

From Engagement to Conversion: Reviewing Social Media Marketing Strategies and Consumer Behavior

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how social media marketing (SMM) strategies can affect the purchase decisions of consumers by using a literature review on the relevant studies published in modern journals. In particular, it explores how practices that include short-form video content, live streaming and real-time interaction, influencer partnerships and user-generated content (UGC) inform the shopping behaviors of consumers in the social media-dominated marketplaces. The review clarifies interdependence among these strategies and purchase decision-making, including the methods that are most suggested as prevailing contributors of engagement and conversion. By summarizing the existing theoretical and empirical knowledge, the article presents a full-fledged picture of the most efficient SMM activities and can be viewed as a valuable source of information and guidance on possible ways of optimizing the activity of marketers, businesses and advertisers operating in ever-intensifying digital environments. Moreover, the provided findings provide a conceptual basis of further empirical studies regarding performance of social media marketing and its changing dynamics.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Consumer Behavior, Purchase Decisions, Digital Marketing Strategies

INTRODUCTION

The emergence and development of the social media have completely re-defined consumer-brand interaction in the modern digital world causing a shift in the paradigm of traditional marketing that was largely a one-sided communication channel to one where it is interactive, participatory and highly personalized. Social media platforms like Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook and YouTube have acquired prime importance in the consumer decision-making process, serving as the avenue of engaging customers in real-time and providing algorithm-customized content that leaves a significant impact on the buying behaviours (Dzreke & Dzreke, 2025).

Vaterlaus et al. (2016) discovered that temporary posts in the short-termed social networks such as Snapchat can promote the user engagement and trust by creating a sense of authenticity and inappropriateness. LinkedIn may be a lesser-known social media platform to these consumer-driven marketing campaigns but it has proven to be a strategic business social media marketing platform through thought-leadership and micro-influencer partnerships. The importance of the AI-driven personalization is also noted as the factor that is becoming ever more powerful when determining the outcomes of social media marketing. As discussed by Chatterjee et al. (2021), artificial intelligence can be used to deliver hyper-personalized content to meet the interests aligned with their data and predicted preferences, a practice that contributes to the increased engagement and conversion rates.

This revolution has led to more interactive or consumer-centric approaches being used by marketers. SMM in particular has come to cover a number of formats and techniques that resonate with the perceptions of more contemporary consumers. Of these, short-form video content, live streaming, influencer partnerships and user-generated content (UGC) have become the most powerful tools of influencing consumer thoughts and generating purchase conversions (Van Dawt Lian & Srivastav, 2024; Ahmed, 2025).

A. Background of Study

The emergence of digital mediums has propelled the marketing funnel into the avenues of experience that promote the qualities of authenticity, relatability and trust of a product and service, which is now being used more broadly by consumers in their decision making. Empirical results indicate that concise videos, like the ones that are posted through TikTok and Instagram Reels can increase engagement rates by up to 60 percent more than the classical forms of content that are used. This increased performance can be largely explained by the appeal of this substance both in terms of algorithms and in terms of the emotional appeal (Ahmed, 2025).

Likewise, live streaming has shown considerable impact at every page of the purchase experience, including building awareness, leading to the buying decision and post-purchase learning, due to the automatization of immediacy, the possibility of interactivity and accidental creation of a sense of community between consumers (Fletcher & Gbadamosi, 2024). The sphere of influence marketing keeps gaining popularity and dominance in the area of SMM, where, as the statistics show, two-thirds of younger audience state that they are subjected to influence by online personalities in their purchasing (Dzreke & Dzreke, 2025). The compelling power of influencing endorsements is increased by perceived authority of influencers and parasocial connections to inferring between the two, which have the effect of raising consumer confidence and shopper intention (Ahmed, 2025).

In tandem, UGC or user-generated content such as reviews, testimonials and shared experiences, has now become a credible source of brand authenticity and social proof. These factors have always been cited as critical number one influencer of consumer behaviours, brand following and repeat buying (Van Dawt Lian & Srivastav, 2024). The examples of successful SMM implementation in strategy of the leading companies of the world like Bumble, Disney or Semrush once again prove that the incorporation of SMM into corporate strategy can produce demonstrable positive effects on reach, engagement and sales (SEO Chatter, 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Introduction

Faster advancement of current digital technologies completely redefined the consumer purchase decision making process changing it traditionally linear and individual behaviour to the dynamically interactive and socially inclusive one. Social media applications like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and Xiaohongshu have increasingly become more than a place of connection, allowing consumers to learn, make judgments and buy products at the same time. The changing paradigm is driven by various forms of content production such as short-form video, live streaming, influencer collaborations and user-generated content (UGC) which all have varying, yet synergistic impacts on how consumers affect the perceptions, attitudes and behaviors.

Putting their roots within recognized theoretical platforms including the Consumer Purchase Decision Process, the Elaboration Likelihood Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior, the existing bodies of literature point at the interaction of trust, perceived value, the psychological proximity and emotional engagement as key elements of purchase intentions. It is by harmonizing all these theoretical and empirical conclusions that this review sheds light into the strategic implication that marketers have to utilize the persuasive and interpolative affordances of social media. By doing this, it develops brand credibility, boosts customer loyalty and contributes to sustainable competitive advantage in an increasingly growing and algorithm driven digital market.

B. Consumer Purchase Decision Process

The process of consumer purchase decision is one of the pioneer frameworks in marketing and this framework states all the sequential cognitive and behavioral steps that the consumer goes through when making the decision to purchase a product or a service. Traditionally, the process can be defined through the following five stages: need recognition, information search, assessment of alternatives, buying decision and post-purchasing behavior (Shopify, 2023). In the modern digital environment, those processes are highly influenced by a convergence of socio-digital forces such as algorithmically chosen advertising, user-generated content (UGC), influencer advertising and peer reviews on social media sites. Being masterful at this process allows marketers

to predict consumer reactions with greater precision, modify engagement tactics and apply a strategic level of influence where it matters at the decision pivot points to optimise purchase decision outcomes.

The first, need recognition, involves individuals becoming aware of an existing gap between their current and desired state and thus recognizing a need or problem that needs to be resolved. The awareness is activated by either inner stimuli, e.g. physiological needs (e.g., hunger) or psychological states (e.g., boredom) or by outward stimulus (e.g. digital advertisements, influence advocacy or exposure to lifestyle focused content). Social media has also been introduced as an especially powerful external stimulus, introducing recipients to something new in terms of a product, service or trend they would otherwise never have considered. Visual curation of Instagram and TikTok as the platforms has created an illusion of demands through viral challenges presented in aspirational settings (Forbes, 2022). Empirical evidence supports the idea that these digital stimuli influence consumer cognition enabling it to optimism purchase intentions and brand trust, increasing the influence of need recognition in the digital market (Zafar et al., 2021).

When they attain this recognition, consumers pass to their information search stage where information is sought to address the need identified. This can be internally with the use of the existing knowledge and the experiences cloud or externally through the use of social networks, expert reviews or the digital content in the media. On the current market, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok are the important sources of product suggestion and assessment. Importantly, more than 90 percent of customers check in on social media when it comes to buying advice (TechWyse, 2023). Hajli (2015) established social commerce attributes that product such as rating, review and suggestions can bring positive effects on consumers trust and intent to purchase. UGC Content including unboxing videos, peer testimonials and influencer endorsement have the appearance of authenticity otherwise lacking in more traditional advertising. Moreover, social media offer interactive functionality making it possible to have a two-way communication where consumers can pose questions and get live feedback to them. At this point, Stankevich (2017) points out that the consumers will combine the internal and the external information sources to make a sound decision.

The evaluation of alternatives stage entails a consistent comparison of possible alternatives in terms of price, quality, functional performance and brand image. The use of social media increases and speeds up this judgment process by providing a compilation of varying views by regular users to professional influencers in convenient streams of content. Benchmarking products in a side-by-side comparison is done in platforms like Instagram Reels and TikTok and algorithmic recommendation systems broaden the consideration set of the consumer. Hajli (2015) argues that peer-generated reviews, social men-customers and the openly self-accounted feedback improve the accuracy of evaluation and the formation of trust. Stankevich (2017) further contends that the purchase behaviour of consumers also rests squarely on certain product attributes like affordability, availability and brand equity.

The decision stage reaches its peak at the purchasing process whereby the consumer settles on the selection and transacts the business. This is influenced by a combination of promotional promotions, brand image, perceived worth and the convenience related to transacting a deal. The proliferation of in-platform commerce functionality itemized by Instagram Shop Now and checkouts within TikTok, ease the conversion process by minimizing the steps required to buy anything. A recent report reveals that 68 percent of adults have bought whatever they have seen on social media feed commerce (New York Post, 2024), which is an indicator of the expanding share of social commerce. These combined features take advantage of immediacy and impulse, thereby driving more conversion by offering all of these features to bring cohesion to the consumer pathway to purchase.

The post purchase behavior stage entails evaluation of the performance of the product by the consumer, satisfaction and repurchase. Good post-purchase experiences can create loyalty, brand advocates and positive word-of-mouth experiences, whereas bad ones can lead to complaints or returns and negative online reviews. Social media not only acts as an important post-purchase feedback portal, but also UGC that may be boosted by an influencer partnership, can result in a powerful effect on brand reputation. Hajli (2015) states that an active involvement in social commerce settings increases consumer trust and strengthens consumer buying behaviours. The brands that take an active approach to responding to consumer feedback in the social media realm can strengthen customer relations and trigger the customer to make another purchase. Stankevich (2017)

explains that post-purchase behaviour should be observed and analysed in case long-term brand equity is to be maintained.

Overall, the consumer purchase decision process is an important concept that should be used in making strategic marketing decisions. The use of social media has transformed this process with the introduction of new channels of engagement to ensure that there is an immediate exchange of information and the ability to include easy integrated purchasing systems. Strategically harnessing the possibilities of these capabilities enables brands not only to maximise marketing performance outputs but to also develop sustainable consumer-brand relationships and competitiveness over the long term.

C. Short-video content

Short-form video content has become an important part of integrated marketing communications in the modern digital world. An example of platforms taking advantage of the use of shorter form video content is TikTok, Instagram Reels and Facebook Reels, where anyone can post their content in 90 seconds or less and have a high likelihood of getting seen and engaging with the target audience. The increased popularity of this medium can be entirely attributed to its ability to reach out to audiences whose concentration span continues to become shorter and to put forth brand narratives in the form of dynamic, visually appealing and entertaining presentations. This combination of concise nature and its high interaction potential makes short form video an extraordinarily effective tool of influencing consumer mindset and promoting online interaction.

The compelling power of a short-form video marketing heavily relies around qualitative levels of the content. Zhang et al. (2024) tested the role short-form video advertising plays in contributing to consumer purchase intentions based on the concept of Attention, Interest, Desire, Action (AIDA). The researchers conclude that consumers have shown greater potential to consume products that are presented in short videos describing their low prices and portraying a reliable brand image. On the other hand, content that is viewed as exaggerated, misleading or of low quality, will make people less trusting, hence, reducing purchase intentions. The above insights show that marketers need to find the right balance in making the campaign persuasive, yet authentic and credible.

Additionally, Liu and Wang (2023) examined the two aspects of the two concepts of concern, informativeness and entertaining value of the short-form video marketing, with a focus on how their two aspects both affect purchase intention. Informative content makes it easier to make a decision because it provides clear and detailed product descriptions whereas entertaining content creates a compelling emotional appeal on the audience that may increase brand affinity. Their research also revealed perceived value as a partial mediator in the linkage between content characteristics and purchase intention and therefore the notion of cost-benefit considerations as an essential element of determining purchasing behavior emerged. This piece of research supports the definition concerning the importance of using both the informational and entertainment value in order to maximize the number of visitors and conversion.

Short video has also attracted scholarly interest regarding the role of user-generated content (UGC). In a cross-gaze comparison of the Xiaohongshu platform, Zhang et al. (2024) obtained stronger purchase intentions with short video UGC versus graphic-based UGC. The perceived value was found to moderate the association between the UGC type and purchase intention and perceived psychological distance, moderated the association between the UGC type and perceived value. It is implied that short video UGC can successfully decrease the psychological distance between consumers and products, which results in the perceived value increase and the purchase intention increase. Such observations highlight the strategic capability of utilising UGC to develop closer consumer-brand relationships and increase conversion in the online marketplace.

Theoretically, short-form video influence can be explained by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion noted by Cacioppo and Petty (1984). According to the model, persuasion takes place in two main channels: the central route, where the receiver carefully analyses and evaluates the message content and the peripheral route, where the receiver relies on a superficial cue when he/she does not pay a lot of attention to the message. Shorter videos that have grabbed attention with visual pictures, effective editing and attraction of music may use both ways and score higher on affective responses, their memorability and interest of the

consumer.

In addition, Zhang et al. (2024) tested how social and technological affordances of short-form video platforms affect continuous viewing behaviour. Of their results, the researchers found that affective factors are particularly influential especially satisfaction and dependency in increasing the intention of the users to engage in prolonged viewing. Notably, the effects of the presence of traditional advertising made the positive relationship between satisfaction and continuous watching intention less intense, thus showing that intrusive or inappropriate advertising formats can destroy user engagement. This underscores the need to use advertising forms that may not distract users on long-term basis.

Overall, short-form video content becomes an extremely powerful tool in the process of influencing consumer purchasing decisions in the online marketplace. Such a sophisticated perception of content quality, psychological processing mechanism and platform specific affordances will allow marketers to run strategically oriented campaigns that blend information and emotional appeals. When done well such strategies can cultivate brand-consumer relationships, increase engagement and ultimately buying behaviour.

D. Live streaming and Real-Time Engagement

Whereas short-form video attracts consumer interest in micro-bursts of high-engaging content, live streaming goes one step further to provide real-time and interactive consumer experiences, capable of a greater impact on purchase intentions. In recent years, live streaming has become a highly potent means of effectuating a live consumer-brand interaction and has thereby altered paradigms of the old retail scenarios by incorporating interactive audio-visual content and a concomitant mechanism of instant feedback. Social media like Facebook Live, TikTok and Instagram Live allows customers to experience immersive shopping where they can virtually browse products, directly connect with the streamers and real-time answers to their questions, which closes the gap between online and offline shopping setting. Following Guo et al. (2021), the communicative aspects of live streaming improve consumer confidence and reduce the perceived risk and hence influence the purchase intentions positively.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) provides a good way of conceptualization of the effects of live streaming on the consumer behavior. In that regard, consumer-perceived expertise, trust and attractiveness of streamers can have a dramatic effect on consumer trust and perceived value, consequently affecting purchase intentions (Wel et al., 2023). Moreover, homophily or the perceived similarity of the streamer and the consumer, has been demonstrated to amplify the persuasiveness of the content in live streaming (Zou & Fu, 2024).

To bring the urgency effect required in live streaming, there is frequent inclusion of sales-type urgency strategies like flash sales and time-limited offers introduced to give an impulse purchase. A study by Marjerison et al. (2022) suggested that when used on live streams, promotions that are time-bound and limited drive strong levels of impulsive purchase intention especially when there is a high interactivity and entertainment level. In line with these findings, Qu et al. (2023) also indicated that scarcity-based promotions such as time- and quantity-limited offers can be an effective induction of impulse buying behaviors into the live-stream commerce.

Another good influencer of live streaming effectiveness is the social image. According to Zou and Fu (2024), they found that the effect of social image on purchase intentions is positive in terms of streamers physical attractiveness, perceptions of authenticity, professional expertise. The entertainment features and responsiveness were not found to have a statistically significant influence, which implies that in the context of live streaming, consumers would be more inclined to follow credibility and trustfulness over the features related to entertainment aspects.

In summary, live streaming and ongoing interaction have been two new and innovative aspects of modern marketing that give it unique chances of influencing consumer decision in purchasing products. With psychological inputs to the specific mechanisms and theoretical foundations, marketers will be able to make the most out of live streaming campaigns, attracting not only attention but also evoking trust, increasing

perceived value and result in successful sales.

E. Influencer partnership

Influencer partnership is an advanced marketing strategy where the brands find partnership with people having large following online to promote brands or services. These influencers are often seen as reliable, authentic and knowledgeable and thus possesses the ability to create the appropriate attitude and behaviour in an audience (Freberg et al., 2011). In this modern sphere of the digital world, the roles of influencers have taken the form of authorities whose opinions are commonly trusted by consumers. In matters of purchase decision making, brand loyalists usually look to figures of influence that they trust. Such confidence is developed based on relatability and informality and interactivity of social media formats, which increase consumer responsiveness to the referral of the influencers.

Perceived credibility is a key element of influencer marketing as it measures how far people believe a particular message or a source of that message is trusted as credible and well-informed (Metzger & Flanagin, 2007). One cannot underestimate the fact that influencers tend to be perceived as more plausible compared to other channels of advertising, which increases their power of influencing the desire of the consumer to purchase these products (Jimenez-Castillo and Sanchez-Fernandez 2019). Their studies show that of all the personal attributes that enhance brand attitude and intentions to buy the products are perceived credibility which consists of expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness. This persuasiveness can be attributed to the individual relationship between the people being influenced and the people influencing it, making the endorsements more powerful.

Evidence-based hunger marketing: Influencer marketing Parasocial relationships (PSRs) are also central to influence marketing. It is possible to speak about one-sided psychological connections between the followers and the influencers, known as the SRs, where audiences obtain the feeling of closeness regardless of having no physical contact (Lee & Watkins, 2016). These emotional investments create an increased level of engagement and loyalty in the consumer, whereby followers view influencers as valued friends and contribute influential levels of their buying behaviors.

Consumers also have a powerful effect on the consumer perceptions, which is based on the quality of the content produced by influencers. Emotional appeal and immediate experience We have to inject some immediacy and emotional appeal to the products that we offer. This can be done through high-quality outputs like visually interesting imagery, story-driven content and interactive live sessions which can help evoke the feeling of intent to purchase (Wel et al., 2023). In the example of live streaming, influencers who land such engagements successfully can strengthen the emotional connection with their followers and therefore endorsements of products or services by such influencers will impact more. Followers would have greater chances of remembering and taking into account such recommendations in realizing corresponding needs or problems.

In addition, influencer-brand compatibility or match between the personality of influencer and marketed merchandise is a crucial ingredient to effective campaigns. In the case of a high correlation in the endorsement, it is seen as more genuine by the consumer and they are thus more likely to be influenced (Freberg et al., 2011). This correlation increases perceived credibility and gains strength the influence an influencer gains over consumer decision-making. Using the above example, a social media influencer who has a track record of using and reviewing complex technology products will be more trusted when he/she makes recommendations.

To sum up, influencer collaborations is an extremely powerful marketing tool. With the capacity of influencing thoughts and actions through credibility, emotional connection and quality of content, a critical appeal that may greatly influence the consumer purchasing outcome can be made by influencers. As a marketer, the practical strategic process of influencer choice and long-lasting relationships with the influencer is a very crucial prerequisite of ensuring brand trust, increased interactions with the audiences and subsequent growth in sales.

F. User-Generated Content (UGC)

The UGC (User-Generated Content) refers to any media type be it photo, video, review or comments and that is being created and shared by consumers not the brand. UGC has become a key determinant in consumer-based purchase decisions as consumers rely more on peer-generated content than on advertising materials generated by a brand (Mir & Rehman, 2013, as cited in Geng & Chen, 2021).

Empirical studies also show that the quality and interactivity of UGC has a massive impact on the purchase intention. In research on 272 Chinese social media users, Geng and Chen (2021) observed that highly interactive UGC enables consumers to comment, share or ask questions and as a result, assisted in creating a positive perception of usefulness and trust and in turn, conferred a positive impact on purchase intentions.

More so, short-form video UGC has proved to be very useful in affecting the consumer behaviour. In contrast to still pictures, short video adds less psychological distance to make the products more realistic and accessible to potential customers (Qin et al., 2024).

Through a similar argument, it is found by Jimenez-Castillo and Sanchez-Fernandez (2019) that consumers are more inclined to rely on the content created by their peers as opposed to traditional advertising. Such trust has all the positive outcomes as it gives more people the chance to form an interest in the product, develop good opinions about the brand and eventually make the buying decision.

Overall, UGC has the potential to drive brand purchase behavior as a strategic tool. Interactive short-form video UGC also expresses quality and value and rather forms emotional attainments with the consumers. In order to take the maximum out of these opportunities, brands can encourage UGC by offering users sharing plug-ins that are easy to work with, encouraging contributors to be engaged and incorporating consumer-generated content into overall marketing plans.

G. Consumer purchase decisions

Personal, psychological and social factors interact in driving consumer purchase decision-making processes since such decisions are multi-dimensional. The actual process of decision-making usually includes five sequential steps: problem recognition, information search, alternatives evaluation, decision purchase and post-purchase behavior (Stankevich, 2017). Persuasion with regard to the processing of persuasive messages by the consumers, according to the elaboration likelihood model can have dramatic effects on the final decision by the consumers (Cacioppo & Petty, 1984). The social media has become the most important marketing channel in the recent markets as it provides consumers with up-to-date information on the products. These websites have the ability to not only assist a consumer to learn about products, but also, they act as an open forum where consumers can read peer generated reviews of a product, user experiences and personal recommendations that positively or negatively influencing purchasing decision-making.

Businesses have extensively documented the impact that the social media has on consumer buying decisions. An example is seen with Zafar et al (2021), which revealed that interactive properties of social media like user reviews, ratings, personalised recommendations, augment consumer trust, which further increases consumer purchase intentions. This fact is in agreement with the theory of purchase behavior, which states that attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control together predetermine purchase intentions (Ajzen, 1991).

Another determining factor in this process is content format. Meng et al. (2024) discovered that short ads videos on social apps like TikTok are successful in attracting attention and in prompting purchase intentions through the development of sense of urgency and the aesthetic appeal that creates the feeling. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2024) affirmed that platforms like Xiaohongshu have a continuous scrolling feature that keeps consumers exposed to purchase-relevant content and thus increases the purchase intentions.

Credibility and trust are involved in this dynamic. According to Guo et al. (2021), live streaming, which is one of the most popular approaches within social commerce, also facilitates the creation of information symmetry, trust and minimizes the perceived risk and increases the purchase intentions. In a similar manner Zou and Fu

(2024) emphasized positive effects of social image and perceived authenticity in the live stream where consumer behavior was enhanced by the probability of purchase progress.

Therefore, the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decision is high as it influences the attitude of consumers through delivery of interactive, trust- building and emotionally stimulating contents that influence consumer attitudes. As the digital platforms go on to change, defining and utilizing the best strategies that can allow the marketers to gain the attention of the consumer will play a great role in ensuring that a marketer gets a competitive edge.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the accumulated literature on the subject is conclusive that social media marketing has become a significant factor in influencing consumer purchase actions at every state of the decision-making process. Short-form video content, live streaming, influencer partnerships and user-generated content (UGC) are also types of digital engagement strategies that act as effective means of building trust and lowering perceived risk, as well as resulting in more lasting brand-consumer relationships. All these strategies should be at their best when they feature authenticity, interactivity and be value oriented in order to fit the needs, preferences and context of lifestyle of consumers.

These strategies, furthermore, are consistent with well-known behavioural and communication theories, as they point at the role of psychological involvement, processing of the information and credibility in consumer reaction. As the nature of digital ecosystems continue to change, it will be necessary to deploy progressive, evidence-based strategies that incorporate new forms of affordance within a digital system and retain informational richness and emotional appeal. This type of integration is critical to maintaining consumer confidence, purchase intentions and sustainability of long-term brand loyalty in an ever-tightening, ultra-market driven and algorithmic environment.

The review synthesizes evidence from academic literature to evaluate how different social media marketing strategies: short-video content, live-streaming and real-time engagement, influencer partnerships and user-generated content affect consumer purchase decisions.

- i. Short-video content leverages storytelling and emotional engagement, often influencing consumers through the peripheral route of persuasion as proposed by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Li & Xie, 2022; Song et al., 2021).
- ii. Live-streaming and real-time engagement foster immediacy, trust and para-social relationships, consistent with Social Presence Theory and the Commitment-Trust Theory (Short et al., 1976; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Hu & Chaudhry, 2020; Sun et al., 2019).
- iii. Influencer partnerships build credibility and authenticity, which align with the Source Credibility Model and Social Learning Theory (Hovland et al., 1953; Bandura, 1977; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).
- iv. User-generated content (UGC) acts as social proof and enhances trust, explained by the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Technology Acceptance Model (Ajzen, 1991; Gefen et al., 2003; Smith et al., 2021; Pope et al., 2020).

Although all four strategies have proven to be effective in terms of their ability to impact purchase decisions, live-streaming and UGC are particularly powerful because they allow developing natural interactions and social proof and therefore, lead to conversions. Nevertheless, short-video content and collaborations with influencers are still of use when it comes to brand awareness and attitude formation.

The implication of the findings to practitioners is that it is necessary to combine various strategies to appeal to different phases of consumer decision-making process, awareness and conversion. There are other ways of investigating the combined effects of these approaches, the importance of AI-powered personalization and

cross-cultural peculiarities of reactions.

Table 1. Summary of Social Media Marketing Strategies, Theories, Mechanisms and Key References

Strategy	Relevant Theories/Models	Mechanisms of Influence	Key References
Short-video content	Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986)	Peripheral route persuasion, emotional engagement, storytelling	Li & Xie (2022); Song et al. (2021)
Live streaming & real-time engagement	Social Presence Theory (Short et al., 1976); Commitment-Trust Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994)	Immediacy, interactivity, trust building, para-social relationships	Hu & Chaudhry (2020); Sun et al. (2019)
Influencer partnerships	Source Credibility Model (Hovland et al., 1953); Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977)	Credibility, expertise, relatability, observational learning	Lou & Yuan (2019); Djafarova & Trofimenko (2019)
User-generated content (UGC)	Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991); Technology Acceptance Model (Gefen et al., 2003)	Social proof, trust transfer, peer influence	Smith et al. (2021); Pope et al. (2020)

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest associated with this publication.

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