

# *The Impact of Short-Video Marketing on Consumer Preferences for Beauty Products*

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**Abstract.** In recent years, social media has changed consumer behavior and digital marketing in many ways, especially in the beauty industry. Short-video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and Douyin have become important spaces for product promotion and consumer engagement. This paper looks at how short-video marketing influences consumer preferences for beauty products, with a focus on visual content, recommendation algorithms, influencer marketing, and online reviews. The research mainly uses secondary data, academic literature, industry reports, and figure analysis. The findings suggest that short-video marketing has a strong influence on consumer preferences, especially among younger consumers such as Generation Z and Millennials. Influencer credibility also seems to play an important role in building consumer trust. Overall, short-video marketing not only changes the way consumers buy beauty products, but also affects beauty consumption culture in the digital age. The findings not only help explain how short-video marketing shapes consumer behavior in the beauty industry, but also provide useful insights for beauty brands and digital marketers developing marketing strategies in online environments.

**Keywords:** Short-video marketing, Beauty industry, consumer preferences, Influencer marketing, Social media

## **1. Introduction**

With the development of digital technology, social media has greatly changed consumer behavior and online marketing. Short-video advertising is now widely recognized as an effective way to reach and engage consumers [1], and platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and Douyin have become common online spaces where entertainment, social interaction, and product promotion are closely connected.

The beauty industry is among the most strongly influenced by short-video marketing. Concise video footage enables buyers to observe product texture, application methods, and before-and-after results more explicitly, so enhancing purchasing confidence [2]. Previous studies also show that social media users are often motivated by information seeking, entertainment, and social interaction when using online platforms [3].

Although many studies have examined social media marketing and online purchasing behavior, most focus primarily on short-term purchase intention and user engagement. Comparatively less

attention has been Given to long-term consumer preferences, trust formation, and brand perception [1].

This paper examines how short-video marketing shapes consumer preferences for beauty products. To answer this question more clearly, the discussion uses three classic theories as the main analytical framework.

First, the Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) suggests that consumers actively choose media content based on needs such as information seeking, entertainment, social interaction, and identity construction [4]. Second, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) explains that persuasion can occur through two routes: the central route, which relies on careful thinking and evaluation, and the peripheral route, which relies more on simple cues such as attractiveness or popularity [5]. Third, the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) argues that consumers gradually learn to recognize persuasive intent and may become more skeptical of marketing messages over time [6]. By combining these theories, this paper explores the ways short-video marketing influences consumer preferences in the beauty industry.

## **2. The influence of online content on purchasing decisions**

### **2.1. Visual and interactive features of short videos**

Short-video platforms have changed the way consumers learn about and purchase beauty products. Compared with traditional advertising, short videos provide a more visual and interactive experience. Beauty influencers often use tutorials, product demonstrations, and before-and-after comparisons to show how products work. This helps consumers understand products more easily and can increase purchasing confidence [1].

Recommendation algorithms are also significant. Platforms typically suggest material based on users' preferences and online activities. Repeated exposure to certain brands or products can gradually increase familiarity and consumer interest [2]. At the same time, users often like to comment on, share, and interact with beauty-related content. In many cases, these activities satisfy social and identity-related needs, which reflects the active audience idea in Uses and Gratifications Theory [3].

The influence of short-video content is especially noticeable among younger consumers. According to a 2023 Statista survey, 64 percent of Gen Z consumers and 67 percent of Millennials in the United States reported that social media increased their spending on beauty products.

Figure 1 shows a clear generational difference. While 46 percent of total U.S. consumers believed social media increased their beauty spending, the percentages for Millennials and Gen Z were much higher. Younger consumers seem to respond more strongly to beauty-related content on social media platforms. The slightly higher percentage among Millennials may be connected to stronger purchasing power and higher disposable income. Short-video platforms have emerged as crucial marketing channels for cosmetics businesses targeting younger demographics. A plausible explanation is that younger customers allocate significantly more time to algorithm-driven platforms, where beauty-related content is incessantly interwoven with entertainment and social interaction. Because of this, beauty consumption is becoming connected not only to buying products, but also to online identity and lifestyle expression.

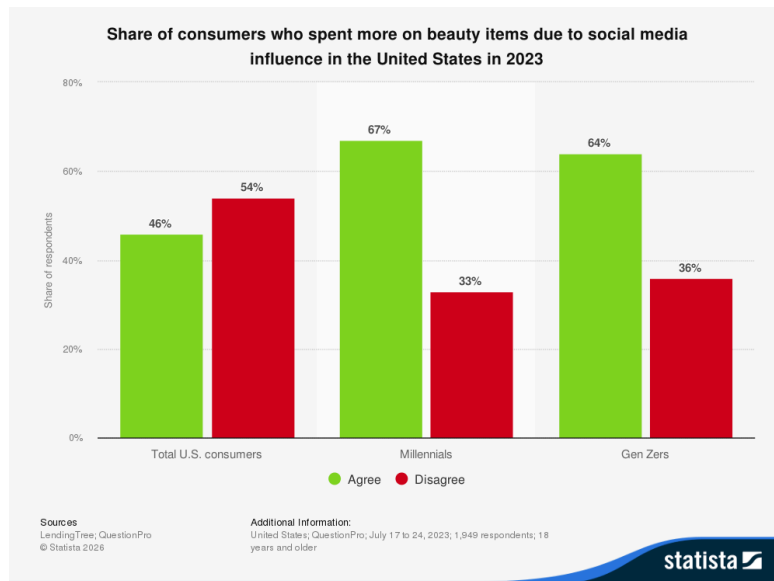


Figure 1. Share of consumers who spent more on beauty items due to social media influence in the United States in 2023 (source: Statista, 2023)

## 2.2. Influencer recommendations and online reviews

Influencer recommendations and online reviews play an important role in shaping purchasing decisions in the beauty industry. Consumers who cannot physically test products before online purchases often rely heavily on visual demonstrations and personal experiences shared by influencers and other users. According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), consumers with low involvement are more likely to rely on peripheral cues such as an influencer's appearance, popularity, or follower count when casually browsing short videos [5]. On the other hand, consumers with higher involvement are more likely to use the central route and carefully evaluate product ingredients, reviews, and objective information before deciding whether to buy. This may help explain why short-video marketing works especially well in the beauty industry. Beauty products are often associated with appearance, emotions, and visual attractiveness rather than solely practical functions. Consumers may also become skeptical when influencer recommendations appear too commercialized. The Persuasion Knowledge Model suggests that consumers activate persuasion knowledge when they recognize persuasive intent in marketing content [6]. For example, if consumers observe that an influencer abruptly begins to promote the same brand regularly or alters their typical content style, they may start to doubt the validity of the endorsement.

As influencer culture becomes more commercialized, some consumers may gradually trust influencer recommendations less. Once recommendations start to feel repetitive or mainly financially motivated, influencer content may lose part of the authenticity that originally made it persuasive. Therefore, the effectiveness of influencer marketing depends not only on visibility but also on whether consumers view influencers as authentic and trustworthy.

### 3. The impact of social media marketing on the beauty industry

#### 3.1. The growth of digital marketing in the beauty industry

The rapid growth of social media has significantly changed marketing strategies in the beauty industry. Many beauty brands have shifted toward digital marketing methods such as short videos, influencer collaborations, and livestream shopping [7]. Currently, competition among beauty firms relies not solely on product quality, but also on internet exposure, social media interaction, and digital branding. Studies have demonstrated that profile photos and online representations might affect consumers' perceptions of credibility in digital markets [8]. This reflects the growing importance of visual presentation and online identity in beauty-related marketing environments.

#### 3.2. The influence of younger consumers on beauty marketing

Millennials and Gen Z have become the leading consumer groups in the beauty and personal care industry [9]. Many beauty products become popular through viral TikTok videos or influencer recommendations rather than traditional television or magazine advertisements. Younger consumers also tend to prefer interactive, visually engaging content, making short-video platforms especially effective for beauty marketing. This also reflects a broader change in digital consumer culture, where purchasing decisions are increasingly shaped by online participation, trend circulation, and platform visibility rather than traditional advertising alone. Social media platforms allow users to share beauty trends, tutorials, and product reviews quickly. Because of this, beauty marketing is no longer controlled only by companies and advertisers. Consumers themselves also participate in shaping digital beauty culture.



Figure 2. Leading social media platforms for online beauty purchases in the united states in 2023 (source: Statista, 2023)

Figure 2 shows that short-video platforms play a major role in influencing online beauty purchases in the United States. TikTok ranks highest among individual platforms, slightly above Instagram and YouTube. This suggests that short-video content, recommendation algorithms, and influencer promotion have become major marketing tools in the beauty industry.

The differences between platforms also reflect differences in platform structure and user behavior. TikTok focuses more on rapid trend circulation and algorithm-driven visibility, which allows beauty products to spread quickly among users. Instagram prioritises influencer branding and visual aesthetics, but YouTube offers extended product reviews and lessons that facilitate more comprehensive consumer assessment. The aforementioned disparities indicate that platform design can affect customers' processes of discovering, evaluating, and purchasing beauty products online. Consumer behavior is shaped not only by products and influencers, but also by the digital environments created by social media platforms.

### **3.3. Short-video advertising and consumer engagement**

Short-video advertising can significantly increase consumer engagement and influence purchasing behavior [1]. Recommendation algorithms repeatedly expose users to beauty products and trends, increasing the visibility of certain brands and online trends [2]. Interactive behaviors such as liking, commenting, and sharing also satisfy consumers' social and identity-related needs. As a result, consumers become active participants in the spread of beauty trends rather than passive audiences [3].

### **3.4. Algorithmic visibility and consumer behavior**

Although influencer marketing and visual content are important parts of short-video marketing, platform algorithms also play a central role in shaping consumer behavior. In contrast to conventional advertising, short-video platforms consistently tailor content based on users' viewing history, interaction behaviours, and browsing choices. Consequently, customers are consistently confronted with analogous beauty items, trends, and influencers within highly personalised digital landscapes.

This algorithm-driven structure changes the way consumers encounter beauty-related information. In traditional media environments, consumers often actively searched for advertisements or product information. However, on platforms such as TikTok and Douyin, beauty-related content frequently appears during entertainment-focused browsing. Consumers may first interact with beauty content casually, but repeated exposure gradually increases familiarity with specific products and brands. Over time, some products may start to appear highly popular, socially accepted, or almost unavoidable within users' online environments.

This process may also strengthen the persuasive effect of influencer marketing. When consumers repeatedly encounter the same product through multiple influencers, videos, and recommendations, they may begin to view the product as more trustworthy or widely supported. Algorithms are not simply neutral tools for displaying content. They also shape what users repeatedly see and pay attention to online.

At the same time, algorithmic recommendations may reduce consumers' exposure to alternative opinions or competing products. Since platforms prioritize content that generates high engagement, users are often shown videos similar to those they previously watched or interacted with. This can create highly repetitive consumption environments where certain beauty standards, trends, and products receive disproportionate visibility. As a result, consumer preferences may increasingly reflect algorithmic exposure rather than independent evaluation.

From the perspective of the Persuasion Knowledge Model, this also creates an important tension. Consumers may not always realize how strongly algorithms shape the content they consume because recommendations are naturally integrated into entertainment and social interaction. As a result,

algorithmic persuasion may seem less obvious than traditional advertising, yet still strongly influences consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior [6].

## **4. Consumer trust and psychological influence**

### **4.1. Influencer credibility and consumer trust**

Consumer trust is a key factor in why short-video marketing strongly influences consumer preferences for beauty products. Official advertisements often fail to address consumers' practical concerns fully, so many consumers rely more on influencers who appear honest, relatable, and experienced [10].

Duffek et al. argue that influencer credibility is shaped by expertise, connectedness, originality, transparency, and integrity [10]. Consumers are generally more likely to trust influencers whose online identities appear consistent and authentic.

Social Identity Theory also helps explain this relationship. Consumers often identify with influencers who share similar characteristics, lifestyles, or aesthetic preferences. When consumers view influencers as relatable or aspirational figures, they are more likely to trust and imitate their recommendations. This suggests that relatability may build long-term consumer trust more effectively than highly idealized perfection.

### **4.2. Commercialization, viral trends, and consumer skepticism**

Although influencer credibility can strengthen consumer trust, influencer marketing also creates tension between authenticity and commercialization. Influencers often face pressure to promote products for commercial purposes while still maintaining authentic online identities [10].

According to the Persuasion Knowledge Model, consumers become more skeptical when they recognize persuasive intent in influencer content [6]. Viral beauty trends may spread rapidly through repeated exposure and algorithmic recommendations, but consumers may also become skeptical if trends appear excessively commercialized or artificially promoted.

For beauty brands, this creates an important challenge. Short-video marketing can quickly increase visibility, but visibility alone does not guarantee long-term consumer trust. Collaborations between beauty brands and influencers whose content styles naturally match the products are more likely to appear credible and authentic.

## **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, short-video marketing has become an important factor influencing consumer preferences in the beauty industry. This paper shows that online beauty content strongly influences purchasing behavior, especially among younger consumers such as Generation Z and Millennials. Influencer credibility and perceived authenticity also play key roles in determining whether consumers trust beauty-related content online. From a theoretical perspective, three main findings emerge. First, consumers actively use short-video platforms to satisfy information, entertainment, social, and identity-related needs, which is consistent with Uses and Gratifications Theory [4]. Second, the effectiveness of persuasion depends on consumers' information processing routes, as explained by the Elaboration Likelihood Model [5]. Third, consumers may become more skeptical when they recognize excessive commercialization, which supports the Persuasion Knowledge Model [6]. Consumers are increasingly engaging as active participants in the dissemination and

perpetuation of beauty trends inside digital media contexts, rather than remaining passive audiences. Overall, short-video marketing influences consumer behavior through visual engagement, algorithmic recommendation, social interaction, credibility, and perceived authenticity.

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