

Discussions of How Short form Videos Influences Towards the Purchase Intention of Consumers

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Abstract

Short-form video, or now has called as ‘reels’, had became how people connect, express, making decisions towards the brands around them by just scrolling and swiping with the attention they were drawn to. This paper discusses a working model called Content, Emotion, and Action (CEA), which isn't meant to overcomplicate things, but rather help us think clearly about what makes short videos stick. Through close observation of five real campaigns from different industries-ranging from beauty to education-we try to understand how these quick, emotional stories affect how people feel, act, and even see themselves. Instead of focusing only on how many clicks a video gets, this study looks at the more subtle ways that emotion shapes brand memory, trust, and participation. What we find is simple but powerful: when short-form videos are done with care and understanding, they can build surprisingly deep human connections. This matters more than ever in a time when everyone is watching, reacting, and choosing in seconds. Which help us to understand the perspective and biases of how people think when they watching the reels regarding a brand.

Keywords

Short Video, Brand Trust, Emotion-driven Marketing, Human Connection, Content Identity, CEA Framework

1. Introduction of the Discussions

With this modern era that covered in all digital aspects, people’s attention spans are getting shorter and media formats evolve at lightning speed, brand communication is no longer about what you say - it’s about how they make people feel, imaging, and experiencing. Short-form videos may seem like just another content trend, but their growing dominance marks a deeper shift in how human perception and brand storytelling collide.

For younger generations, especially Gen Z, brand loyalty is not declared through surveys or slogans [1]. It is felt - within seconds. They scroll, watch, react, and either stay or swipe. A polished 30-second commercial created by an award-winning firm can no longer have the same emotional impact comparing to a 10-second video filmed on a smartphone by an average user. Why? Because it feels real. Because it mirrors their world. Because it doesn’t try to sell, but to resonate.

This paper introduces a straightforward yet insightful interpretive model: Content, Emotion, and Action (CEA). It is not built from academic abstraction alone, but from lived observation - watching how real people engage, relate, and respond to brand messages in the chaotic, emotional space of short-form video platforms. TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts - they are no longer mere apps. They are identity arenas.

The CEA model breaks down the real psychological journey that effective short-form videos create. It examines how storytelling is compressed into seconds, how emotions are designed to rise quickly and stick deeply, and how these feelings ultimately lead users to take action - be it sharing, buying, commenting, or creatively participating.

Through five cross-industry case studies - beauty, tech, lifestyle, fintech, and education - this paper unpacks the nuanced techniques and emotional architectures that make short-form videos succeed [2]. But beyond tactics, this is a study in behavior. What do people really react to? What creates that silent “yes” in the viewer's mind before they even realize it [3]?

We argue that short-form videos are not just about grabbing attention; they are about building shared emotional logic between brands and viewers. In this space, influence is no longer pushed - it’s invited. The most successful videos are not ads, they are emotional micro-mirrors. They reflect not only the brand’s essence but the audience’s hopes, frustrations, humor, and desire for belonging.

This is not a paper about formats. It is about emotional velocity. It is about understanding how brands shift from talking at people to speaking with them - or better yet, becoming part of how people speak about themselves.

2. Theoretical Background

In this chapter, we are going to learn on how to look beyond marketing mechanics and investigate how people think, feel, and construct meaning in today's digital environments in order to comprehend why short-form videos have such persuasive power over those traditional classic advertisements. Consumer decisions are primarily based on emotional responses rather than logical considerations, particularly in fast-paced digital environments as the short videos had strike their heart with their storytelling of their brands.

According to conventional theories of persuasion, such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model, audiences can process information in one of two ways: centrally, logically, or peripherally, emotionally. However, short term content doesn't allow us time to make a decision but instead, forces us onto the side lane [4]. We are struck by the music, the facial expressions, and the transitions before we even recognize that we are viewing an advertisement.

The decision-making process, therefore, becomes more about emotional permission than analytical judgment. But there's something deeper at play here. Russell Belk's idea of the "extended self" reminds us that we don't just buy things; we adopt them into our identity [5]. What we wear, share, post, and save - especially on social platforms - becomes a reflection of who we are or who we want to be seen as. As many people nowadays judge people with its covers. They determine a person by just looking at their outlook to assume of what's that individual was like. A short video that captures a moment of joy, pride, struggle, or transformation doesn't just tell a story - it gives the viewer a script for their own identity expression [6]. That's a powerful currency in a world saturated with content. Whereby pulling all the strings that connects their sensory towards their brands by using another way to attract them such as creating a story that could arouse their empathy to a certain aspect.

More recently, research in neuroaesthetics and cognitive psychology has emphasized how certain visual and auditory elements - such as warmth in lighting, intimacy in camera angle, or emotional peaks in music - activate mirror neurons and build subconscious emotional bonds. We don't just observe; we simulate. We feel as if we are in the video. And that sense of immersion creates memory, and memory creates brand stickiness.

Many earlier advertising frameworks treated consumers as passive receivers of information. But in the digital space - especially on platforms like TikTok or Reels - the audience becomes part of the performance as viewers could provide 'likes', 'comment' and 'share' to their public post or with friends. A viewer might duet, remix, comment, or create a reaction video. In doing so, they are not just engaging with content; they're co-creating the brand narrative. As it is another form that the brand gaining their popularity by emerging with the consumers' sentiment. This participatory dynamic collapses the distance between brand and user, and turns marketing into shared authorship.

Yet, despite this shift, much of the existing literature remains stuck in the language of impressions, reach, and clicks. What's often missing is a behavioral understanding of why certain videos feel magnetic - why they "stick" emotionally, and why people act on them. The CEA model aims to address that gap, not by introducing yet another marketing formula, but by giving structure to what emotionally intelligent content already does intuitively.

What we're dealing with isn't just content virality - it's emotional choreography [7]. And if brands want to stay relevant, they must learn not just how to tell stories, but how to invite the audience to feel something personal, and act on it in a way that aligns with their evolving digital identity.

3. The CEA Model: Content, Emotion, Action

To decode the psychological rhythm behind short-form video success, we propose a human-centered interpretive framework: the Content, Emotion, and Action model - or simply, CEA. This model perceives the viewer as an emotionally aware and socially active person navigating disjointed digital environments, as opposed to treating users as passive receivers or algorithmic endpoints but is also an active point in this model. The fundamental premise is clear but vital as people react to the feelings the content that evokes in them and how those feelings fit with who they are and who they have become, not only just the content itself.

Let's start with **Content**. In the world of short videos, content is not just the storyline or visuals but it is a form of architecture with the creation of attention. The pacing, angles, sound layers, visual metaphors, and even on-screen text all play a role in shaping perception. A productive short-form content grabs attention in under three seconds - not through shock, but through emotional relevance. Think of a close-up of a cracked phone screen and a voice saying, "This was my last message before I gave up." That's not marketing. That's micro-storytelling with emotional stakes.

Next is **Emotion**. This is the heartbeat of the model. People scroll until something makes them pause - and they pause when something speaks directly to an emotion they recognize: hope, fear, joy, frustration, pride, or longing. In short-form content, emotions are compressed and sharpened as there is no time for slowly build it up but should arrive early and stay consistent. But emotion doesn't exist in a vacuum. It gains meaning through relatability. A single mother watching a 15-second video about balancing work and parenting doesn't just see a story - she sees herself. That recognition activates empathy and begins to anchor brand trust.

Finally comes **Action**. This is where most traditional models stop at "conversion," but the digital ecosystem we live in is more nuanced. Action can take many forms: a like, a save, a comment, a share, a silent nod, or a purchase. In the CEA model, action is understood as a form of emotional validation. When users interact with a video, they are not

merely engaging with the brand - they are reaffirming a version of themselves. “This is so me,” “I’ve been there,” “Where can I get this?” - these are more than comments; they’re identity signals.

What makes the CEA model especially adaptive is its recognition of shared authorship. Short-form platforms are not one-way streets. The comment section often becomes an extension of the video itself - a kind of emotional chorus that reflects, amplifies, and occasionally even transforms the brand message as people nowadays likes to share their thoughts in the comment box by giving their perspective or honest opinions towards the brand [8]. When viewers add their own stories, they expand the brand narrative far beyond what the original creator intended.

Moreover, the sequence of Content-Emotion-Action is not rigid. Sometimes, emotion leads and content follows. Other times, action occurs even before full emotional processing - such as sharing a video out of instinct. But what remains constant is the triangular relationship: visual design (content), emotional depth (emotion), and behavioral response (action) form a loop of engagement, identity affirmation, and brand intimacy.

Rather than attempting to manipulate consumers, the CEA model offers a way for brands to show up honestly, provoke feeling ethically, and participate in real cultural dialogue. It’s a call for narrative sincerity in an age of visual noise - and an invitation for marketers to become emotional architects, not just storytellers.

4. Methodology

Understanding how short-form video advertising shapes human behavior requires more than numbers, clicks, and conversions. It demands we pause and listen - not just to metrics, but to meaning. In this study, rather than chasing mass data sets or simulating behavior in a lab, we chose to engage closely with five real-world branded videos from distinct industries. This was a deliberate decision: in an attention economy, context and nuance matter more than scale.

Our methodology is qualitative, interpretive, and emotionally attuned. We selected case studies across five domains - beauty, technology, lifestyle, finance, and education - not for statistical representativeness, but for their diversity of narrative form, emotional intent, and audience interaction. Every video was openly accessible and had produced a substantial amount of organic participation, which we saw as emotional footprints rather than just “likes.” In branded content, these videos served as micro-mirrors, reflecting the various ways of how individuals view themselves, their values, and their goals in their life.

The CEA lens-Content, Emotion, Action-was used to examine each film, but the analysis went beyond what was displayed. Camera angles, voice tones, soundtracks, tempo, on-screen text, and even silence were all carefully considered in order to ensure how to strike the heart of consumers. These are psychological entry points rather than merely decorative elements. Action was seen as the visible apex of much deeper identification processes, emotion as the energy that passes through it, and content as the structural framework of a story.

To supplement this, we analyzed the comments under each video as an extension of the storytelling environment. Instead of treating comments as noise, we treated them as emotional signals - evidence of resonance, reflection, resistance, or reinforcement. A comment like “This is literally my life right now” is not just feedback; it’s a moment of shared authorship. This is how brands cross the screen and become part of someone’s self-narrative.

Additionally, we considered cultural context. For instance, a fintech ad in Malaysia, where freelance work is increasingly normalized among Gen Z, carries different emotional implications or concepts than it might in the U.S. or Germany as it was totally different in cultures. Thus, part of our methodology involved reading each video not in isolation, but within its sociocultural environment - where emotional codes, humor, struggle, and hope differ across borders.

What this approach may lack in breadth, it gains in depth. It privileges emotional texture over quantification, and identity alignment over statistical generalization. It is not designed to predict behavior in all settings, but to uncover the human logic that makes certain short-form content feel unforgettable.

This methodology is shaped by a simple belief: marketing, at its best, is not manipulation - it is meaning-making. And in an era where even a 15-second clip can move millions [9], the question is not “How do we go viral?” but “Why did this touch people the way it did?”

5. Cross-Sector Case Insights

To truly understand how brands are succeeding - or failing - in short-form video advertising, it is necessary to go beyond theory and enter the lived digital space where consumers interact, comment, resonate, and sometimes reject. In this section, I reflect on five campaigns that stood out across sectors: beauty, technology, lifestyle, finance, and education. Each of these cases offers a different emotional language, a different user expectation, and yet, surprisingly, they all operate within the same fundamental logic - the interplay of content, emotion, and action.

In the beauty sector, the Fenty Beauty transformation video was particularly revealing. A real user applies makeup, transforming not only her appearance but also, more subtly, her self-perception in just only 20 seconds. The transitions are rhythmic and satisfying, synced with upbeat audio, while her smile at the end speaks more than any slogan could. But what really mattered was not the polish - it was the authenticity. The video felt raw, unforced, and unfiltered, which led to hundreds of thousands of comments like “This is literally me” or “I need this confidence.” Fenty wasn’t just

selling makeup. They were giving viewers emotional permission to feel beautiful on their own terms. That emotional permission is powerful currency.

In the realm of technology, OPPO's night vlog campaign took a more cinematic path. The video showcased a creator walking through neon-lit streets at night, capturing moments with steady camera movements and reflective narration. It wasn't about showing a phone's specs but showing what the phone *felt* like to use. Emotionally, it evoked curiosity, nostalgia, and even a sense of gentle melancholy from an individual or lit up their inner memories of their past of what they had experienced. What surprised us was how many users stitched their own night walks after watching the advertisement. It sparked a trend not by asking for one, but by offering a feeling people wanted to recreate. This is where brand storytelling becomes participatory - when viewers take ownership of the mood and continue it in their own lives.

Moving into lifestyle, one fitness brand's morning jogging video stood out by doing less. It opened with slow-motion clips of sunlight filtering through trees, a runner tying their shoelaces, and soft instrumental music, giving a vibe of calming yet relax life. A calm voiceover whispered things like "Some days, it's not about running fast... it's about moving forward." It didn't try to hype. It tried to heal. And that's what made it special. In the comments, people confessed struggles with anxiety, with motivation, with showing up. The video gave them a moment of peace - and a reason to keep going. This kind of gentle emotional content may not drive instant conversions, but it cultivates long-term brand trust. The result? Users began forming jogging communities using the brand's hashtag, not because they were told to - but because they felt seen.

Finance may seem like an unlikely sector for emotional resonance, but the fintech ad we studied proved otherwise. It followed a freelancer through a week of working, sending invoices, checking her bank balance, and setting aside money for taxes - all shown through fast-forwarded time-lapse. But the emotional beat came when she paused at her desk, took a breath, and smiled after successfully budgeting her month. That tiny moment of relief was deeply relatable. The brand positioned itself as a quiet enabler of stability in a chaotic world but not just merely a tool. Unsurprisingly, the comment section was filled with freelancers by tagging their own friends, asking for links, and even sharing their own financial routines. It wasn't just an app - it was a reassurance.

Finally, the education sector offered a different kind of narrative arc. The video from an online course provider featured snippets of students before and after completing the course - from working long shifts in food service to being accepted into tech internships. But what really carried the emotional weight was their own voices, saying things like "I never thought I could..." or "My mom cried when I told her I got in." The edits were raw and quick, but the transitions were emotionally loaded. Hope, ambition, pride - these emotions don't just sell a course. They sell a future. And in the comment section, other users began sharing their own goals, their setbacks, and their desire to be next. This wasn't marketing. It was community-building through aspiration.

Across all five sectors, a pattern emerges: the best short-form videos do not tell people what to buy. They show people who they could become. Whether it's a confident version of themselves, a more creative self, a more stable self, or a more empowered one - these videos tap into something profoundly human. They connect with not just what we want, but who we are trying to be.

And that, ultimately, is the power of the CEA model in action. When the content resonates, the emotion flows naturally. And when the emotion is real, the action follows - not as reaction, but as reflection.

6. Strategic Implications for Brands

If we accept that the future of branding lies not in controlling narratives, but in releasing them - like seeds into the hands of the audience - then short-form video is no longer a tool. It is a medium of identity exchange. In this evolving landscape, where viewers are not passive recipients but emotionally reactive collaborators, brand strategy must evolve from message crafting to emotion engineering.

From the case studies explored earlier, several truths begin to take shape. First, emotions are no longer optional; they are the primary currency of engagement. Audiences are more likely to forget what your product does than how your content made them feel [10]. And because of the overwhelming saturation of digital noise, what cuts through is not cleverness, but clarity - of feeling, of identity, of intent.

Brands must begin with one essential question, not only what do we want to say or what do we want to promo, should be what do we want our audience to *feel* in the first three seconds. That single decision will determine the tone, pacing, color palette, audio design, and even captioning style. Emotion-first content design is not about manipulating users, that should be about the aligning with their emotional readiness. Some days, your audience wants to be motivated. Some days, they need to laugh. And some days, they just need to feel like someone sees them. The brands that win are those that can read the emotional weather of their audience - and adjust their content climate accordingly.

But emotion alone is not enough. What follows it must be a sense of personal truth. This is where narrative compression becomes critical. In long-form storytelling, you have time to build. But in a 15-second vertical frame, every frame *is* the story. Each second must carry symbolic meaning - a movement, a glance, a word, a shift in lighting. When done well, this is not just efficient storytelling. It is poetic resonance.

Consider how users interact with short-form content: they pause at the first moment of visual friction, they replay something that touches a nerve, they comment when a memory is triggered. These micro-reactions are not accidental. They are part of a cognitive-emotional process. Brands must study these behaviors not as metrics, but as emotional footprints. When we talk about “engagement,” we must move beyond likes and views. The more meaningful unit is *echo* - did the content stay in someone’s mind long after the video ended?

Another critical implication lies in how we end our stories. Too many brands focus on the “call-to-action” in a mechanical way - “Click now,” “Buy here,” “Tag a friend.” But the most effective prompts are invitations, not instructions. A better closing might be: “Who would you watch the sunrise with?” or “Does this remind you of a version of yourself you miss?” These aren’t conversion tactics - they’re emotional bridges. And users don’t cross bridges unless they feel safe, seen, and stirred.

One overlooked but that is really profoundly powerful strategy is identity mirroring. When a viewer sees someone who looks like them, who speaks like them, who struggles like them, or who dreams like them in your content of video, then something will be unlocked. There’s a moment of identification that is far more persuasive than any direct pitch. This is especially true across diverse markets. For example, even a 40 years old professional may not be moved by the same thing that appeals to a 20 year old University student. In addition to language and currency, brands also need to localize emotional tone. Emotional faithfulness is more important than translation when it comes to cultural nuance as each of it are unique.

Furthermore, comment sections are no longer just feedback zones. They are emotional arenas. What users write in response to your video - or what they don’t - reveals what they *felt* but didn’t say aloud. Smart brands don’t just read comments. They curate them, respond authentically, and sometimes even build future content *from* them by exchanging their thoughts towards these videos itself. This kind of dialogic branding transforms a one-way ad into a living narrative that grows, mutates, and deepens through community interaction that leads to another platform.

Ultimately, brand strategy in the short-form video era is not about visibility. It’s about memorability. Being seen is easy - algorithms can amplify anything. But being remembered? That takes emotional truth, aesthetic clarity, and narrative integrity. It requires brands to be brave enough to stop shouting and start listening - and to speak not just to markets, but to the human condition.

As short-form content continues to dominate the attention economy, the challenge for brands is not how to be viral. It is how to be *valuable* in moments that are barely longer than a breath - but that might, just might, change how someone sees themselves.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study attempts to offer a structured and insightful lens to understand how short-form video advertising influences consumer emotion and behavior, it would be intellectually dishonest to suggest that the framework is exhaustive. Any effort to decode human emotional response, especially in a fast-changing digital environment, inevitably comes with limitations.

To begin with this methodology, it was employed in this paper is qualitative in nature. The strength of such an approach lies in depth rather than breadth-it allows us to closely examine how storytelling and emotion operate in specific contexts, but it cannot claim universal applicability as everything are moving fast. Our analysis focused on five representative brand campaigns from different industries as we recognize that the world of short-form video are massive, fast and culturally layered. What resonates today may not resonate tomorrow, and what moves viewers in one country may fall flat in another.

Secondly, while the campaigns reached a global stage, emotional resonance is always shaped by cultural context. A video that evokes empathy in one market might evoke confusion or disinterest in another. Concepts like “authenticity,” “success,” or “beauty” are not universally defined but they are embedded in social and cultural systems by showing different elements from it. Future research should test the CEA model across multiple cultural settings and explore the potential for modifications based on cultural psychology or socio-linguistic differences.

Another key limitation is the absence of quantitative or longitudinal data. Although we observed strong engagement metrics-likes, shares, comments-these data points reveal only surface-level behavior as people would not provide their deepest thoughts to a stranger too. They cannot answer deeper questions: Do emotionally engaging videos actually result in sustained brand loyalty? Do they lead to repeat purchases? Or are they simply bursts of short-term attention? To answer such questions, future studies should employ mixed methods, including behavioral tracking and time-based retention analysis throughout global.

Moreover, while the CEA model outlines a linear path from content to emotion to action, real-life behavior is rarely so straightforward as the video not just only promoting their brands but also using another way to gain the curiosity of their consumers at beginning. On platforms like TikTok or Instagram, users may act first-perhaps influenced by a peer’s share-before emotionally processing the video’s meaning. Some may return to the video days later and experience a delayed emotional response. Others may interact out of habit or impulse. Future refinements of the model should account for non-linear, cyclical, or fragmented engagement pathways.

An additional layer of complexity lies in the algorithmic mediation of content. In today's attention economy, what users see is not solely a function of interest but a result of platform algorithms predicting and feeding emotional needs. The algorithmic manipulation of content adds another level of intricacy. In the attention economy of today, platform algorithms anticipate and satisfy users' emotional needs in addition to their interests. This highlights the moral question: Are companies using predictive emotional engineering or are they actually establishing a connection with consumers? Should emotional advertising be more closely monitored when it targets vulnerable groups, particularly younger users? These issues are central to responsible brand storytelling; they are not incidental.

The rising presence of AI in content creation further complicates the emotional terrain. As videos can now be written, voiced, and edited by machines, we must consider few aspects such as: Do viewers feel the same emotional connection to AI-generated narratives? Or does emotional depth require the trace of human labor, imperfection, and intention? Future research should explore how audience perception shifts when the line between human and machine authorship becomes blurred.

Based on the above reflections, we propose the following directions for further research:

- Employ experimental A/B testing to measure how different emotional triggers affect user behavior across demographic groups.
- Compare performance of identical videos across platforms to study how platform culture shapes emotional interpretation.
- Conduct cross-cultural studies to explore the adaptability and limits of the CEA model beyond Western-centric narratives.
- Investigate audience responses to AI-generated short videos, examining emotional authenticity and trust dynamics.
- Develop ethical frameworks to guide emotionally charged advertising, especially when targeting minors or at-risk users.

Ultimately, this study offers a starting point-not a finish line. The CEA model should not be seen as a fixed prescription but as a living framework, evolving alongside shifts in media, technology, and human attention in order to improve the model. As platforms grow smarter and users more discerning, brands must learn not only how to be heard, but how to listen. It is very important as different perspectives could provide different viewpoints when comes to a decision making and a strategic planning too. The most effective emotional strategies are not just those that make people feel something-but those that respect what they already feel.

8. Conclusion

This paper began with a simple observation: people don't remember ads-they remember how something made them feel. Especially in the fast, messy, emotional world of short-form video, the real competition isn't just about grabbing attention. It's about earning resonance. Through this study, we offered the Content, Emotion, and Action (CEA) model not as a universal rulebook, but as a lens-a way to observe and understand how these short videos do more than entertain. They shape perception, reinforce identity, and in many cases, quietly guide consumer behavior. Not with loud persuasion, but with a sense of shared truth.

What we found across the five case studies wasn't magic or manipulation-it was alignment. When the content looked like something the viewer might've lived through, when the emotion felt honest, when the call-to-action felt natural instead of forced-that's when the audience responded as those aspects has evokes in them. Not because they were brought to, but because they saw themselves inside the story based on the past experiences they had gone through. Modern branding lives not just only logos and taglines anymore, but in moments of emotional clarity. It is not just about buying a brand, but it is about how the brand makes us feel about ourselves.

Looking forward, I think the biggest mistake marketers could make is to over-optimize. Algorithms are powerful, but people are more complex. Emotional strategy can't be faked for long. What works today may not work tomorrow-not because the format changed, but because audiences evolved and the changing of technologies.

Last but not least, We conclude by stating that "Remember the human on the other side of the screen in the competition to produce viral content." The late-night scroller who is weary, inquisitive, and optimistic. Not just that individual is reached by the greatest short-form advertisements. They remind them of something they already knew deep down. And a brand no longer needs to yell once it accomplishes it.

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