

# Which Matters More? A Study on the Impact of Short Video Production Modes on Users' Purchase Intention

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**Abstract:** *With the continuous development of the Internet, the continuous improvement of technical level, the way of information dissemination has also developed from traditional newspapers, magazines and other paper media to Internet-based mobile media, and the interactivity is getting stronger and stronger, short video marketing is born in such an environment. Short video is an information sharing platform, and its content production mode has also developed from a social user production model to a refined professional production model. Some brands use short videos for marketing, thereby influencing users' purchase intentions. However, with the increasing number of short videos, the continuous expansion of user groups, and the gradual increase in the requirements for short videos, short video marketing wants to further develop and grow, it is necessary to judge the time and size up the situation, according to the user group to make quality content that meets most groups, in order to promote the development of the brand. Based on the SOR model, this study uses the questionnaire survey method and uses flow experience as the mediating variable to study the influence of short video production content type on users' purchase intention. This paper adopts the experimental design between the professional production content mode and the user production content mode to discuss how the short video production content mode affects users' purchase intention. The results show that users' purchase intentions for short videos generated by different short video production content models are significantly different, and the professional production content model has a greater impact on users' purchase intentions than that of user production content models. According to the experimental results, it is suggested that enterprises and brands can produce more short video content in professional mode for product promotion, which can increase users' willingness to buy.*

**Keywords:** Short video content production mode; Flow experience; Purchase intention.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the continuous development of modern science and technology, the popularity of smartphones has increased, providing conditions for the growth of new media short video platforms. In recent years, short videos have risen rapidly and become one of the main ways for users to obtain information and entertain themselves. However, research on the impact of short video production modes on users' purchase intention remains relatively scarce. Current studies mainly focus on the role of short videos in communication, marketing, and brand building, while neglecting the influence of short video production modes on users' purchasing behavior. Therefore, this study aims to explore the impact of short video production modes on users' purchase intention, in order to provide empirical support for the formulation of relevant marketing strategies, and offer reference for short video platforms and advertisers, thereby promoting the development of the industry.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 The Impact of Short Video Production Modes on Users' Purchase Intention

Short videos refer to video content produced via mobile devices, disseminated through the Internet, and featuring strong social attributes (Wang Qian et al., 2021). Their content production modes are mainly divided into two categories: User-Generated Content (UGC) and Professional-Generated Content (PGC). UGC is independently created by non-professional users, characterized by strong creativity and sociality, with an emphasis on user participation and interaction (Johan O. Stman, 2012; Zhang Yong et al., 2018). PGC is produced by professional teams, focusing on refined and professional processing of content, with the characteristics of systematic information and high credibility (Jiang Keyu, 2022; Zhang Lin, 2021). Purchase intention refers to the subjective probability of consumers engaging in purchasing behavior for a product, which is influenced by factors such as information quality and emotional experience (Ajzen, 1991; Hellier et al., 2003). In short video marketing, users' perception of content indirectly affects their purchase intention through psychological mechanisms (Zhang Haixia

et al., 2022; Liu Li et al., 2019).

PGC, produced by professional teams, features more systematic content and more reliable information, making it easier to gain users' trust; while UGC, despite its strong sociality, has greater fluctuations in content quality. A study by Zhang Haixia et al. (2022) shows that professionally generated content has a more significant positive impact on users' purchase intention. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Compared with UGC, PGC has a more significant positive impact on users' purchase intention.

## **2.1 The Impact of Short Video Production Modes on Flow Experience**

Flow experience, proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (1975), refers to a psychological state of pleasure, concentration, and loss of control when users are immersed in an activity. In online contexts, it can be divided into three core dimensions: pleasure (a sense of happiness during the activity), concentration (highly focused attention), and sense of control (judgment and mastery of information) (Koufari, 2002; Zhao Chengling et al., 2018). The content characteristics of short videos directly affect the intensity of users' flow experience (Zhang Wenchu et al., 2023; Liu Xiaoyun et al., 2022). The creativity and sociality of UGC are more likely to stimulate users' emotional resonance, bringing a stronger sense of pleasure (Ma Yuhui, 2017); while the professionalism and systematicness of PGC can enhance users' sense of control over information, and high-quality content is more likely to guide users to concentrate their attention (Jiang Keyu, 2022; Zhang Wenchu et al., 2023). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Compared with PGC, UGC is more likely to trigger users' sense of pleasure;

H3: Compared with UGC, PGC is more likely to trigger users' sense of control;

H4: Compared with UGC, PGC is more likely to trigger users' sense of concentration.

## **2.3 The Impact of Flow Experience on Purchase Intention**

The sense of pleasure in flow experience can enhance users' favorability towards content, the sense of concentration can deepen their understanding of product information, and the sense of control can improve their trust in information—all of which positively promote purchase intention (Zheng Xing, 2019; Zhao Subo et al., 2022). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: The sense of pleasure, control, and concentration in flow experience all positively affect users' purchase intention.

## **2.4 The Mediating Role of Flow Experience**

The SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) theory proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) suggests that external stimuli (S) affect behavioral responses (R) through individual psychological reactions (O). In this paper, the short video production mode serves as the "stimulus (S)", flow experience as the "organism response (O)", and purchase intention as the "behavioral response (R)", forming a logical framework of "production mode → flow experience → purchase intention" (Wu Ruijuan et al., 2014; Zhang Yuqi, 2020).

Based on the SOR theory, the short video production mode (stimulus) indirectly affects purchase intention (behavioral response) through flow experience (organism response). Liu Benqi (2023) verified the mediating effect of flow experience in marketing scenarios. This paper speculates that the two production modes affect purchase intention through different dimensions of flow experience. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Flow experience plays a mediating role between short video production modes and users' purchase intention, i.e., PGC indirectly affects purchase intention by enhancing the sense of control and concentration, while UGC does so by enhancing the sense of pleasure.

## **3. EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN AND RESULTS**

The purpose of the experiment is to examine whether the main effect holds, i.e., whether the short video production mode (Professional-Generated Content [PGC] vs. User-Generated Content [UGC]) affects consumers' purchase

intention. We manipulated the production mode of the short videos watched by subjects (PGC group and UGC group) and measured purchase intention and flow experience (pleasure, concentration, sense of control) in each group. We predicted that the PGC mode would improve users' purchase intention by enhancing flow experience (especially concentration and sense of control), while the UGC mode would more easily trigger pleasure but have an overall weaker impact on purchase intention than PGC.

First, a pre-test was conducted, where subjects were divided into two groups (PGC group and UGC group) and asked to rate the production mode characteristics of the videos (i.e., whether they thought the videos were produced by professional teams). The results showed that subjects in the PGC group significantly perceived the professionalism of the videos ( $M_{PGC}=4.82$  vs.  $M_{UGC}=3.26$ ;  $t=4.21$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

Experiment 1 officially started with recruiting subjects. A total of 205 subjects were recruited through the Wenjuanxing platform. After excluding 3 invalid questionnaires, 202 valid samples were retained (98 males and 104 females; age  $M=23.56$ ,  $SD=3.21$ ). Subjects were randomly divided into two groups (PGC group and UGC group). The two groups watched short videos produced by professional teams (PGC group) and short videos independently created by users (UGC group, respectively). We measured:

Purchase intention ("How likely are you to purchase the product promoted in the video?" 1="Not at all likely" to 7="Very likely"; referring to Zhang Siyuan's scale);

Flow experience dimensions:

Pleasure ("Did you feel pleasure while watching the video?" 1="Not at all pleasant" to 7="Very pleasant"; based on Chan & Zhu, 2012);

Concentration ("Did you feel immersed while watching the video?" 1="Not at all immersed" to 7="Very immersed"; based on Koufaris, 2002);

Sense of control ("Were you able to obtain effective information while watching the video?" 1="Not at all able" to 7="Very able"; based on Patr et al., 2000).

The results showed:

Purchase intention in the PGC group was significantly higher than in the UGC group ( $M_{PGC}=4.12$  vs.  $M_{UGC}=3.77$ ;  $t=3.986$ ,  $p<.01$ ); Pleasure in the UGC group was significantly higher than in the PGC group ( $M_{UGC}=3.79$  vs.  $M_{PGC}=3.29$ ;  $t=4.376$ ,  $p<.01$ ); Sense of control in the PGC group was significantly higher than in the UGC group ( $M_{PGC}=3.80$  vs.  $M_{UGC}=3.49$ ;  $t=2.639$ ,  $p<.01$ ); Concentration in the PGC group was significantly higher than in the UGC group ( $M_{PGC}=4.17$  vs.  $M_{UGC}=3.80$ ;  $t=3.454$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

The mediating effect test showed that the indirect effect of flow experience was 0.15, and the confidence interval of the bootstrap test [LLCI=0.0027, ULCI=0.1321] did not contain zero, indicating that flow experience plays a mediating role between short video production modes and purchase intention. The experiment verified the main effect and mediating effect: the PGC mode affects users' purchase intention by enhancing concentration and sense of control, while the UGC mode does so by enhancing pleasure, with the overall impact of PGC being stronger.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This paper focuses on the mechanism by which short video production modes affect users' purchase intention, systematically explores the differential impacts of two modes—Professional-Generated Content (PGC) and User-Generated Content (UGC)—through empirical research, and verifies the mediating role of flow experience. The study found that: compared with UGC, PGC has a more significant positive impact on users' purchase intention; the two production modes have differentiated impacts on the dimensions of flow experience—UGC is more likely to trigger users' sense of pleasure, while PGC is more effective in enhancing users' sense of control and concentration; flow experience (pleasure, control, concentration) plays a partial mediating role between short video production modes and purchase intention, i.e., PGC indirectly affects users' purchase intention by enhancing the sense of control and concentration, while UGC does so by enhancing the sense of pleasure.

Through a combination of literature review and empirical research, this study reveals the core path through which

short video production modes affect purchase intention: on the one hand, it clarifies the differences in marketing effects between different production modes; on the other hand, it is the key role of flow experience as a mediating variable, providing a theoretical basis for understanding the connection between short video content and consumer behavior.

Despite the valuable exploration in the research on the relationship between short video production modes and purchase intention, there are certain limitations. Future studies can be further expanded in the following aspects:

First, the representativeness of the sample needs to be improved. The sample of this study is mainly concentrated in young groups (18-24 years old accounting for 46.53%), with a majority having a bachelor's degree (60.4%), which may limit the generalizability of the conclusions. Future research should expand the sample range to include groups with different ages, educational backgrounds, regions, and cultural backgrounds, improve sample diversity, and enhance the wide applicability of research findings.

Second, the ecological validity of the experimental scenario needs further optimization. This experiment collected data through online questionnaires and grouped video viewing, which, although able to control variables, cannot fully simulate the complex decision-making environment of users in real consumption scenarios (such as comparison of content across multiple platforms, real-time social interaction, etc.). Future studies can design experiments closer to actual consumption situations, such as combining real short video platform data or simulating shopping scenarios, to enhance the practical reference value of the results.

Third, research on long-term effects is insufficient. This study mainly focuses on the immediate impact of short video production modes on purchase intention, without involving long-term effect tracking (such as repeat purchase intention, brand loyalty, etc.). Future studies can adopt a longitudinal research design, comprehensively evaluate the sustained impact of different production modes by tracking user behavior data over a long period, and provide a more comprehensive basis for the formulation of long-term brand marketing strategies.

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