

SHORT VIDEO AND THE COSMETICS CONSUMER BEHAVIOR OF GENERATION Z: THE ROLE OF TRUST AND BRAND LOVE

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Received: 14 April 2026; Revised: 29 April 2026; Accepted: 16 May 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of short-form video content on Generation Z consumer behavior in the cosmetics industry, with a particular focus on the mediating roles of brand trust and brand love. Short-form video content is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct reflecting key attributes commonly embedded in digital beauty communication. Data were collected from 348 Generation Z consumers who actively engage with cosmetics-related short-form video content and analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that short-form video content has significant positive effects on brand trust, brand love, and consumer behavior. In addition, brand trust positively influences both brand love and consumer behavior, while brand love further strengthens consumer behavioral responses. These results highlight the important role of short-form video content in shaping both cognitive and emotional brand relationships, ultimately driving favorable consumer behavior among Generation Z. The study provides practical insights for cosmetics brands seeking to enhance the effectiveness of their digital content strategies in an increasingly competitive and experience-driven market.

Keywords: Short-form videos, Gen Z consumers, cosmetics industry, brand trust, brand love.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the cosmetics industry in Vietnam has experienced substantial growth, emerging as one of the most dynamic sectors within the consumer goods market. According to Brands Vietnam [1], the Vietnamese cosmetics market is projected to reach approximately USD 2.7 billion by 2027, reflecting steady expansion driven by rising income levels, improving living standards, and increasing awareness of personal care. Among major urban centers, Ho Chi Minh City represents the largest consumption hub, characterized by a dense population, a growing middle class, and a high concentration of young consumers who actively engage in beauty consumption [1]. Concurrently, the rapid diffusion of the Internet and social media has fundamentally transformed how consumers access information and make purchasing decisions. DataReportal [2] indicate that Vietnam has approximately 79 million social media users, accounting for more than 77.6% of the population. Notably, Generation Z (aged 18–28) is estimated to account for 28–30%, making it the largest and most digitally active consumer segment, with an average daily usage of nearly two hours [2]. Within this digital ecosystem, Generation Z has emerged as the most active and influential user segment. As digital natives, Gen Z consumers exhibit strong engagement with social media platforms and demonstrate a clear preference for short-form video formats,

such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. These platforms have become central to content consumption, entertainment, and product discovery, particularly in visually driven industries such as cosmetics.

Short-form video has thus evolved into a powerful marketing tool, enabling brands to communicate product attributes, demonstrate usage, and leverage user-generated content in highly engaging ways. Prior research suggests that digital content characteristics such as entertainment, informativeness, and interactivity can significantly influence consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions. However, despite its growing importance, many brands continue to rely on one-way communication strategies that primarily emphasize product promotion, rather than fostering meaningful interaction or emotional connection with consumers. This limitation is particularly critical in the context of Generation Z, a cohort known for its trend sensitivity, low brand switching costs, and preference for authentic and emotionally engaging content. Consequently, building long-term relationships and sustaining brand loyalty among this segment remains a significant challenge.

From an academic perspective, although a substantial body of literature has examined the effects of digital marketing content on consumer behavior, several research gaps remain. Existing studies tend to focus on individual content attributes in isolation, rather than adopting an integrated perspective that captures the multidimensional nature of short-form video content [3]. While cognitive mediators such as brand trust have been widely investigated, higher-order emotional constructs, particularly brand love, have received comparatively limited attention, especially in the context of short-form video marketing [4]. Brand love, which reflects a deep emotional attachment between consumers and brands, is increasingly recognized as a critical driver of long-term consumer–brand relationships. However, the empirical evidence from emerging markets, including Vietnam, remains relatively scarce, particularly within the cosmetics industry and among Generation Z consumers, who represent the most active users of short-form video platforms [4, 5]. To address these research gaps, this study adopts the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework as its theoretical foundation to examine how short-form video content influences consumer behavior. In this framework, short-form video characteristics are conceptualized as external stimuli, while brand trust and brand love jointly represent internal cognitive and emotional organism states that shape consumer responses. Consumer behavior, operationalized as purchase intention, is modeled as the outcome of this process [4]. Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) examine the impact of short-form video content on brand trust and brand love; and (2) investigate the effects of brand trust and brand love on consumer behavior. By doing so, this research contributes to literature in several ways. It extends the application of the S–O–R framework to the context of short-form video marketing, provides an integrated model that captures both cognitive and emotional mechanisms, and offers empirical evidence from an emerging market setting. From a managerial perspective, the findings provide actionable insights for cosmetics brands seeking to design more effective short-form video strategies that enhance trust, foster emotional engagement, and ultimately drive favorable consumer behavior among Generation Z.

Accordingly, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How does short-form video content influence brand trust and brand love in the cosmetics industry among Generation Z consumers?

RQ2: How do brand trust and brand love affect consumer behavior in the context of cosmetics-related short-form video engagement?

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Theoretical background

2.1.1. Brand Love

Brand love has been widely conceptualized as a deep emotional attachment that consumers develop toward a brand, extending beyond purely functional or utilitarian evaluations. Drawing on the broader concept of interpersonal love, it encompasses dimensions such as passion, intimacy, and commitment [6]. In the marketing context, brand love is defined as the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name, reflecting a strong and enduring consumer–brand relationship [7]. Unlike satisfaction, which is primarily a cognitive evaluation based on transactional experiences, brand love is effective in nature and develops over time through repeated interactions. Moreover, while positive attitudes or involvement may not necessarily lead to long-term commitment, brand love implies a deeper integration of the brand into the consumer’s self-concept, thereby fostering stronger relational bonds and resistance to alternative offerings [8].

In the context of digital marketing, particularly short-form video environments, engaging and meaningful content can create immersive experiences that evoke positive emotional responses. These experiences, when reinforced over time, contribute to the development of brand love. Prior studies have demonstrated that brand love plays a significant role in generating favorable outcomes, including enhanced engagement, loyalty, and positive behavioral intentions [9, 10]. Importantly, the formation of brand love is often grounded in prior cognitive evaluations, particularly brand trust. When consumers perceive a brand as reliable, credible, and authentic, they are more likely to develop emotional attachment. Therefore, within the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework, brand love functions as a key emotional mechanism that links marketing stimuli such as short-form video content to behavioral outcomes, including purchase intention and consumer engagement [11, 12].

2.1.2. Stimulus–Organism–Response Framework (S-O-R)

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, originally proposed by Mehrabian and Russell in environmental psychology, provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding how environmental factors influence individual behavior. The model posits that external stimuli shape individuals’ internal cognitive and affective states, which subsequently lead to behavioral responses [13]. The S–O–R framework has been widely applied in consumer behavior research. With the advancement of digital technologies, previous papers adapted the model to online shopping contexts, showing that digital stimuli can trigger psychological responses that drive consumer behavior [14]. More recent studies have further confirmed its applicability in e-commerce and social media environments [15, 16].

Within the S–O–R framework, external stimuli are represented by environmental cues that influence consumer perceptions and experiences. In the context of this study, short-form video content on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts serves as the primary stimulus. These videos typically incorporate multiple attributes, including entertainment value, informativeness, interactivity, visual appeal, and the presence of key opinion leaders (KOLs) or key opinion consumers (KOCs), all of which shape consumer engagement and perception. The organism component reflects internal psychological processes, encompassing both cognitive and affective responses. In this study, these processes are operationalized through brand trust and brand love. Brand trust represents consumers’ cognitive evaluations of a brand’s reliability and credibility, whereas brand love captures a deeper emotional attachment that develops through repeated and meaningful interactions with brand-related content [17].

Behavioral response refers to the observable outcomes resulting from these internal states. In this research, consumer response is conceptualized as purchase intention, indicating the likelihood that consumers will purchase cosmetics products promoted through short-form video content. Within this theoretical structure, brand trust and brand love act as key mediating mechanisms that explain how marketing stimuli are translated into behavioral outcomes. Short-form video content influences consumers' perceptions and emotions, which in turn shape their behavioral intentions. Accordingly, the S-O-R framework provides a comprehensive and appropriate lens for examining the psychological mechanisms underlying the impact of short-form video marketing on consumer behavior in the cosmetics industry.

2.1.3. Signaling Theory

Signaling Theory, originally developed by Spence [18], provides a foundational framework for understanding decision-making under conditions of information asymmetry, where one party possesses private information that is not directly observable by the other. According to this theory, informed parties convey signals that enable receivers to infer unobservable attributes such as quality, credibility, or intent [19]. In marketing contexts, signals are defined as observable and controllable cues that are not part of the core product itself but allow consumers to evaluate attributes that are otherwise difficult to assess prior to purchase. These signals play a critical role in reducing uncertainty and ambiguity, thereby facilitating more informed decision-making [18]. In digital environments, where direct product evaluation is often not feasible, consumers rely heavily on signals embedded in online content to assess credibility and determine whether a product meets their expectations [20, 21].

Within the context of social media marketing, short-form video content functions as a powerful signaling mechanism. These videos convey both explicit and implicit information through visual demonstrations, user-generated content, and influencer endorsements. Elements such as the presence of key opinion leaders (KOLs) or key opinion consumers (KOCs), realistic product usage scenarios, and interactive features enhance the perceived authenticity and credibility of the message. This is particularly relevant in short-form video environments, where consumers are unable to physically experience products, resulting in heightened information asymmetry between sellers and buyers [22]. In such contexts, short-form videos, especially those created by influencers or KOCs serve as quality signals by providing visual evidence of product attributes such as texture, color, durability, and usage outcomes [23]. These signaling effects are especially salient for Generation Z consumers, who tend to value authenticity and relatability when evaluating digital content.

From a theoretical perspective, signaling mechanisms play a crucial role in shaping both cognitive and affective consumer responses [24]. By reducing uncertainty and enhancing perceived transparency, signals contribute to the formation of brand trust. Simultaneously, repeated exposure to credible and emotionally engaging signals fosters deeper emotional attachment, facilitating the development of brand love. These internal psychological states subsequently influence behavioral outcomes, including purchase intention. Accordingly, signaling theory complements S-O-R framework by explaining how specific content attributes in short-form video marketing function as signals that drive consumer cognition, emotion, and behavior [20].

2.1.4. Brand Trust

Brand trust is defined as the extent to which consumers are willing to rely on a brand's ability to fulfill its stated functions [25]. It reflects consumers' confidence in a brand's reliability and integrity, particularly in situations involving uncertainty or perceived risk [26]. In the cosmetics industry, where product quality and safety are critical, trust serves as a

foundational cognitive mechanism that reduces perceived risk and enhances consumers' willingness to engage with a brand.

More importantly, brand trust acts as a precursor to emotional attachment, fostering brand love as consumers develop positive feelings and deeper connections with trusted brands [25]. This emotional bond subsequently translates into favorable behavioral outcomes, including increased purchase intention and actual buying behavior. For Generation Z consumers, who are highly influenced by digital content and brand experiences, trust established through short-form video content can significantly strengthen brand love and ultimately drive cosmetics purchasing decisions.

2.2. Hypothesis development

Short-form video content is conceptualized as a higher-order construct (HOC), reflecting its multidimensional nature [16]. Rather than representing a single attribute, it encompasses several underlying dimensions that collectively determine content effectiveness. Prior research has identified key characteristics of digital content, including entertainment value, informativeness (usefulness), interactivity, visual appeal, and influencer attractiveness, as critical components shaping consumer responses. These dimensions capture both functional and experiential aspects of short-form video, making it a comprehensive construct for understanding its impact on consumer behavior [27, 28]. These attributes function as salient stimuli in digital environments, shaping both cognitive evaluations and emotional responses. From the perspective of signaling theory, each content attribute serves as a distinct signal that reduces information asymmetry and enhances perceived credibility [18, 29]. Informative content provides diagnostic cues that help consumers evaluate product quality, while entertainment and visual appeal increase attention and engagement. Interactivity fosters two-way communication and enhances perceived transparency, whereas KOL/KOC attractiveness strengthens message persuasiveness and social proof [30].

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that these dimensions significantly influence consumer trust, emotional engagement, and behavioral intentions in digital contexts. For instance, short-form video characteristics have been shown to enhance flow experience and behavioral intention among Generation Z users [28], while content quality and social media attributes significantly affect brand-related outcomes such as trust and engagement [27]. Given that these attributes operate simultaneously and interactively in shaping consumer perceptions, modeling short-form video as a higher-order construct provides a more comprehensive and theoretically grounded representation of digital marketing stimuli. This approach aligns with prior research emphasizing the integrated effects of multiple content characteristics on consumer responses in online environments [13, 31].

2.2.1. Short-form video and brand trust

Short-form video content constitutes a rich set of observable signals that reduce information asymmetry in digital environments. According to signaling theory, consumers rely on content-based cues to infer product quality and brand credibility when direct evaluation is not feasible [18, 30]. In short-form video contexts, attributes such as informativeness, visual clarity, and influencer presence function as diagnostic signals that enhance perceived transparency and reliability.

Empirical evidence suggests that content characteristics in short-form videos significantly influence consumers' trust formation. For instance, Yang et al. [21] demonstrate that attributes of short-form video content positively affect trust and satisfaction, while Liu [27] highlights that high-quality social media content strengthens consumer perceptions and brand-related outcomes. In addition, visual and experiential cues embedded in short-form videos enable consumers to better evaluate product performance, thereby reinforcing trust,

particularly among Generation Z users who rely heavily on social media signals [28, 30]. Therefore, short-form video content is expected to positively influence brand trust

H1: Short-form video content has a positive effect on brand trust.

2.2.2. Short-form video and brand love

Beyond cognitive evaluations, short-form video content also plays a critical role in shaping consumers' affective responses. Engaging and immersive content can stimulate emotional experiences that foster deeper connections between consumers and brands. Prior research indicates that interactive and emotionally appealing content enhances user engagement and contributes to the development of strong brand relationships [13, 32].

Short-form videos often integrate storytelling, influencer relatability, and visually appealing elements that enhance emotional resonance. These features are particularly effective for Generation Z consumers, who prioritize authenticity and emotional alignment when interacting with brands [30]. Over time, repeated exposure to emotionally engaging content strengthens emotional attachment, facilitating the development of brand love [11, 32]. Accordingly, short-form video content is expected to foster brand love.

H2: Short-form video content has a positive effect on brand love.

2.2.3. Short-form video and purchase intention

Short-form video marketing has emerged as a powerful driver of consumer behavioral responses in digital environments. By integrating multiple content attributes such as entertainment, informativeness, and interactivity, so short-form videos enhance consumer engagement and perceived value, thereby influencing purchase-related decisions [5, 28].

From a signaling perspective, these content attributes serve as credible cues that reduce perceived risk and increase confidence in purchase decisions [18]. Empirical studies confirm that short-form video marketing significantly influences purchase intention, particularly among Generation Z consumers who are highly responsive to digital content and influencer-driven communication [17, 33]. Therefore, short-form video content is expected to directly enhance consumers' purchase intention.

H3: Short-form video content has a positive effect on purchase intention.

2.2.4. Brand trust and brand love

Brand trust is a fundamental antecedent of emotional attachment in consumer-brand relationships [25]. Trust reduces perceived uncertainty and establishes a sense of reliability, which creates a psychological foundation for emotional bonding [33]. Within relational exchange processes, trust facilitates the transition from cognitive evaluation to affective commitment [33]. Empirical studies further indicate that trust significantly contributes to the development of brand love by reinforcing positive consumer-brand interactions [34]. Thus, higher levels of brand trust are expected to strengthen consumers' emotional attachment to brands.

H4: Brand trust has a positive effect on brand love

2.2.5. Brand trust and purchase intention

Brand trust plays a central role in shaping consumer behavioral intentions by reducing perceived risk and increasing decision confidence [26]. In online environments, where uncertainty is inherently higher, trust becomes a critical determinant of purchase intention [30, 33]. Empirical evidence suggests that trust not only enhances consumers' willingness to engage with brands but also directly influences their likelihood of making purchase decisions [13]. In the context of short-form video marketing, trust formed through credible content

signals further reinforces purchase-related behaviors. Therefore, brand trust is expected to positively influence purchase intention

H5: Brand trust has a positive effect on purchase intention.

2.2.6. Brand love and purchase intention

Brand love represents a deep emotional bond that drives long-term consumer commitment and favorable behavioral outcomes. Unlike cognitive evaluations, emotional attachment reflects a stronger and more enduring relationship with the brand, leading to increased loyalty and purchase behavior [6, 7].

Research has demonstrated that brand love significantly influences consumers' behavioral intentions, including purchase intention and willingness to maintain relationships with the brand [32, 35]. Emotional attachment enhances consumers' motivation to act in favor of the brand, particularly in experiential product categories such as cosmetics. Accordingly, brand love is expected to positively influence purchase intention.

H6: Brand love has a positive effect on purchase intention.

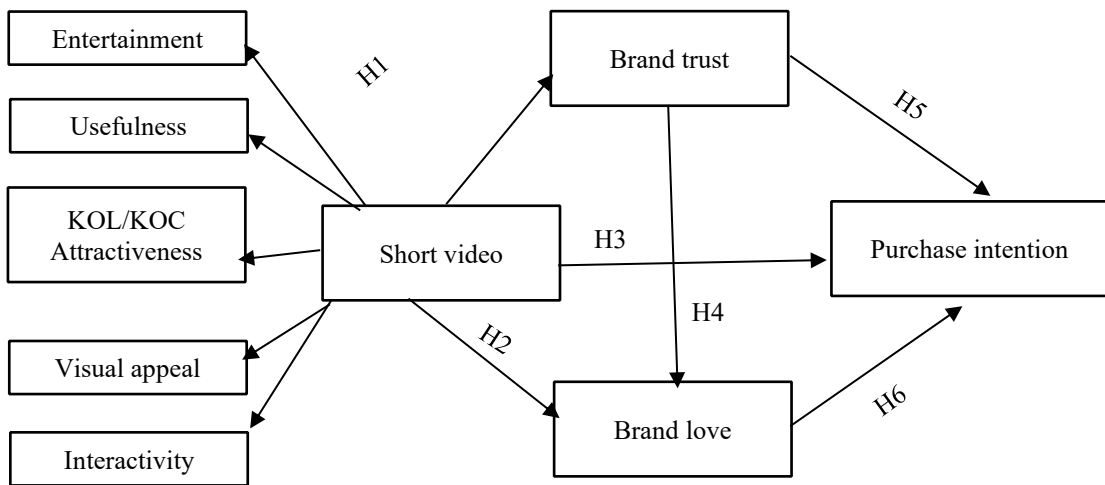


Fig. 1. Conceptual model. Source: Authors' elaboration

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the proposed theoretical relationships. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on established theories and prior empirical studies to ensure content validity and measurement reliability. The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section captures respondents' demographic characteristics, while the second section measures the key constructs included in the proposed research model. A total of 33 closed-ended items were employed, all measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Short-form video content is operationalized as a second-order reflective construct, comprising five first-order dimensions: entertainment, interactivity, usefulness, visual appeal, and KOL/KOC attractiveness. Each dimension is measured using observed indicators adapted from prior studies [27, 28, 36]. The remaining constructs like Brand trust, brand love, and purchase intention were each measured using observed variables, adapted from previous research [5, 30, 34].

The target population comprises Generation Z consumers (born between 1997 and 2007) residing in Ho Chi Minh City who actively use social media and have prior experience engaging with cosmetics-related short-form video content. Data were collected through an online survey

distributed via social media platforms, including Facebook, Zalo, TikTok, and relevant online beauty communities. A total of 348 valid responses were obtained for analysis. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is appropriate for complex models involving higher-order constructs and relatively moderate sample sizes [37]. The analysis followed a two-stage approach. In the first stage, descriptive statistics and preliminary reliability analysis were conducted using SPSS. Internal consistency reliability was initially assessed using Cronbach's Alpha with threshold values exceeding 0.70 indicating acceptable reliability [37]. In the second stage, SmartPLS 4.0 [38] was employed to assess both the measurement model and the structural model. Internal consistency reliability was further assessed using composite reliability (CR) and ρ_A , which are considered more appropriate for PLS-SEM than Cronbach's Alpha alone [37]. CR values ranging from 0.70 to 0.95 indicate satisfactory reliability levels [37]. Indicator reliability was evaluated through outer loadings, where values exceeding 0.70 are recommended [37]. Convergent validity was assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE), with a threshold of 0.50 indicating that the construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators [37]. Discriminant validity was examined using the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT), with values below 0.85 indicating adequate discriminant validity between constructs [38]. Given the inclusion of a higher-order construct, the two-stage approach was adopted to ensure robust estimation of hierarchical component models. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was conducted to evaluate the significance of path coefficients and test the proposed hypotheses.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Sample description

The sample consists of 348 valid respondents, providing a relevant representation of Generation Z consumers in the study context. In terms of gender distribution, male respondents account for 78.4%, while females represent accounted for 21.6%. This distribution reflects the characteristics of the cosmetics market, where female consumers tend to exhibit higher levels of interest and engagement, particularly in product exploration and content interaction on social media platforms.

Regarding monthly income, the sample is predominantly concentrated in the lower income segment. Specifically, 81.9% of respondents report earnings below 7 million VND, 12.6% fall within the 7–15 million VND range, and only 5.5% report income above 15 million VND. This reflects the relatively young profile of the sample, in which students constitute a substantial proportion. In terms of short-form video consumption behavior, respondents demonstrate varying levels of engagement. Approximately 34.5% report watching short-form videos for less than 30 minutes per day, while 33.0% spend between 30 minutes and one hour. A smaller proportion reports higher levels of usage, with 15.8% watching for one to two hours and 16.7% exceeding two hours daily. These figures indicate a generally high level of exposure to short-form video content among the target population.

In addition to general usage patterns, respondents were also asked about the types of short-form video content they most frequently engage with. The results indicate a strong preference for informational and experience-based content. Specifically, skincare-related content accounts for the highest proportion (20.7%), followed closely by cosmetic reviews (19.9%) and makeup-related content (17.9%). Personal experience sharing also represents a notable share (16.8%), suggesting that consumers value authenticity and real-life usage insights. The demographic and behavioral characteristics of the sample are consistent with the target population of Generation Z social media users, thereby providing a suitable basis for subsequent empirical analysis.

Table 1. Demographic information (348 Responses)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency (F)</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
Gender	Male	75	78.4
	Female	273	21.6
Monthly income	<7 million VND	285	81.9
	7 - 15 million VND	44	12.6
	15 - 20 million VND	9	2.6
	20 million VND	10	2.9
Short-form video consumption	<30 minutes	120	34.5
	30 minutes - 1 hour	115	33.0
	1 - 2 hours	55	15.8
	>2 hours	58	16.7
Topics	Makeup	242	17.9
	Skincare	279	20.7
	Cosmetic reviews	269	19.9
	Cosmetic comparisons	179	13.3
	Personal experiences	226	16.8
	Usage guides	143	10.6
	Other	11	0.8

Source: Authors' elaboration

4.2. Evaluation of the measurement model

4.2.1. First – order measurement model assessment

The first stage of the analysis involves the assessment of the measurement model to establish the reliability and validity of the constructs. The evaluation begins with indicator reliability, which is assessed through the examination of outer loadings. The results indicate that all observed variables exhibit outer loadings exceeding the recommended threshold [37]. This suggests that each indicator demonstrates satisfactory reliability and contributes meaningfully to its respective latent construct. No items were removed, as all indicators meet the minimum acceptable criteria.

Table 2. Stage 1 - Construct reliability and validity

Constructs	Items	Outer Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Entertainment (ENTE)	ENTE1	0.847	0.864	0.908	0.710
	ENTE2	0.836			
	ENTE3	0.853			
	ENTE4	0.836			
Usefulness (USE)	USE2	0.847	0.878	0.916	0.732
	USE3	0.877			
	USE4	0.859			
	USE1	0.840			

KOL/KOC Attractiveness (KOL)	KOL1	0.882	0.867	0.918	0.790
	KOL2	0.894			
	KOL3	0.889			
Visual Appeal (VISU)	VISU1	0.859	0.838	0.903	0.756
	VISU3	0.877			
	VISU2	0.872			
Interactivity (INTE)	INTE1	0.816	0.850	0.899	0.690
	INTE2	0.842			
	INTE3	0.849			
	INTE4	0.816			

Source: Authors' elaboration

As presented in Table 2, all indicator loadings for the first-order dimensions, namely Entertainment, Usefulness, KOL/KOC Attractiveness, Visual Appeal, and Interactivity range from 0.816 to 0.894, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.708 [37]. This indicates strong indicator reliability and confirms that all measurement items are well associated with their respective constructs. Regarding internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.838 to 0.878, while Composite Reliability (CR) values range from 0.899 to 0.918. All values surpass the recommended threshold of 0.70, demonstrating a high level of internal consistency across all first-order constructs. Convergent validity is also established, as the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values range from 0.690 to 0.790, all exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.50. Among the constructs, KOL/KOC Attractiveness (AVE = 0.790) and Visual Appeal (AVE = 0.756) exhibit particularly strong convergent validity, indicating that these constructs capture a substantial proportion of variance from their respective indicators. The results provide strong empirical support for the reliability and convergent validity of the first-order measurement model, thereby confirming its suitability for inclusion in the higher-order construct and subsequent structural model analysis.

4.2.2. Second-order measurement model assessment

Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.870 to 0.932, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.70. Composite Reliability (rho_c) values range from 0.915 to 0.948, further confirming the strong internal consistency of the constructs [37]. Among these, the higher-order construct short-form video demonstrates particularly high reliability (CR = 0.948), reflecting the stability of its multidimensional structure. With respect to convergent validity, all constructs report AVE values well above the recommended threshold of 0.50, ranging from 0.729 to 0.816. Brand Trust (AVE = 0.816) and Brand Love (AVE = 0.793) exhibit especially strong levels of convergent validity, indicating that a substantial proportion of variance in their indicators is captured by the respective latent constructs. Purchase intention also demonstrates adequate convergent validity (AVE = 0.729), supporting its measurement robustness. These results provide further evidence that both the higher-order construct and endogenous variables satisfy the criteria for reliability and convergent validity, thereby reinforcing the adequacy of the measurement model for subsequent structural analysis.

Table 3. Stage 2 - Construct reliability and validity

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Outer Loadings</i>	<i>CA</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Short video (VIDEO)	ENTE	0.885	0.932	0.948	0.787
	USE	0.868			
	KOL	0.874			

	VISU	0.899			
	INTE	0.904			
Brand Trust (TRUST)	TRUST1	0.903	0.887	0.930	0.816
	TRUST3	0.909			
	TRUST2	0.898			
Brand Love (LOVE)	LOVE1	0.883	0.870	0.920	0.793
	LOVE3	0.878			
	LOVE2	0.911			
Purchase Intention (PUR)	YD1	0.874	0.876	0.915	0.729
	YD2	0.837			
	YD3	0.852			
	YD4	0.852			

Source: Authors' elaboration

As presented in Table 4, the square root of AVE values (diagonal elements) for all constructs are greater than the corresponding inter-construct correlations. Specifically, the square root of AVE for Brand Trust (0.903), Brand Love (0.891), Short-form Video (0.886), and Purchase Intention (0.854) all exceed their highest correlations with other constructs. The square root of AVE for Short-form Video (0.886) is higher than its correlations with Brand Love (0.802), Purchase Intention (0.798), and Brand Trust (0.732). Similarly, Brand Trust (0.903) demonstrates a higher value than its correlations with Purchase Intention (0.760) and Brand Love (0.701). These results indicate that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs in the model. Therefore, the Fornell–Larcker criterion is satisfied, confirming adequate discriminant validity among the constructs.

Table 4. Discriminant validity

	Brand trust	Brand love	Short video	Purchase intention
Brand Trust	0.903			
Brand Love	0.701	0.891		
Short video	0.732	0.802	0.886	
Purchase intention	0.760	0.723	0.798	0.854

Source: Authors' elaboration

In addition, the VIF values ranged from 2.180 to 3.028, which are below the recommended threshold of 3.3, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern and that common method bias is unlikely to affect the results. The effect sizes (f^2) for the structural paths range from 0.017 to 1.152, indicating varying levels of impact across relationships. Specifically, short-form video content exerts strong effects on both brand trust and brand love, while its effect on purchase intention is moderate. Brand trust demonstrates a moderate influence on purchase intention, whereas the effect of brand love appears to be weak. Furthermore, the predictive relevance of the model was assessed using the Stone–Geisser Q^2 statistic. The Q^2 values for Brand Trust (0.342), Brand Love (0.438), and Purchase Intention (0.512) are all greater than zero, indicating that the model has satisfactory predictive relevance for all endogenous constructs. These results confirm the model's ability to accurately predict key outcome variables.

4.3. Hypothesis testing

The findings (Table 5) indicate that most of the proposed relationships are statistically significant and supported. Specifically, short-form video content exerts a strong positive effect on brand trust ($\beta = 0.732$, $t = 21.333$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H1. This result suggests that short-form video serves as an effective mechanism for enhancing consumers' cognitive evaluations of brand reliability. Short-form video content also has a significant positive impact on brand love ($\beta = 0.622$, $t = 11.337$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2. This finding highlights the role of engaging and emotionally appealing video content in fostering consumers' affective attachment to brands. In addition, short-form video directly influences purchase intention ($\beta = 0.444$, $t = 6.331$, $p < 0.001$), confirming H3 and demonstrating its effectiveness in driving behavioral responses.

Table 5. Hypothesis testing result

H	Path	Original sample	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values	Result
H1	ShortVideo $\rightarrow$ BrandTrust	0.732	0.034	21.333	0.000	Accepted
H2	ShortVideo $\rightarrow$ BrandLove	0.622	0.055	11.337	0.000	Accepted
H3	ShortVideo $\rightarrow$ Purchase	0.444	0.070	6.331	0.000	Accepted
H4	BrandTrust $\rightarrow$ BrandLove	0.246	0.060	4.101	0.000	Accepted
H5	BrandTrust $\rightarrow$ Purchase	0.350	0.064	5.515	0.000	Accepted
H6	BrandLove $\rightarrow$ Purchase	0.122	0.068	1.785	0.074	Not supported

Source: Authors' elaboration

Regarding the relationships among mediating variables, brand trust is found to have a positive effect on brand love ($\beta = 0.246$, $t = 4.101$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H4. This indicates that cognitive trust serves as a foundation for the development of emotional attachment. Furthermore, brand trust significantly influences purchase intention ($\beta = 0.350$, $t = 5.515$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H5, which underscores the importance of trust in reducing uncertainty and encouraging purchasing decisions. However, the relationship between brand love and purchase intention is not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.122$, $t = 1.785$, $p = 0.074$), leading to the rejection of H6. This finding suggests that, in the context of short-form video marketing and Generation Z consumers, emotional attachment alone may not be sufficient to directly drive purchase intention. Instead, cognitive factors such as trust appear to play a more dominant role in shaping behavioral outcomes.

The results highlight the critical role of short-form video as both a cognitive and emotional stimulus, while also revealing that trust acts as a more immediate driver of purchase intention compared to brand love in this research context.

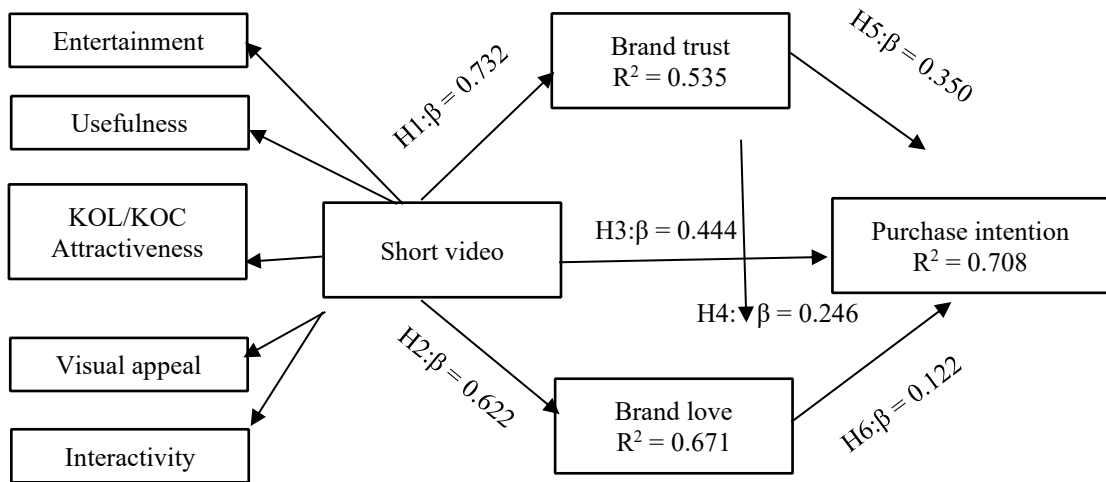


Fig. 2. Results of PLS-SEM analysis. Source: Authors' elaboration

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Discussion

This study aims to examine the mechanisms through which short-form video content on social media influences the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers in Ho Chi Minh City, with particular emphasis on the mediating roles of brand trust and brand love. The empirical findings provide robust support for most of the proposed relationships, thereby contributing to both theoretical development and contextual understanding within the Vietnamese cosmetics industry. The results demonstrate that short-form video content, conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing entertainment, informativeness, interactivity, visual appeal, and KOL/KOC attractiveness, exerts significant positive effects on both brand trust and brand love. This finding reinforces the view that short-form videos function not merely as communication tools but as experiential and interactive platforms through which consumers form both cognitive evaluations and emotional connections with brands. Such evidence aligns with the S–O–R framework, where content characteristics act as stimuli that shape internal psychological states, as well as with signaling theory, which emphasizes the role of content cues in reducing uncertainty and enhancing perceived credibility.

Regarding behavioral outcomes, the findings reveal that brand trust has a significant positive effect on purchase intention, confirming its critical role as a cognitive driver of consumer decision-making. In contrast, brand love does not exhibit a statistically significant effect on purchase intention. This result suggests that, within the context of short-form video consumption among Generation Z, emotional attachment alone may not be sufficient to directly translate into purchase behavior. Instead, consumers may rely more heavily on cognitive evaluations particularly trust when making purchasing decisions in digital environments characterized by abundant information and high uncertainty. This finding offers an important extension to prior research, which often assumes a direct and strong linkage between brand love and behavioral outcomes [32, 36]. In the present context, brand love appears to function more as a complementary or reinforcing mechanism rather than a primary determinant of purchase intention. One possible explanation is that Generation Z consumers, despite forming emotional connections with brands, remain highly pragmatic and information-

driven, especially in product categories such as cosmetics where perceived risk and product performance are salient considerations.

Furthermore, the study confirms that brand trust significantly influences brand love, supporting the argument that cognitive trust serves as a foundational antecedent of emotional attachment. This result is consistent with relationship marketing and social exchange perspectives, which posit that trust precedes and facilitates the development of deeper emotional bonds. The finding is particularly meaningful in the context of social media marketing, where trust derived from credible content and authentic signals plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' affective responses. The direct effect of short-form video content on purchase intention is found to be significant, indicating that such content can influence consumer behavior not only indirectly through psychological mechanisms but also directly through repeated exposure and persuasive communication. This highlights the increasing effectiveness of short-form video as a standalone marketing stimulus capable of driving immediate behavioral responses among Generation Z consumers. These findings underscore the dominant role of cognitive mechanisms, particularly trust, in translating digital marketing stimuli into behavioral outcomes, while positioning emotional attachment as a secondary yet meaningful component within the consumer decision-making process.

From a theoretical perspective, this study extends both the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework and signaling theory, rather than simply applying them to a new context. Specifically, within the S–O–R framework, this study advances the conceptualization of the organism component by explicitly distinguishing between cognitive and affective mechanisms. Brand trust is positioned as a cognitive evaluation reflecting consumers' confidence in the brand, while brand love represents an effective response characterized by emotional attachment. By differentiating these two pathways, the study provides a more nuanced understanding of how external stimuli translate into consumer behavior through distinct psychological processes.

5.2. Implications

The findings of this study offer several important managerial implications for cosmetics brands operating in digital and social media environments. Short-form video content should be reconceptualized not merely as a communication tool but as a strategic mechanism for shaping consumer perceptions and driving behavioral outcomes. In highly competitive markets such as cosmetics, where functional differentiation is often limited, brands must increasingly rely on digitally mediated experiences to influence consumer decision-making. From a strategic standpoint, brands should adopt a holistic approach to short-form video content by integrating multiple content dimensions, including entertainment, informativeness, interactivity, visual appeal, and KOL/KOC attractiveness. Among these, informativeness and credibility-related cues play a particularly critical role in strengthening brand trust, which is identified as a key driver of purchase intention in this study. Therefore, brands should prioritize content that provides clear, useful, and transparent information, such as product demonstrations, ingredient explanations, and authentic user experiences.

While entertainment and emotional appeal remain important for capturing attention and fostering engagement, the findings suggest that emotional attachment alone may not be sufficient to directly drive purchase intention. As such, brands should ensure that emotionally engaging content is complemented by trust-building elements. This includes leveraging credible influencers, showcasing realistic product usage, and encouraging user-generated content to enhance perceived authenticity. Interactivity also plays a significant role in enhancing consumer engagement and relationship quality. Brands are encouraged to move beyond one-way communication and develop interactive content formats that facilitate dialogue and participation, such as live streaming, comment engagement, and co-creation

activities. These practices contribute to building a sense of connection and community, which indirectly supports trust formation. Furthermore, the results highlight the importance of viewing social media platforms as “trust-building ecosystems.” In this context, consistent and transparent communication, combined with authentic social proof, can significantly enhance brand credibility. As trust increases, consumers are more likely to convert their positive perceptions into actual purchase intentions. Cosmetics brands should prioritize trust-building strategies within their short-form video marketing efforts, while simultaneously leveraging emotional and experiential elements to strengthen consumer engagement. By aligning cognitive and affective mechanisms, firms can more effectively translate digital interactions into sustainable consumer relationships and purchase outcomes.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the use of convenience sampling in Ho Chi Minh City, with a primary focus on Generation Z consumers, may limit the generalizability of the findings. Consumer behavior, particularly in digital environments, can vary across demographic groups, geographic regions, and cultural contexts. Therefore, the results should be interpreted within the specific context of young, digitally active consumers in an urban setting.

This study focuses exclusively on the cosmetics industry, which is inherently experiential and visually driven. As such, the findings may not be directly transferable to other product categories with different levels of involvement or risk perception. Future research could extend the model to other industries, such as technology, fashion, or services, to test its applicability and robustness across different consumption contexts, while this study examines brand trust and brand love as key mediating mechanisms, other potentially relevant variables were not included. Future research could incorporate additional constructs, such as perceived authenticity, consumer engagement, or social influence, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological processes underlying short-form video marketing effectiveness. By addressing these limitations would enhance the generalizability, explanatory power, and theoretical richness of future research, while providing deeper insights into the evolving role of short-form video in shaping consumer behavior.

Acknowledgement: This research is part of the project funded by Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade, under Decision No. 256/HĐ-DCT (dated 01 July 2025). The authors would like to express their gratitude to the University for its support throughout the research process.

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