creators, algorithmic curation, and consumer psychology. Jiang and Chen (2024) argues that AI-driven personalization generates digital dependency, which, in turn, shapes purchase behavior, and emphasizes that effectiveness depends on both content quality and algorithmic alignment.

Engagement signals such as likes, comments, shares, and watch time further shape platform visibility and user evaluations. While entertaining, original, and emotionally rich content strengthens engagement, overly commercial or repetitive videos may induce avoidance. Moreover, excessive personalization can weaken privacy perceptions and increase ad avoidance (Li et al., 2023), underscoring the importance of transparency and fairness in understanding short-video marketing.

This study synthesizes 54 empirical studies published between 2014 and 2025, following PRISMA guidelines, to assess how short-form video algorithms influence attention economy indicators and marketing outcomes. Three core questions guide this review. How do video algorithms and content features shape attention and flow? How do social presence and trust mechanisms influence purchase intention? How do platform differences and content types alter marketing effectiveness? Addressing these questions helps integrate fragmented theoretical insights and provides practitioners with evidence-based guidance for navigating an algorithmic marketing landscape.

1. Literature Review

Digital marketing research increasingly highlights the shift from static social media formats to algorithmically curated short-form video feeds on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. Synthesizing 54 studies published between 2014 and 2025, four theoretical perspectives emerge as central. The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), Flow Theory, and Social Presence Theory. In S–O–R research, platform features and sensory cues are treated as stimuli that elicit internal states such as trust, flow, and telepresence, which ultimately shape purchase, avoidance, or engagement. Yu et al. (2024) show that telepresence and flow produced by short-form video ads increase purchase intention, and Luo et al. (2025) demonstrate that perceived utility and entertainment only translate into behavioral intention when trust serves as a key mediator. Extending this perspective, Kumsawat et al. (2025) find that creator credibility enhances hedonic experience and drives offline restaurant visits.

ELM-based studies adapt persuasion theory to the ultra-compressed nature of short videos. While peripheral cues, such as visual design, music, and attractiveness, often dominate, recent evidence highlights a hybrid persuasion process. Magadán-Díaz and Rivas-García (2023) show that argument quality remains decisive in book-related purchases. In contrast, Schneider et al. (2025) find that fast editing and viral music in TikTok challenges can suppress central processing. In higher-risk categories such as travel, Almohammed et al. (2025) demonstrate that informational value outweighs aesthetic appeal. Flow-based research complements these insights by showing that rapid pacing and sensory richness facilitate immersive, low-effort attention, thereby strengthening brand evaluations and purchase intention.

Parallel findings emerge from Social Presence Theory and parasocial interaction studies, which emphasize interpersonal cues such as facial expressions, speech style, and direct address. Zheng et al. (2025) show that social presence enhances cognitive engagement, while Luo et al. (2025) identify trust as the mediator linking content features to purchase decisions. Livestream formats heighten these effects through real-time interaction and explicit viewer recognition, which increases conversion likelihood.

Another significant research stream focuses on mechanisms of the attention economy and algorithmic curation. Short-form video platforms rely on recommender systems optimized for watch time and engagement, yet traditional engagement metrics remain limited. Yang et al. (2025) propose the Product Engagement Score, a pixel-based metric predicting sales lift more accurately than likes or views. Cross-platform comparisons underscore the distinction between surface and deep attention. Reuter et al. (2021) find that Instagram drives superficial engagement for anti-tobacco messages, whereas Twitter generates deeper information-seeking behavior. At the same time, algorithmic persuasion raises ethical concerns. Jiang and Chen (2024) document how personalized feeds create digital dependency that mediates purchase behavior, while Ding et al. (2025) reveal a privacy paradox in which AI-based personalization increases both perceived usefulness and privacy-related avoidance.

A final cluster of studies analyzes influencer strategies, content types, and platform-specific mechanisms. Gu et al. (2024) show that mixing mega and micro influencers in the same campaign can erode trust and reduce conversions. Hung et al. (2025) report that physical attractiveness outweighs expertise in the Vietnamese cosmetics market, highlighting the dominance of visual heuristics. Content type also matters. Qi et al. (2025) find that utilitarian content stimulates food ordering more effectively than hedonic formats, whereas Wu and Lai (2025) show that narrative-driven hedonic storytelling enhances luxury hotel brand attitudes.

Across these studies, short-form video marketing appears not as a simple viral tool but as a multi-layered system shaped by content quality, sensory richness, social presence, trust, attention metrics, influencer structures, and algorithmic personalization. Their combined effects form a complex but empirically observable pattern that positions short-form video platforms as one of the most dynamic and theoretically rich domains in contemporary digital marketing research.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to synthesize the fragmented research on how short-form video algorithms influence marketing outcomes. The review follows PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure transparency and replicability (Page et al., 2021). The scope is limited to empirical and conceptual work situated in marketing, consumer behavior, and related social science fields.

Data collection was conducted exclusively through the Web of Science Core Collection, chosen for its strong indexing standards and coverage of high-impact journals. The search, completed on 10 September 2025, covered studies published between 2014 and 2025. The starting year reflects the launch of Musical.ly, which marked the emergence of short-form video formats in marketing research (Kudeshia et al., 2014). The search strategy combined terms related to platforms (e.g., TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, Douyin, livestreaming), underlying mechanisms (algorithms, recommendation systems, attention economy, flow, social presence), and marketing outcomes (purchase intention, engagement, brand attitude, marketing effectiveness, impulse buying). The final search string integrated all three conceptual blocks, and the review included only peer-reviewed journal articles, early access papers, and review articles in English.

Eligibility criteria were developed using a PICOS-based logic. Studies were included if they established an empirical or theoretical link between short-form video algorithms or content features and at least one marketing-related outcome. Research focusing solely on technical video compression, engineering-driven algorithm design without behavioral components or educational technologies unrelated to marketing was excluded. Of the 165 records retrieved, 84 were removed during title and abstract screening for lacking relevance to short-form video contexts or marketing outcomes. Full-text review of the remaining records resulted in the exclusion of an additional 27 studies due to methodological or thematic misalignment. A final sample of 54 studies met all criteria and served as the basis for the synthesis.

Data extraction followed a structured content analysis approach. Each study was coded for bibliometric information, theoretical frameworks such as ELM, S–O–R, Flow Theory, and Social Presence Theory, and methodological characteristics including experiments, surveys using SEM or PLS, content analyses, neuromarketing or eye-tracking methods, and panel or log-data analyses. Platform context was recorded to distinguish research conducted on TikTok, Douyin, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and similar environments. Operationalizations of attention and engagement metrics were documented, including views, watch time, completion rate, likes, comments, shares, click-through rate, and composite indicators such as the Product Engagement Score. Main findings were summarized, with attention to how algorithmic curation, content attributes, and psychological mechanisms such as trust, flow, social presence, parasocial interaction, and impulse buying were connected to marketing outcomes.

The analysis combined descriptive mapping and thematic interpretation. Descriptively, studies were organized by publication year, journal outlet, methodological approach, and platform focus to reveal temporal and contextual patterns. Thematically, developments in core concepts were traced from early work emphasizing simple engagement metrics (e.g., Kudeshia et al., 2014) to more advanced measures reflecting algorithmically mediated attention (e.g., Yang et al., 2025; Luo et al., 2025). The synthesis highlights how engagement relates to conversion, how flow and social presence serve as mediators, and how personalization, transparency, and perceived privacy shape user responses. This methodological structure provides a coherent overview of the field and forms the foundation for the conceptual

and practical insights developed in subsequent sections.

3. Results

This review synthesizes 54 studies published between 2014 and 2025 on short-form video marketing, consumer engagement, and livestream commerce. The findings reveal a clear evolution in the field, shifting from early static social media research toward an algorithmically driven ecosystem in which recommendation systems, platform architectures, and AI-based personalization play a decisive role in shaping consumer behavior.

Chronologically, the literature progresses through three phases. Between 2014 and 2018, research centered on Facebook-like environments dominated by text and static images, where engagement was treated as a relational rather than algorithmic construct. From 2019 to 2022, TikTok's rise and pandemic-driven digitalization expanded interest in video formats, although many studies still examined mixed-platform contexts. The period from 2023 onward marks a decisive shift. Most studies focus explicitly on short-form videos, livestream commerce, and algorithmic persuasion, employing richer datasets and more advanced analytic methods. High-impact journals increasingly publish work on these topics, solidifying their standing in mainstream marketing, information systems, and interactive advertising research.

Methodologically, the field moves from survey-based SEM to experiments, panel models, and AI-driven analytics. Early studies relied on self-reported constructs such as purchase intention or brand attitude. In contrast, recent research uses experimental manipulations of video attributes, log data from millions of livestreams, and deep learning models to compute pixel-level engagement indicators, such as the Product Engagement Score. This progression reflects a broader shift from intention-based metrics to observable behavioral outcomes.

Thematically, three clusters of findings emerge. First, consumer engagement consistently predicts marketing performance. Likes, comments, watch time, and completion rate not only improve feed visibility but also serve as robust indicators of deeper cognitive processing and emotional involvement, which in turn elevate brand attitudes and purchase likelihood. Second, psychological mechanisms such as flow and social presence operate as key mediators. Immersive videos with rapid pacing and strong sensory cues induce flow states, while interpersonal signals from creators' facial expressions, direct address, and self-disclosure enhance social presence and parasocial bonding, strengthening trust and persuasion, especially in livestream contexts.

Third, algorithmic curation plays a central role in structuring exposure and attention. Personalized feeds increase relevance and engagement but also generate privacy concerns when tracking becomes intrusive, creating a "privacy paradox" in which usefulness and discomfort rise simultaneously. Platform differences further shape persuasion. Entertainment-oriented ecosystems such as TikTok favor intuitive, peripheral processing, whereas others facilitate more deliberate information-based evaluation.

Content-related patterns reinforce these dynamics. Videos that are original, emotionally rich, narratively coherent, and visually integrated with the product sustain attention and reduce the risk of the "vampire effect." Utilitarian formats work better in low-margin, functional categories such as food ordering, while hedonic storytelling is more effective for experiential products like luxury hotels. Influencer research shows that popularity does not guarantee persuasion. Mixed influencer strategies can erode trust, and micro creators often outperform mega influencers in driving conversions. In livestream commerce, moderate levels of real-time chat enhance social proof, but excessive comment density can overload viewers and reduce sales.

Finally, platform-specific and cultural distinctions matter. Algorithmic priorities, user demographics, and normative content styles differ across TikTok, Douyin, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, leading to distinct psychological and behavioral outcomes. East Asian livestream ecosystems display highly developed forms of social interaction and AI personalization, whereas Western and emerging markets emphasize trust-building and contextual adaptation.

Overall, the results portray short-form video marketing as a multi-layered socio-technical system in which attention, engagement, flow, social presence, trust, and purchase intention co-evolve under the joint influence of content design and algorithmic steering. Rather than a simple viral mechanism, it is a complex environment in which psychological processes and platform architectures intersect to shape consumer decision-making.

4. Conclusion

This systematic review of 54 studies published between 2014 and 2025 demonstrates that short-form video and livestreaming platforms represent a structural shift from a "social graph" logic toward an "interest graph" logic in which algorithms determine what users see and how they respond. Across the literature, short-form video algorithms function as active structural actors that shape attention, preference formation, and purchase behavior. Digital marketing effectiveness, therefore, depends not only on message quality but also on how well content aligns with algorithmic affordances and on how prominently the product is integrated into the video's visual and temporal flow.

The results challenge longstanding assumptions about engagement. Yang, Zhang, and Zhang (2025) show, using their Product Engagement Score, that likes and comments are weak predictors of sales, highlighting the primacy of product saliency within the video frame. Complementing this, Gu, Zhang, and Kannan (2024) demonstrate that using mega and micro influencers simultaneously can erode trust and create substitution effects, undermining campaign performance. Together, these findings emphasize the need for algorithmic fit, calibrated influencer strategies, and attention quality rather than raw engagement volume.

The review also refines key theoretical frameworks. The S–O–R model expands through the inclusion of flow and digital dependency, as shown by Yu et al. (2024) and Jiang and Chen (2024), suggesting that immersive, algorithmically curated feeds can lower cognitive resistance and convert exposure into habitual purchase tendencies. The Elaboration Likelihood Model is reinterpreted for compressed video environments. While peripheral cues remain influential, Magadán-Díaz and Rivas-García (2023) show that argument quality continues to drive final purchase decisions, supporting a hybrid processing model. Work by Ding, Antonucci, and Venditti (2025) conceptualizes AI-based personalization as a source of a privacy paradox, in which relevance and perceived surveillance coexist, and calls for integrating perceived monitoring into technology acceptance and trust frameworks.

Managerial implications highlight that brands should prioritize "engagement that converts." Products should appear early, be centrally framed, and remain embedded in the storyline to avoid the vampire effect (Yang, Zhang, and Zhang, 2025). Influencer portfolios must reflect functional asymmetry. Mega influencers effectively raise awareness, whereas micro influencers foster credibility and drive conversions, ideally deployed sequentially rather than simultaneously (Gu, Zhang, and Kannan, 2024). Platform-specific messaging remains essential. TikTok favors concrete, action-oriented content (Pittman ve Li, 2025), whereas Instagram rewards aspirational narratives. In livestream commerce, comment density requires moderation. Zhao et al. (2024) show that excessive real-time commentary produces cognitive overload and reduces sales.

The review also identifies important gaps. The dominance of studies centered on China and the United States limits cultural generalizability, while reliance on cross-sectional and self-reported data constrains causal inference. Future research should experiment with AI-generated versus human influencers (Lee & Shen, 2025), apply neuromarketing tools such as EEG and eye-tracking to capture flow and avoidance responses, and conduct algorithmic auditing to examine whether recommendation systems systematically privilege problematic content. Additionally, B2B short-form video usage remains understudied despite its growing relevance on professional platforms.

Overall, the evidence positions short-form video marketing as a foundational component of a new economic order in which human attention is monetized at scale. Understanding this environment requires integrating psychological, technological, and ethical considerations to ensure that powerful algorithmic mechanisms are leveraged responsibly and effectively.

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