utilised to ensure high-quality visuals and sound. Training photographers in product knowledge and enhancing their presentation skills can also help in clearly conveying product and activity information in a concise manner.

Secondly, given the significant impact of usefulness on perceived value and purchase intention, it is essential to profile target customers, understand their needs, and tailor content accordingly. Maslow's hierarchy of needs—physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation—underpin the logic behind consumers' engagement with short videos. Sharing useful knowledge, skills, and experiences, rather than just product information, can increase consumer engagement.

Lastly, specifically promotional discounts do increase perceived value but however, this factor did not significantly affect purchase intent. Proper discounts have to be in line with the product characteristics and match the target customers profiles. Different level discounts may have different impacts on consumer groups therefore if it is to be used range of promotional discounts needs to be studied. It is indispensable for companies that are primarily working in varied culture regions to ensure that local people have choices and they respect the local beliefs which might be related to the product. Individual needs and preferences will be a crucial factor in taking brief video advertising to the next level by customizing marketing materials.

## 7 Limitations and Future Research Directions

This paper explores the internal mechanisms behind the influence of short video clarity and usefulness, as well as the external factor of promotional discounts, on consumer purchase intention. While these results are informative for short video marketing, there are limitations. Firstly, consumer perceived value and purchase intentions may vary for different product categories, such as luxury versus general consumer goods, which this study does not distinguish. Future research could more closely examine the

relationship between perceived value and purchase intention across different product types and discount levels. Secondly, perceived value and trust in merchants and platforms may also play intermediary roles, warranting more comprehensive future studies. Moreover, this research differentiates the items marketed in the short films, which might have different effects on the consumers' purchase decisions. Further studies are needed in order to extend this study on how other product categories affect consumer's attitudes towards making a purchase.

Lastly, the study's reliance on quantitative methods also limits its ability to capture the subtleties of consumer reactions to different short video content. Future research could combine qualitative methods, like face-to-face interviews, with quantitative analysis for a more thorough and in-depth understanding of consumer behaviour in response to varied short video content. Additionally, exploring technological advancements in content creation, the psychological aspects of consumer decision-making, and cultural and regional differences in consumer response could further enrich the understanding of short video marketing's impact on consumer behaviour.

## 8 Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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