

Original Article

SHORT-FORM VIDEO PLATFORMS AND CONSUMER BUYING INTENTION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK EXTENDING THE UNIFIED THEORY OF ACCEPTANCE AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Short-form video platforms like YouTube Shorts, Instagram Reels, Facebook Reels, Facebook Videos, and Snapchat have changed consumers' experience of the commercial information they encounter, consider, and act upon. Previous scholarship has demonstrated the persuasiveness of such content, but not in three respects. First, technology acceptance research has focused mainly on modelling the intention to use or continue using technology rather than on buying it. Second, there has been a focus on a single platform (TikTok), which has restricted the ability to draw comparisons between the broader short-form video landscape. Third, the psychological process that translates perceptions of acceptance into purchase decisions is generally taken for granted rather than defined. This paper extends the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) model in three ways: by including learning value as a context-specific predictor, by positioning consumer engagement as a mediating factor between acceptance perceptions and buying intention, and by identifying digital literacy as a moderator between consumer engagement and buying intention. The framework is theoretically connected to the Stimulus–Organism–Response paradigm and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the latter of which is a confirmed framework for understanding the reasons for engagement, being the correct organismic state and why intention is the correct proximal outcome. Twelve propositions are advanced, and a methodological path is proposed to validate them empirically using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling in the empirical study in the Tricity region of northern India. The framework extends UTAUT2 with a consumer-behaviour model, provides a diagnostic model of the success or failure of short-form video persuasion for marketers, and provides a testable framework for further empirical research.

Keywords: Short-Form Video Platforms, Consumer Buying Intention, UTAUT2, Consumer Engagement, Digital Literacy, Social Commerce

INTRODUCTION

Consumers have turned to digital platforms as their primary search space for gathering information about products, comparing alternatives, and making purchasing decisions [Kaplan and Haenlein \(2010\)](#), [Lim et al. \(2022\)](#). In this context, one format is emerging disproportionately. YouTube Shorts, Instagram Reels, Facebook Reels, Facebook Videos, and Snapchat are all short-form video delivery platforms that bundle together product demonstration, endorsement and entertainment into a vertical clip that is less than 60 seconds long and delivered via an algorithmic feed that doesn't require any intentional effort on the part of the consumer. Some

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of these platforms have shown that such content can significantly influence brand attitudes and purchase intent [Babu et al. \(2025\)](#), [Eskander and Mohammed \(2024\)](#), [Luo et al. \(2025\)](#).

The format is persuasive, and there is a reasonably well-understood basis for this. The emotional appeal of video content, enhanced processing efficiency of the product information, and increased perceived credibility, as compared with text or static images, have been demonstrated, and the short-term video user-generated content has been found to have a greater effect on purchase intention than the graphic content, due to the perceived value and emotional involvement [Qin et al. \(2024\)](#). The short video provided by the influencer exerts a para-social effect, in which the credibility of the video content and the sense of closeness and intimacy with the creator translate into a willingness to purchase products [Sokolova and Kefi \(2020\)](#), [Lou and Yuan \(2019\)](#). Combined, this collection of work proves that short-form videos do work. Its action is much less predictable in terms of who it affects, for whom it works, and when and where it has a greater or lesser effect.

The most developed vocabulary for addressing the first of these questions comes from technology acceptance research. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2), developed by [Venkatesh et al. \(2012\)](#) in a consumer rather than an organisational setting, understands the reasons behind adoption in terms of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, price value, and habit. The framework has been leveraged successfully in various applications, including mobile shopping [Chopdar et al. \(2018\)](#), mobile food ordering [Alalwan \(2020\)](#), and social commerce ([Sarker et al., 2025](#)), with meta-analytic evidence supporting the validity of key predictors [Dwivedi et al. \(2020\)](#), [Tamilmani et al. \(2020\)](#). It is almost always behavioural intention to use the technology that is the dependent variable. This is a significant constraint for a marketing question. If a consumer is already planning to watch Reels, it doesn't necessarily mean they plan to buy what the Reels show.

Another constraint is the mechanism. When acceptance constructs are related to purchase outcomes, the relationship is usually modelled as direct, leaving the intervening psychological process unspecified. There is a theoretically based potential process for consumer engagement: consumer engagement. Engagement is defined as a multidimensional state that includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects of involvement with brand-related content [Hollebeek et al. \(2014\)](#) and has been found to influence purchase intention in the context of social media interaction [Onofrei et al. \(2022\)](#), which is designed to deliver. The use of engagement as a mediator rather than as an outcome changes UTAUT2 from a model of adoption to a model of persuading.

So, the third limitation is individual differences. The same short video does not work the same for everyone. The capacity to access, analyse, understand, and engage with digital information varies among consumers and is encapsulated in the concept of 'digital literacy' [Ng \(2012\)](#), [Van et al. \(2014\)](#). A digitally literate viewer is more likely to spot the promotional message, recognise over-exaggerated claims, and distinguish between the demonstrative and entertainment content. It is an open question of consequence whether existing frameworks consider whether this ability enhances the engagement intention path by providing what is truly relevant to the decision, or whether it detracts, placing critical evaluation between the path of engagement and intention.

This paper aims to overcome these three drawbacks by creating a conceptual framework that integrates. The framework builds upon UTAUT2 by incorporating learning value as an additional context-specific predictor because it refers to the learning value that consumers can gain from tutorials, demonstrations, unboxing videos and reviews; by adding consumer engagement as a mediating variable between acceptance perceptions and buying intention; and by including digital literacy as a moderating variable that links the relationship between consumer engagement and buying intention. It is theoretically grounded in UTAUT2 [Davis \(1986\)](#), the Stimulus–Organism–Response paradigm [Mehrabian and Russell \(1974\)](#), and the Theory of Planned Behaviour [Ajzen \(1991\)](#), which collectively explain the model's structure rather than merely embellish it.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 establishes the theoretical underpinnings and discusses the intersection of the three theories. Section 3 examines empirical research on short-form video, engagement, and digital literacy and identifies the gaps the framework aims to fill. A structure and the twelve propositions are given in section 4. Section 5 provides a methodological approach to empirical validation. The theoretical and practical implications are presented in Sections 6 and 7, while the limitations and conclusions are discussed in Sections 8 and 9.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

For a conceptual contribution to be made, the theories used must make a different explanatory contribution. The three theories applied here are not mutually redundant but rather complementary: UTAUT2 explains consumers' perceptions of the platform, the Stimulus–Organism–Response paradigm explains how these perceptions are psychologically processed, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour explains why the resulting state does not directly lead to behaviour.

THE UNIFIED THEORY OF ACCEPTANCE AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY 2

UTAUT2 [Venkatesh et al. \(2012\)](#) is an extension of the original unified model [Venkatesh et al. \(2003\)](#), which has been extended to the consumer domain to incorporate hedonic motivation, price value and habit alongside the original constructs of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions. This extension is where the framework is suitable. Short-

form video platforms are watched voluntarily, for fun, and repetitively, which is not captured by a model that lacks enjoyment and repetition. Evidence from meta-analysis also corroborates the salience of hedonic motivation in just such contexts [Tamilmani et al. \(2020\)](#), and the predictive power of the underlying constructs has been demonstrated for consumer digital platforms [Dwivedi et al. \(2020\)](#).

For the present purpose, two adaptations are made. Price value is not included because the platforms examined are free at the point of use, and the logic of monetary trade-offs does not apply to content consumption. It is replaced by learning value, which has been found in the technology acceptance application of learning-oriented platforms and is the direct extension of the tutorial, demonstration, and review genres that prevail in commercial short video [Al-Lozi \(2015\)](#).

THE STIMULUS-ORGANISM-RESPONSE PARADIGM

According to the Stimulus-Organism-Response paradigm [Mehrabian and Russell \(1974\)](#), environmental stimuli affect the internal state, which then leads to responses in the form of behaviour. It adds to the current framework, but in the structural, not the decorative, sense: It provides the rationale for considering engagement as a mediator. In the model, the acceptance perceptions are the stimuli set, the consumer states are the organisms, and the response is the buying intention. The ambiguity in technology acceptance studies in the field of marketing is addressed in this mapping, which commonly involves using acceptance constructs that are regressed directly on purchase outcomes rather than on the intervening psychological state. This logic is supported by recent short-video research, which indicates that the influence of short videos on purchase intention is realised by internal states such as trust [Luo et al. \(2025\)](#) and perceived value and emotional involvement [Qin et al. \(2024\)](#).

THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) [Ajzen \(1991\)](#), which builds on the expectancy-value tradition of [Fishbein and Ajzen \(1975\)](#), posits that behaviour is the product of intention, which is a function of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. It plays two roles here. It validates buying intention as a defensible proximal outcome in a cross-sectional research design and provides insight into the conceptual content of two UTAUT2 predictors, social influence and facilitating conditions, which are similar to subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, respectively. This recognition of the relationship avoids double-counting constructs with different names across different literatures.

THEORETICAL INTEGRATION

The three theories are not layered, but are introduced sequentially. The stimulus set is filled with constructs that have demonstrated predictive validity in the consumer technology context, as evidenced by the UTAUT2. The third step in the Stimulus-Organism-Response paradigm is the organismic state, as described in the engagement literature [Hollebeek et al. \(2014\)](#). The response terminus is anchored by the Theory of Planned Behaviour, and the normative and control constructs are disciplined. This sequence includes digital literacy, which also shows that individual digital skills determine the significance of online exposure [Van et al. \(2014\)](#). The framework produced in this way is not UTAUT2 with additional boxes, but rather a reformulation of the model in which acceptance perceptions are now considered persuasive stimuli, mediated by engagement and moderated by competence, in the model for purchase-related intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH GAPS

SHORT-FORM VIDEO AND PURCHASE INTENTION

Research on the main effect of short-form video on purchase outcomes has grown significantly and coalesced around a positive effect. In a structural model estimated among social media users, informative and entertaining short-video content had a positive effect on consumer trust, which in turn had a positive effect on purchase intention, according to [Luo et al. \(2025\)](#). In an experimental study, [Qin et al. \(2024\)](#) found that purchase intention was significantly different between short-video UGC and graphic UGC, with perceived value and emotional involvement having an influence. The evidence that follows is platform-specific, though: Facebook Reels content has been found to be associated with brand attitude and purchase intention [Babu et al. \(2025\)](#); and celebrity-created ads on Snapchat have been connected to purchase intent [Eskander and Mohammed \(2024\)](#).

A parallel stream looks at the source instead of the format. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) found that perceived credibility and parasocial interaction on Instagram and YouTube drive consumers' purchase intention, and [Lou and Yuan \(2019\)](#) found that the informativeness and credibility of influencer messages affect consumer trust. The popularity of influencers has been shown to influence purchase decisions among young female users when there is a fit between the influencer and the product [Djafarova and Rushworth \(2017\)](#) and when the influencer is perceived as credible and can influence brand attitude [De Veirman et al. \(2017\)](#). [Belanche et al. \(2021\)](#) found a positive relationship between influencers' credibility on Instagram and followers' attitudes, and [Bu et al. \(2022\)](#) demonstrated a relationship between homophily between influencers and followers and value co-creation behaviour and purchase intention.

What this literature fails to capture is the platform as technology whose perceived properties lead to the results. The unit of analysis is not the consumer's evaluation of the platform as a decision support environment, but rather the message or the messenger. This is precisely what the constructs of technology acceptance measure, and indicates a valuable but largely untapped complementarity.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE IN CONSUMER DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS

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CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT AS A MEDIATING MECHANISM

Consumer engagement has been defined as a multi-dimensional phenomenon that involves both cognitive processing and affect and activation towards brand-related content [Hollebeek et al. \(2014\)](#). Social media research also backs up its mediation: [Onofrei et al. \(2022\)](#) showed that the source and content factors partially mediated between social media interaction and both behavioural engagement and purchase intent, while previous studies demonstrated that social media interaction is linked to the sharing and interaction behaviours that lead to the inference of engagement, and that brand-related content on social platforms positively influences those behaviors [De et al. \(2012\)](#). Similar findings are found in electronic word-of-mouth research, which indicates that consumer-generated communication can affect purchase likelihood by providing information and/or normative cues [Cheung and Thadani \(2012\)](#), [Hennig-Thurau et al. \(2004\)](#).

Engagement is thus a state of being well-suited to the short-form video setting, which is designed to elicit this response from the audience. Vertical presentation, autoplay, sound on delivery, and algorithmic sequencing are all design decisions that aim to hold attention and elicit a reaction. The modelling of online engagement as a consequence of perceptions of the platform and as an antecedent of intention thus aligns the theoretical structure with the technological one.

DIGITAL LITERACY AS A BOUNDARY CONDITION

Digital literacy has been defined as the ability to access, evaluate, interpret, and productively use digital information [Ng \(2012\)](#), and has been found to predict whether Internet use has concrete consequences [Van et al. \(2014\)](#). It is very much about persuasion. Higher-digitally-literate consumers better understand sponsored content, evaluate source credibility, and differentiate between demonstrative and entertaining information, factors that have implications for decisions to adopt a promotional video to make a purchase. Trust surges in online shopping also imply that consumers' interpretive ability affects the impact of platform cues [Gefen et al. \(2003\)](#). In spite of this, digital literacy is rarely used as a moderator in short-form video research, and its impact remains the subject of theoretical debate, as Section 4 will show.

SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH GAPS

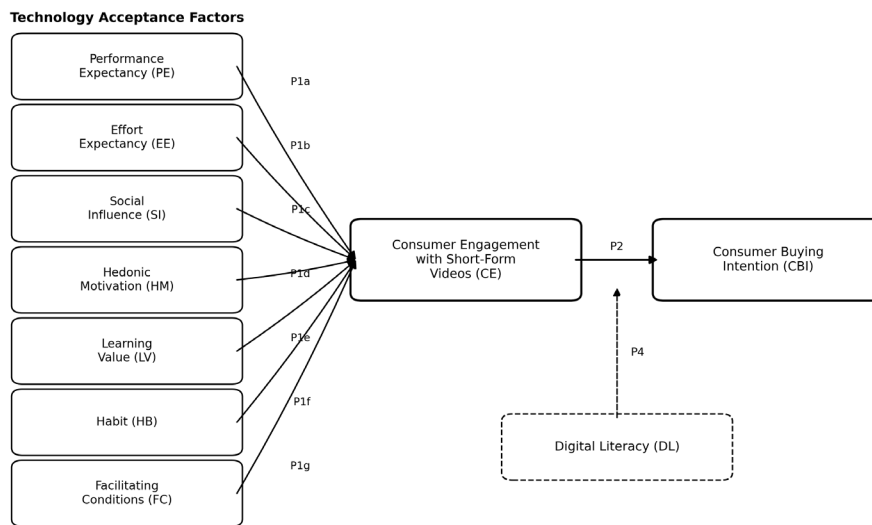
Four gaps follow from the foregoing review and jointly motivate the proposed framework. They are summarised in [Table 1](#).

Table 1

Table 1 Research Gaps Addressed by the Proposed Framework		
Gap	Description	How the framework addresses it
Outcome gap	Technology acceptance research models usage, adoption, or continuance intention rather than purchase-related outcomes Chopdar et al. (2018) ; Sarker et al. (2025) .	Relocates the dependent variable to consumer buying intention while retaining the established predictor set.
Mechanism gap	Where acceptance constructs are linked to purchase outcomes, the intervening psychological process is left unspecified.	Specifies consumer engagement as the mediating organismic state, justified by the Stimulus–Organism–Response paradigm and the engagement literature Hollebeek et al. (2014) .
Boundary-condition gap	Individual differences in interpretive competence are rarely modelled, although digital skill governs whether exposure yields outcomes Van et al. (2014) .	Introduces digital literacy as a moderator of the engagement–intention relationship with competing theoretical predictions.
Contextual gap	Empirical attention concentrates on a single platform and on developed and East Asian economies Qin et al. (2024) , Luo et al. (2025) .	Frames the model across five short-form video platforms and locates validation in an emerging-market urban cluster.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSITIONS

The proposed framework is shown in [Figure 1](#). The seven factors of technology acceptance are modelled as antecedents of consumers' engagement with short videos, and consumers' engagement is modelled as the proximal antecedent of consumers' buying intention as well as the mediator of the technology acceptance–intention path.

Figure 1

P3a–P3g: Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between each technology acceptance factor and consumer buying intention.

Context: YouTube Shorts, Instagram Reels, Facebook Reels, Facebook Videos, and Snapchat

Figure 1 Proposed Conceptual Framework

Note. P1a–P1g denote the Direct Effects of the Technology Acceptance Factors on Consumer Engagement; P2 Denotes the Engagement–Intention Relationship; P3a–P3g Denote the Mediated Effects; P4 Denotes the Moderating Effect of Digital Literacy.

CONSTRUCTS AND THEIR DEFINITIONS

Table 2 describes the constructs in terms of their operational definitions as they will be used in this context and indicates where the measurement items will be drawn from. Contextualisation does not involve just adding support to the platform, but rather involves substantive components such as performance expectancy, which means not the general usefulness of the platform, but the usefulness for increasing product awareness, evaluation, and decision quality.

Table 2

Table 2 Construct Definitions and Measurement Sources			
Role	Construct	Contextual definition	Source of items
Antecedent	Performance expectancy (PE)	Belief that short-form video platforms improve product awareness, evaluation, and decision quality.	Venkatesh et al. (2012); Brown et al. (2010)
Antecedent	Effort expectancy (EE)	Perceived ease of accessing, navigating, and comprehending short-form video content.	Venkatesh et al. (2012); Morris & Venkatesh (2010)
Antecedent	Social influence (SI)	Perception that peers, family, influencers, and online communities endorse using these platforms for purchase-related information.	Venkatesh et al. (2012); Kim & Malhotra (2005)
Antecedent	Hedonic motivation (HM)	Enjoyment, entertainment, and pleasure derived from consuming short-form video content.	Venkatesh et al. (2012); Brown et al. (2010)
Antecedent	Learning value (LV)	Perceived informational and instructional benefit of short videos in building product knowledge and reducing purchase uncertainty.	Al-Lozi (2015); Venkatesh et al. (2012)
Antecedent	Habit (HB)	Extent to which consumption of short-form video has become automatic through repetition.	Venkatesh et al. (2012); Limayem et al. (2007)
Antecedent	Facilitating conditions (FC)	Availability of devices, connectivity, and platform functionality supporting uninterrupted consumption.	Venkatesh et al. (2012); Thompson et al. (1991)
Mediator	Consumer engagement (CE)	Cognitive, emotional, and behavioural involvement with brand-related short-form video content.	Hollebeek et al. (2014)
Moderator	Digital literacy (DL)	Ability to access, evaluate, interpret, and act upon digital information, including promotional content.	Ng (2012); Van Deursen et al. (2014)
Outcome	Consumer buying intention (CBI)	Willingness and perceived likelihood of purchasing products encountered through short-form video content.	Fishbein & Ajzen (1975); Venkatesh et al. (2012)

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE FACTORS AND CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

Performance expectancy refers to the platform's usefulness for buying items. If customers believe that the short video provides a reliable demonstration, comparison, and evaluation that enhances the evaluation process, it is no longer just entertainment but also an information hub. This reframing increases attention and deliberate processing, the cognitive component of engagement. Performance expectancy has consistently been found to be the strongest predictor of consumer behavioural intention across contexts Dwivedi et al. (2020).

Proposition 1a. Performance expectancy is positively associated with consumer engagement with short-form videos.

Effort expectancy is related to the cost of thinking about the consumption. That cost is drastically lowered to practically nothing in the vertical format, single-thumb navigation, short duration, and algorithmic curation of short-form video, eliminating the search process often involved in traditional online information retrieval. With minimal effort, consumption is regular, and attention is devoted to the content rather than navigation, facilitating prolonged engagement.

Proposition 1b. Effort expectancy is positively associated with consumer engagement with short-form videos.

These platforms have a visible social architecture, and it is through that social structure that social influence occurs. The volume of comments, shares, creators following, and likes is continually displayed and serves as a normative cue for what content to pay attention to. This is similar to the subjective norm component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour [Ajzen \(1991\)](#) and is supported by research indicating that perceived source credibility and social validation influence consumer reactions on social media platforms [Djafarova et al. \(2017\)](#), [Onofrei et al. \(2022\)](#).

Proposition 1c. Social influence is positively associated with consumer engagement with short-form videos.

In this context, it is hypothesised that hedonic motivation is the predominant affective motive. In short-form video, engagement is driven by voluntary attention, and the video is usually watched for entertainment. Hedonic motivation is also well-established in consumer technology contexts [Tamilmani et al. \(2020\)](#), and evidence suggests that entertainment value drives consumers' responses to short videos [Luo et al. \(2025\)](#).

Proposition 1d. Hedonic motivation is positively associated with consumer engagement with short-form videos.

Learning value is the main addition to the predictor set in the framework. Tutorials, unboxing videos, comparison clips, and demonstrations fit the same kind of material into a time-efficient format that reduces the uncertainty consumers feel before buying something, at minimal time cost. The instruction being perceived as a "consumer benefit" ought to be a conscious choice, rather than happenstance, to return to the format. Consumers who see this as an instructional benefit should make a purposeful return to the format, not an accidental one. The construct is already used in acceptance studies of learning platforms [Al-Lozi \(2015\)](#) and has a different conceptual meaning from PE, as it relates to knowledge acquisition rather than decision efficiency.

Proposition 1e. Learning value is positively associated with consumer engagement with short-form videos.

The automaticity of consumption is captured by habit. When a short video feed is a habit when there's time to kill, exposure isn't intentional, and when the channel becomes a default place to discover products, it's a habit that can backfire. In continuance settings, the conscious intention to engage the desired behaviour has been found to limit the ability to predict the occurrence of the behaviour [Limayem et al. \(2007\)](#), suggesting that the direct effect of conscious intention on engagement is theoretically significant, not just additive.

Proposition 1f. Habit is positively associated with consumer engagement with short-form videos.

Facilitating conditions include the infrastructural prerequisites for consumption: device capabilities, data affordability, and connection stability. Short-form video is bandwidth-intensive, and its persuasive effect relies on continuous delivery, so weak facilitating conditions reduce exposure time before engagement. This construct is similar to perceived behavioural control in the Theory of Planned Behaviour and is likely to have a greater impact in less-connected environments in emerging markets.

Proposition 1g. Facilitating conditions are positively associated with consumer engagement with short-form videos.

CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT AND CONSUMER BUYING INTENTION

Engagement has been proposed as a proximal antecedent of buying intention. If a consumer watches a video, reacts emotionally to it, and takes action as a result of the video (such as liking, saving, or sharing) he or she has put mental and emotional effort into the content, and that effort will make the product more likely to be accessed and remembered at the time of decision. There are empirical evidences in social media contexts where engagement related mediators have been found to mediate the effect of social media interaction to purchase intention [Onofrei et al. \(2022\)](#), and in short video media contexts where internal state variables such as trust and perceived value variables have been found to mediate content effects to purchase intention [Luo et al. \(2025\)](#), [Qin et al. \(2024\)](#).

Proposition 2. Consumer engagement with short-form videos is positively associated with consumer buying intention.

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

The technology acceptance factors are hypothesised to indirectly affect the buying intention via engagement in the proposed framework. The rationale is that acceptance perception is an evaluation of the platform, while buying intention is an evaluation of a product; the two are linked only when a psychological state regarding certain content has developed as a result of the platform perception. Engagement is there. This specification adheres to the Stimulus – Organism – Response (SOR) logic outlined in Section 2.2 and is empirically plausible as supported by the mediated structures reported in similar studies [Luo et al. \(2025\)](#), [Onofrei et al. \(2022\)](#).

The propositions are expressed at the level of individual predictors because the mediation role need not be consistent across the seven predictors. The factors with fully platform-directed relevance are expected to be fully mediated by effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, and habit. Partial mediation may be possible for performance expectancy and learning value, because if a consumer views a short video as valuable information, they can develop purchase intentions based on it even when they engage with the video only moderately. This type of testing provides more information than testing an individual aggregate mediation claim.

Propositions 3a–3g. Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between each of performance expectancy (3a), effort expectancy (3b), social influence (3c), hedonic motivation (3d), learning value (3e), habit (3f), and facilitating conditions (3g), and consumer buying intention.

THE MODERATING ROLE OF DIGITAL LITERACY

The last proposition concerns the boundary condition. Two predictions can be made, predictions that are defensible and not some looming ambiguity to be elided.

The amplification account is that digital literacy reinforces the engagement–intention relationship. When consumers engage with content, they can access usable product information, check its credibility across different sources, and act on it with confidence, thereby increasing purchase intention [Van Deursen et al. \(2014\)](#). This perspective sees competence as a necessary means to making engagement meaningful, not just fun.

The contrary is the case in the attenuation account. Advertising literacy is part of digital literacy, the ability to identify persuasive intent and to value it accordingly [Ng \(2012\)](#). If a consumer is highly literate, he or she can enjoy and understand a sponsored Reel while knowing it is sponsored, which is an important factor in evaluating the relationship between engagement and intention. This perspective is protective, meaning that the persuasive power of short-form video would likely be strongest for those who are less digitally literate, a finding with direct implications for consumer protection.

The two accounts suggest opposite directions, so the proposition is worded in the direction of the more existing and well-supported empirical basis, amplification, and the alternative is pursued as a competing account to be evaluated in light of the data. If it were negative, it would not refute the system; it would only show the competitive edge of the short-form video as a competence-driven weakness.

Proposition 4. Digital literacy moderates the relationship between consumer engagement and consumer buying intention, such that the relationship is stronger at higher levels of digital literacy.

[Table 3](#) consolidates the twelve propositions and their theoretical anchoring.

Table 3

Table 3 Summary of Propositions		
Code	Proposition	Primary theoretical basis
P1a	Performance expectancy → consumer engagement (+)	UTAUT2
P1b	Effort expectancy → consumer engagement (+)	UTAUT2
P1c	Social influence → consumer engagement (+)	UTAUT2; TPB (subjective norms)
P1d	Hedonic motivation → consumer engagement (+)	UTAUT2
P1e	Learning value → consumer engagement (+)	Contextual extension of UTAUT2
P1f	Habit → consumer engagement (+)	UTAUT2
P1g	Facilitating conditions → consumer engagement (+)	UTAUT2; TPB (perceived control)
P2	Consumer engagement → consumer buying intention (+)	S–O–R; engagement theory
P3a–P3g	Consumer engagement mediates each acceptance factor → buying intention	S–O–R
P4	Digital literacy moderates engagement → buying intention	Digital literacy literature

A METHODOLOGICAL ROADMAP FOR EMPIRICAL VALIDATION

The status of a conceptual framework depends on its testability. This section outlines the ways in which the propositions can be assessed, to the extent that it is possible to do so in sufficient detail for the assessment to be carried out and the framework to be disconfirmed.

DESIGN AND SETTING

A cross-sectional survey design is appropriate because all constructs are perceptual, and the outcome is intention rather than actual behaviour. The Tricity region of northern India, which includes Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula, is an urban cluster with high smartphone penetration, a youth population, and high social media usage, and is proposed for validation. The setting is

considered to fill the gap in [Table 1](#) by offering meaningful differences in the variables of digital literacy and facilitating conditions, thereby allowing the propositions in the infrastructure to be testable, as well as for moderation.

SAMPLING

Ideally, probability sampling should be used, with respondents selected at random from a known sampling frame in each of the three cities, ensuring equal and independent chance for each element of the target population. A minimum of 385 respondents is calculated using the standard sample-size formula for a large population at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error; an achieved sample of 500 is proposed to allow for incomplete responses and to support the multi-group and interaction analyses needed by Proposition 4. If the three cities are divided by population percentages, then representativeness is maintained. The acceptance constructs imply that at least one of the five platforms was used actively within the last month, so eligibility should be limited to consumers who report such use.

INSTRUMENTATION

All constructs should be measured using multi-item reflective scales based on the validated scales in Table 2, rated on a 7-point Likert scale. Flexibility should be contextual, not lexical; it is about the specific platforms and about purchase-related use, not about technology per se. Content validity needs to be determined through expert review, followed by a pilot with 50-60 respondents to assess item clarity and preliminary reliability. The multidimensionality of engagement suggests holding onto the cognitive, emotional and behavioural components prematurely.

ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

Two stages of the covariance-based structural equation modelling approach are suggested. In the first stage, confirmatory factor analysis is used to establish the measurement model; convergent validity is assessed using standardised loadings and average variance extracted; internal consistency is assessed using composite reliability; and discriminant validity is assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio. It is important to use both absolute and incremental indices when evaluating model fit, not just one index. In the second stage, the structural model tests Propositions 1a to 1g and Proposition 2, mediation analysis for Propositions 3a to 3g was evaluated using bootstrapped indirect effects across 5,000 (or more) resamples, with bias correction, reporting the results at the level of each individual path. Proposition 4 would be tested via a latent interaction term, and multi-group analysis of digitally literate and less literate subsamples, and measurement invariance would be established prior to any group comparisons being interpreted.

VALIDITY SAFEGUARDS

Common method variance is a material threat because all data would be oriented towards a single source at a single point in time. Procedural remedies involve separating predictor and criterion items, ensuring respondent anonymity, and rotating scale anchors; statistical remedies involve Harman's single-factor test as a preliminary screen and the marker-variable or common-latent-factor approach as a more robust check [Podsakoff et al. \(2003\)](#). Comparing early with late respondents will indicate non-response bias. Reporting standards should mandate that the cases in which a measurement fails, as well as any instances of shortfall in discriminant validity, be reported, not eliminated as a result of post hoc deletion of items that appear to have been planned.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The framework has three theoretical contributions. The first one is the dependent variable being moved. The framework shifts the focus of UTAUT2 from adoption to commercial persuasion by replacing the concept of behavioural intention to use with consumer buying intention. This is not a mere cosmetic substitution, but rather changes the modality of the things to which the predictors are committed to explain, and thus opens the acceptance tradition to marketing questions that it has largely left to attitude-based models.

The second is mechanistic. The framework represents the mediating organismic state, the absence of which is found in direct-effect applications of acceptance models. This emphasises the acceptance model and works in harmony with the Stimulus – Organism – Response paradigm, the engagement literature [Hollebeek et al. \(2014\)](#), and places a series of correlational statements in a sequential fashion. Mediation propositions can also be presented on an individual predictor level, allowing for a full vs. partial mediation distinction.

The third is a specification of a boundary condition that has multiple competing directional predictions. Digital literacy is introduced as a moderator that can strengthen or weaken the engagement–intention relationship, resulting in a truly falsifiable framework that bridges consumer technology research with the consumer-protection literature. The inclusion of the context-specific

predictor (learning value) further substantiates the extendability of UTAUT2 beyond simply adding on to it when the technology being examined also has instructional affordances.

MANAGERIAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The framework suggests that marketers should consider a short-form video strategy based on engagement rather than reach. If the impression received affects buying intention only through engagement, then, whether the impression is received cognitively, emotionally or behaviourally, there should be no expected relationship between the impression received and buying intention. The framework also specifies where investments should be made: hedonic motivation and learning value are the two most manipulable predictors, and one implication for practice is that content that is both entertaining and truly instructional will be more effective than content that is just entertaining or just informative.

The focus on social influence and credibility also indicates that authenticity and audience fit are more important to content creators than the number of followers, aligning with previous research on influencer effectiveness showing that this is based on perceived credibility and product congruence, rather than the number of followers the influencer has [De et al. \(2017\)](#), [Lou and Yuan \(2019\)](#). From the perspective of platform designers, ensuring delivery reliability, even within constrained bandwidth, is a key factor in commercial success in emerging markets, rather than merely a technical issue.

For policymakers and consumer advocates, the digital literacy proposition has the most significant implications. In fact, if the attenuation account is true, it would seem that the persuasiveness of short-form video is strongest among those who can least judge it: this would give greater weight to the argument for enforceable disclosure of sponsored videos and to the argument for digital literacy programs, which are more explicit about commercial persuasion than in taking a purely technical approach.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The most significant one is that the framework has not been tested. Although it is based on a theoretical derivation, its propositions are conjectural and are only validated through the strategy outlined in Section 5. The framework itself has several other design constraints. The proposed cross-sectional design would provide only information on association, not causation, and, indeed, habituation is hard to model convincingly at a single point in time; a valuable extension of the study would be to model it. This is because the end variable is intention, not purchase, and the intention-behaviour gap is well established, and future research that connects the model to transaction data would significantly enhance it.

Also, the five platforms are categorized as a single entity, a simplification. Feed logic, creator economics, and commerce integration vary across platforms, and a multi-group comparison across platforms would test the model's invariance or platform-contingency. Likewise, product category is not included in the model, but the persuasive needs of low- and high-involvement purchases are likely to differ. Finally, validation within a single urban cluster of an emerging economy will limit generalisability, whereas replication in rural and cross-national contexts would provide external validity, and experimental designs that vary content characteristics would complement the survey by testing causality in the opposite direction.

CONCLUSION

While short-form video is one of the main ways consumers encounter and evaluate products, the theoretical toolbox to explain its commercial impact has been split between acceptance theories, which limit their explanations to use, and persuasion theories, which exclude the platform. This paper has developed an integrated conceptual framework that links the two. The framework was theoretically rooted in three complementary traditions: extending UTAUT2 with learning value, by adding the mediating variable of consumer engagement as a bridging mechanism between the acceptance perceptions and buying intention, and by making digital literacy a boundary condition with opposing directions of the relationship. It provides a structure that is theoretically anchored and explicitly oriented toward empirical falsification. It has twelve propositions and a methodological roadmap, which are meant to be tested, revised, and, if found wrong, rejected. The power of the framework will lie in the degree of engagement revealed through that testing, and in whether digital competence enables consumers to enjoy or resist short-form video.

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