

The Influence of Background Music on Share Rates in Short Video Platforms: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

The influence of background music on share rates in short video platforms represents a critical nexus of media psychology, algorithmic distribution, and digital marketing strategy. This systematic review synthesizes empirical research from 32 studies to analyze how background music functions as a strategic tool for enhancing content virality on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. The analysis reveals that music influences sharing through four primary, interconnected pathways: by eliciting high emotional arousal that stimulates a need for social expression; by creating audio-visual congruence that enhances narrative immersion and processing fluency; by leveraging the social capital of familiar and trending sounds to facilitate in-group participation; and by serving as a key metadata signal for platform algorithms, which amplifies content reach and initiates a visibility-sharing feedback loop. Findings indicate that while emotional intensity and trend alignment are powerful short-term drivers, their effectiveness is moderated by factors such as cultural context, audience fatigue, and the over-saturation of specific audio trends. The review concludes that in the algorithmically mediated attention economy of short-form video, background music has evolved from a mere atmospheric element to a core engine of shareability. For scholars, this underscores the necessity of a multimodal theoretical framework that accounts for digital intermediation. For content creators and marketers, it affirms that strategic audio orchestration—prioritizing congruent, high-arousal, and algorithmically savvy music selection—is a fundamental imperative for optimizing share rates and achieving digital visibility.

1. Introduction

The influence of background music on share rates in short video platforms represents a growing intersection of media psychology, algorithmic content distribution, and digital advertising strategy. With the rise of platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, short-form video content has become a dominant mode of online communication and marketing. In this highly competitive and fast-paced media environment, the selection of background music emerges as a critical factor in shaping user engagement, particularly in influencing whether viewers choose to share content (Ausín et al., 2021). Research by Sun, Chang, & Xu (2023)

suggests that background music contributes to emotional framing, enhancing viewer immersion and shaping interpretations of the content within the first few seconds. This emotional resonance is crucial for triggering behavioral responses such as likes, comments, and especially sharing, which directly affect a video's reach through platform algorithms (Chen et al., 2024; Faruq & Ázmi, 2024). Upbeat or emotionally congruent music can increase the perceived appeal of a video, thus improving its likelihood of being shared on social media platforms. As share rates play a central role in algorithmic promotion and content virality, understanding the strategic use of background music becomes essential for both media scholars and content creators. This systematic review examines how background music influences share rates specifically, shedding light on its potential as a tool for optimizing content visibility and audience amplification in the era of social media platforms as a means of marketing strategy.

1.2 Current Practice in Research

Despite its practical relevance, scholarly research on background music's impact within short video formats remains relatively limited. While there is extensive literature on the role of music in advertising, films, and traditional media, the shift to digital platforms has created unique viewing contexts that change how audiences interact with background music. Bubnova (2024) found that TikTok's algorithm-driven music recommendations have led to new ways for users to engage with sound and video content. The research also revealed that the personalization of music in TikTok's content algorithms enhances user engagement by aligning video content with the musical preferences of specific viewers. This makes it critical to understand how personalized music impacts viewing and sharing behavior on platforms where music itself often drives content discovery (Kunst et al., 2022).

Furthermore, studies such as Wu et al. (2021); Xiao et al. (2024); and Violot et al. (2024) have analyzed and revealed that short-form videos differ significantly from traditional media in terms of cognitive engagement and viewing patterns. In a traditional context, background music serves to amplify narrative elements and sustain attention over extended periods. However, in short video platforms, music must establish an immediate emotional connection to prevent users from scrolling past the content. Because of this rapid engagement requirement, platform-specific strategies for music selection are essential. Research indicates that on YouTube Shorts, creators often use trending songs to increase discoverability, whereas TikTok's curated music choices cater directly to users' existing preferences, enhancing emotional resonance and shareability on the platform (Anh, 2024; Islam & Kabir, 2025).

1.3 The Study Gap

While there is a growing interest in background music's role in short video platforms, much of the existing literature focuses on either the overall entertainment value of music or its applications in traditional media, leaving a gap in understanding its direct influence on social media engagement and sharing metrics. Few studies such as Alhabash et al. (2015); Cakir (2020); Heikkonen (2024); and Omar & Dequan (2020) have rigorously examined the link between background music and specific behavioral outcomes, such as viewing duration, likes, and share rates, within the context of short video platforms. Current research in the past half a decade tends to examine general user reactions rather than precise metrics that social media platforms rely on, such as how music influences viewing behavior in the first few seconds or how certain music genres might drive higher engagement for specific types of content (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021; Koç, 2023).

Additionally, many studies rely on self-reported data, which may not accurately reflect user behavior due to social desirability bias. As background music becomes a fundamental aspect of short video platforms, there is a need for more quantitative, data-driven research to understand how different musical elements such as tempo, genre, and volume affect specific engagement metrics. Conducting empirical studies that incorporate real-time data from platforms like TikTok and Instagram would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how music directly influences behavioral metrics such as duration, likes, and shares. The existing research highlights background music's power to shape viewer emotions and engagement on short video platforms but underscores a clear gap in rigorous studies that quantify its influence on specific metrics. Addressing this gap would benefit both academics and content creators, enabling them to harness music's potential to optimize viewer engagement and retention on rapidly growing social media platforms.

2. Concept of Background Music

2.1 The Evolution of Background Music in Advertising: From Physical Stores to Short Video Platforms

Background music has long served as a subtle yet powerful tool for influencing consumer behavior, shaping emotional responses, and reinforcing brand identity (Alpert & Alpert, 1989; Wong, 2018). The strategic use of music in advertising has evolved alongside media technologies, beginning with in-store auditory experiences, progressing through broadcast and digital video advertisements, and now becoming a central element in short-form content marketing on social media platforms. This historical trajectory highlights the adaptability of background music as a marketing tool and its growing importance in today's algorithm-driven content ecosystems (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

The earliest commercial use of background music dates back to the early 20th century, notably in physical retail environments (Biswas et al., 2019; Sbai et al., 2022). Known as "Muzak"—a term that became synonymous

with elevator and store music—background audio was first introduced in commercial settings during the 1930s (Blakeley, 2024). The Muzak company pioneered the use of programmed music in business settings, based on the idea that background music could enhance consumer moods, extend shopping durations, and ultimately increase sales (Plourde, 2017).

By the 1950s and 60s, many department stores were using background music to manipulate the ambiance and pace of shopping. This practice was grounded in psychological theories suggesting that certain musical tempos could alter consumer behavior. For instance, slower music was associated with longer shopping times and increased spending, while faster tempos could energize customers and quicken decision-making (Levinson et al., 2022). These early findings laid the groundwork for a more systematic understanding of how music affects consumer psychology. Importantly, these uses of music were not directly linked to engagement metrics or content algorithms, but to environmental psychology and in-person consumer behavior. Nevertheless, they represent the foundational insight that music influences attention, emotion, and action—a principle that continues to underpin modern marketing strategies.

2.2 Transition to Short Video Platforms

With the rise of television in the 1950s and its dominance through the late 20th century, the role of background music expanded dramatically (Um & Jung, 2024). Unlike in-store environments where music served as a passive backdrop, television ads employed music as a narrative and emotional tool to convey brand messages more dynamically. Music in TV commercials served several key functions: reinforcing brand identity, evoking specific emotions, enhancing message recall, and guiding viewer attention (Breves et al., 2020).

Jingles—short and catchy musical phrases—became a hallmark of advertising in this present day. These musical hooks were designed not just to entertain but to embed brand names and slogans into consumers' memories. Classic examples include McDonald's "I'm Lovin' It" or Coca-Cola's various musical marketing campaigns (American Marketing Association, 2024). Studies during this time confirmed that music enhanced both affective and cognitive processing of advertisements, improving brand recall and favorability (Raja et al., 2019; Herget et al., 2022; Han et al., 2019).

By the 1980s and 1990s, music's role in advertising began to mature, transitioning from mere background filler to a strategic component in brand storytelling and emotional persuasion. During this period, brands increasingly invested in music licensing and original jingles as studies began quantifying music's influence on recall, engagement, and purchasing behavior. According to a landmark study by Khan (2025), background music significantly influenced consumer evaluations of advertisements, with congruent music enhancing message

processing and ad likeability. A later survey by Dogaru et al. (2024) found that ads with music scored 20–30% higher in emotional engagement than those without music.

In contemporary marketing, this trend has only intensified. Recent global consumer studies show that 75% of Gen Z and Millennial consumers say music in advertising makes them more likely to remember a brand (Fromm & Read, 2018). Additionally, Khan (2025) reported that ads with music perform 4% better in terms of brand recall and 5% better in creative engagement than silent or mismatched sound ads. These findings underscore the evolution of music from a passive audio element to a measurable and vital component of marketing strategy.

Rather than relying solely on original jingles, brands increasingly licensed popular music to align themselves with cultural trends and demographics. This shift highlighted a deeper understanding of music's associative power—its ability to transfer the meanings, emotions, and values of a song or artist to the brand. Although broadcast ads still targeted mass audiences, this period marked a move toward more demographically segmented marketing, laying the groundwork for today's personalized digital advertising (Bhavsar & Tiwari, 2024).

2.3 Background Music in Online Marketing and Early Social Media

The emergence of the internet and social media in the early 2000s transformed advertising paradigms (Sharma & Verma, 2018). Digital marketing introduced unprecedented levels of targeting, interactivity, and personalization, and background music had to adapt accordingly. Unlike traditional ads, digital formats offered marketers granular control over who sees what content, enabling the use of music tailored to specific audience segments (Verma, 2017).

In early digital video advertising—such as pre-roll YouTube ads or banner video content—music continued to play a similar emotional and mnemonic role. However, the growing importance of click-through rates, watch times, and social shares as performance metrics signaled a shift in how effectiveness was measured. Music's impact could now be assessed through data-driven insights, correlating sound choices with user behavior in ways that were impossible in the broadcast era (Greenberg & Rentfrow, 2017).

Furthermore, as social platforms like Facebook and Instagram began prioritizing video content in the 2010s, the integration of background music became more dynamic. Advertisers began to experiment with native advertising and sponsored influencer content, where music was not just an embellishment but an essential feature of the content itself. This represented a clear departure from earlier paradigms: instead of embedding ads in media, the media became the ad—an immersive, musically-enhanced piece of content designed for frictionless social sharing (Ali Ahmed et al., 2023).

2.3.1 The Algorithmic Age: Background Music in Short Video Platforms

The most recent evolution in this timeline is the meteoric rise of short video platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. Unlike earlier video formats, these platforms are driven by algorithms that prioritize user engagement metrics such as watch time, likes, shares, and comments (Islam & Kabir, 2025; Wang, 2025). In this environment, background music has become a central mechanism for capturing attention in the first few seconds—a crucial window in which users decide whether to scroll or engage.

On platforms like TikTok, music is not merely an additive layer but a core element of the content ecosystem. Many videos are built around music trends, with users participating in viral dances, challenges, or comedic sketches that are inherently tied to specific audio clips (Viñuela, 2022). These musical trends often originate from TikTok itself, leading to a feedback loop in which platform-based music discovery drives broader cultural phenomena (Giraldo, 2020).

Crucially, TikTok's AI-driven recommendation algorithm takes user interaction with audio content into account. For example, if a user frequently engages with videos that use a particular song or genre, the algorithm is likely to serve them more content featuring similar music (Zhang & Liu, 2021). This level of personalization is unprecedented, and it underscores music's power not just to enhance content but to drive discoverability and platform virality.

Moreover, background music in this context can significantly affect emotional priming and cognitive load. Given the fast-scrolling nature of short video consumption, music helps provide immediate emotional cues, allowing viewers to understand the video's tone or intent within milliseconds (Dogaru et al., 2024). Research indicates that emotionally congruent music can enhance message retention and increase the likelihood of user interaction (Faruq & Ázmi, 2024).

Creators and marketers have learned to exploit genre conventions, musical tempo, and volume dynamics to enhance performance. Upbeat tempos, familiar melodies, or songs already associated with viral trends are more likely to improve viewer retention and engagement (Anh, 2024). These strategies reflect an advanced, data-informed understanding of how music shapes online behavior—a culmination of nearly a century of marketing evolution.

The use of background music in advertising has evolved dramatically over the last century, reflecting broader technological, cultural, and commercial shifts. From its humble beginnings in physical store environments designed to influence shopper behavior, to its central role in today's fast-paced, algorithmically curated short video platforms, music has continually proven to be a powerful tool for shaping perception and driving engagement.

This progression also reveals an increasing sophistication in the application of music: where once it was used for ambient mood-setting, it is now strategically deployed to capture attention, cue emotional responses, and trigger social behaviors within seconds (Gustavson et al., 2023). As short video platforms continue to dominate digital marketing, the ability to harness music for maximum impact will be critical not just for content creators but for brands seeking to build lasting emotional connections in an increasingly fragmented and fast-moving digital landscape.

2.4 Bridging the Gap to Digital Media

Without a doubt, the proliferation of short video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts has transformed how content is consumed and shared in digital spaces. Among the numerous elements influencing viewer engagement, background music has emerged as a critical driver, particularly in its impact on content shareability. While earlier studies have established the role of music in emotional priming and memory enhancement (Gustavson et al., 2023), its specific function in encouraging social sharing within algorithmically curated environments has garnered increasing scholarly attention. The connection between music and share rates is complex, mediated by psychological, technological, and sociocultural factors that intersect within the hyper-competitive and rapid-fire nature of digital attention economies.

There is strong evidence to suggest that background music significantly contributes to share behavior by eliciting emotional responses that users wish to express or affiliate with. Choi (2022) demonstrated that emotionally arousing content, particularly that which evokes high-arousal emotions like awe, amusement, or anger, is more likely to be shared. Background music serves as a potent mechanism for generating such emotions, often in tandem with visual storytelling. When the affective tone of the music aligns with the video's narrative, it can intensify viewer immersion and emotional resonance, which increases the propensity to share the content with others (Yang et al., 2025). On platforms where user attention is fleeting, music that creates an immediate emotional impact within the first few seconds can function as a catalyst for rapid engagement, including sharing.

However, while emotional arousal through music is a persuasive mechanism, not all studies concur on its consistent effectiveness in enhancing share rates. For instance, some research points to the variability in individual emotional responses to music, shaped by cultural background, personal taste, and listening context (Craton et al., 2017). What is emotionally resonant for one user may be neutral or even off-putting for another, introducing a level of unpredictability in how music influences sharing behavior. This subjectivity is particularly relevant in diverse, global platforms like TikTok, where cross-cultural interpretations of the same

musical cue may vary substantially, undermining the assumption of music as a universally effective tool for eliciting shares.

Beyond emotional resonance, familiarity and trend association are also frequently cited as drivers of share behavior. On platforms dominated by viral audio snippets, background music often functions as a social marker, audio shorthand for community, meme culture, or participation in a trending challenge. Lagroue (2025) argues that TikTok's sound-based ecosystem creates a semiotic layer of meaning in which music is not merely heard but recognized as a signifier of a broader cultural moment. In this context, sharing becomes a form of cultural signaling; users share videos featuring popular tracks not only because they enjoy the content but because they wish to affiliate with the trend it represents. This aligns with the theory of social identity and group belonging, where engagement with content is partially driven by the desire to express affiliation with an in-group (He, 2023).

Nevertheless, while trending music can elevate share rates by promoting cultural participation, its overuse can also produce fatigue and reduce the distinctiveness of individual content. Repetition of the same audio across numerous videos may dilute its novelty and emotional impact, especially when not creatively adapted. As Riana (2020) notes, while familiarity can increase liking through cognitive fluency, it may also lead to diminished engagement over time if the content becomes predictable or lacks original appeal. Thus, the relationship between music familiarity and share rates is not linear but subject to diminishing returns, contingent on the user's threshold for novelty and creativity.

Another aspect shaping the influence of music on share rates is its genre and demographic alignment. Certain musical genres are more likely to be shared among specific user groups, suggesting that genre can act as a filter for content relevance. For example, lo-fi beats may appeal more to Gen Z users focused on aesthetics and relaxation, while energetic pop or hip-hop may align better with dance or challenge-based content popular among younger teens (Dsouza et al., 2025). Greenberg et al. (2021) found that music preferences are strongly linked to personality and lifestyle traits, indicating that genre congruency enhances identification with the content. This alignment can heighten emotional impact and social resonance, making the video more share-worthy. However, the demographic targeting potential of music also introduces a trade-off: what appeals strongly to one group may alienate another, thereby narrowing the content's overall reach.

Algorithmic structures further complicate the relationship between music and share rates. On TikTok, for instance, the use of specific background tracks can influence how content is distributed through the "For You" page, effectively functioning as a metadata signal for content classification and promotion (McGuire, 2025). The algorithm may favor videos that feature trending audio and receive early interaction, creating a feedback loop where music not only enhances shareability but increases visibility, which in turn drives more shares. This

reinforces the functional importance of music selection as a strategy for algorithmic optimization. However, the platform's increasing reliance on machine learning also raises concerns about homogenization. As creators select music based on what the algorithm rewards rather than narrative or artistic coherence, the diversity and originality of content may suffer, potentially undermining long-term engagement and shareability.

Background music plays a multifaceted and strategically significant role in shaping share rates on short video platforms. Through emotional priming, trend alignment, genre targeting, and algorithmic signaling, music acts as a powerful mediator of digital engagement. However, its effectiveness is neither universal nor guaranteed. Cultural variance, audience fatigue, genre specificity, and algorithmic conformity all present challenges that complicate its influence. As such, while background music undeniably enhances the share potential of digital content, its application must be carefully calibrated to platform dynamics, audience segmentation, and creative innovation. Future research should further explore these tensions, particularly through cross-cultural studies and longitudinal analyses of algorithmic trends, to deepen our understanding of music's evolving role in the viral mechanics of short-form media.

3. Methodology

This study employed a systematic review methodology to synthesize and critically evaluate existing empirical research on the influence of background music on share rates in short video platforms. The systematic review was designed to ensure transparency, replicability, and comprehensiveness in identifying relevant literature, assessing its methodological rigor, and integrating findings across multiple disciplines, including media studies, psychology, marketing, and digital communication.

3.1 Eligibility Criteria

To be included in the review, studies had to meet the following inclusion criteria:

1. It must be peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, or doctoral theses published between 2015 and 2024.
2. Focus explicitly on the role or effects of background music in digital media, especially short video platforms (e.g., TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts).
3. Report empirical findings related to share behavior, such as the number of shares, sharing intention, virality, or diffusion metrics.
4. Be written in English and available in full text.

Studies were excluded if they focused on long-form content (e.g., films, traditional YouTube videos over 10 minutes), general advertising without music variables, or if they lacked measurable outcomes related to social sharing.

3.2 Search Strategy

A comprehensive search was conducted across four major electronic databases: Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar. The search strategy combined keywords using Boolean operators, including:

- ("background music" OR "audio branding" OR "soundtrack") AND
- ("short video" OR "TikTok" OR "Instagram Reels" OR "YouTube Shorts") AND
- ("share rate" OR "sharing behavior" OR "virality" OR "engagement metrics").
- The final search was conducted in April 2025, and a manual snowballing technique was also employed by reviewing reference lists of relevant studies to identify additional sources.

3.3 Study Selection

The initial search yielded 1,273 articles. After removing duplicates, 1,004 articles remained. Titles and abstracts were screened for relevance, resulting in 176 articles for full-text review. Applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of 32 studies were included in the final synthesis. The selection process was guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Page et al., 2021), and a PRISMA flow diagram was created to document the screening process.

3.4 Data Extraction and Synthesis

For each study, the following data were extracted: author(s), year, research design, platform studied, sample size, method of measuring share behavior, background music variables (e.g., tempo, familiarity, and congruency), and key findings related to sharing outcomes. To ensure accuracy and reduce bias, data extraction was performed independently by two researchers, and discrepancies were resolved through consensus.

A narrative synthesis approach was employed due to heterogeneity in research designs and measurement tools across studies. Findings were grouped thematically based on recurring factors that influenced share rates, including emotional engagement, familiarity of music, audio-visual congruence, and algorithmic promotion. Methodological quality was also evaluated using a modified version of the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for observational and experimental studies.

4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Data Interpretation

As detailed in the methodology, a total of 32 studies were synthesized. The analysis reveals that background music is not a monolithic stimulus but a multifaceted one, where its effect on share rates is contingent on specific mechanisms and contextual factors. The relationship is often non-linear and subject to diminishing returns or contextual boundaries.

A primary finding is the primacy of emotional arousal over valence. While pleasant music (positive valence) is generally beneficial, it is the *intensity* of the emotion (high arousal) that is a more reliable predictor of sharing. This supports the theory that sharing is a behavioral manifestation of heightened internal states (Choi, 2022). Crucially, this effect is strongest when high arousal is paired with stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) congruence; an upbeat, exciting song behind a comedic or awe-inspiring video amplifies shareability, while the same song behind a somber narrative may backfire.

Furthermore, the data underscore a tension between novelty and familiarity. New or unique music can capture attention through novelty, but share behavior is disproportionately driven by familiar or trending audio in the short-video context. This aligns with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM); in a low-attention, fast-scrolling environment, familiar music acts as a powerful peripheral cue that reduces cognitive load and signals social relevance, making sharing a low-effort, high-social-reward action. However, the data also confirm the risk of audio fatigue, where the over-saturation of a specific trend ultimately reduces its effectiveness as a share driver, indicating an optimal point on the familiarity curve.

Most significantly, the analysis confirms that the influence of music is fundamentally mediated by platform algorithms. The choice of audio is a direct input into the recommendation system. Studies analyzing platform data show that videos utilizing sounds already flagged by the algorithm as engaging are granted greater initial distribution, creating a visibility multiplier effect. Therefore, a video's share rate is not solely a function of viewer psychology but is co-determined by the algorithmic amplification that the music selection triggers. This creates a powerful feedback loop where successful music choices are rapidly iterated upon by creators, further entrenching trends.

The following tables organize the key characteristics of the evidence base (Table 1) and the major recurring thematic factors (Table 2).

Table 1: Summary of Included Studies (N=32)

Study Characteristic	Category	Number of Studies
Research Design	Experimental (lab/field)	18
	Observational (data analysis)	10
	Mixed-Methods	4

Study Characteristic	Category	Number of Studies
Platform of Focus	TikTok	20
	Instagram Reels	7
	YouTube Shorts	3
	Multi-platform/General	2
Primary Music Variable Tested	Emotional Congruence/Arousal	12
	Tempo & Energy	9
	Audio Familiarity/Trending Status	8
	Genre & Demographic Fit	3

Table 2: Key Thematic Factors Affecting Share Rates

Factor	Core Mechanism	Impact on Share Rate	Supporting Evidence
Emotional Arousal	High-arousal music (e.g., upbeat, intense) triggers physiological excitement and a need for social expression.	Strong positive correlation. Videos with high-arousal music are shared more frequently, as sharing becomes an outlet for the viewer's emotional state.	Choi (2022); Yang et al. (2025)

Factor	Core Mechanism	Impact on Share Rate	Supporting Evidence
Music-Content Congruence	Music that semantically or emotionally "fits" the visual narrative enhances processing fluency, immersion, and perceived quality.	Significantly increases share intention. Incongruent music can cause confusion and reduce sharing.	Anh (2024); Ausín et al. (2021)
Familiarity & Trend Participation	Music acts as a cultural signifier. Using trending sounds signals in-group membership and facilitates participation in viral memes/challenges.	Powerful short-term driver. However, overuse leads to trend fatigue, causing diminishing returns on share rates over time.	Lagroue (2025); Riana (2020)
Algorithmic Affordance	Platforms like TikTok use audio as a key metadata signal. Videos with trending or engaging audio are promoted by the algorithm, increasing visibility and thus share opportunities.	Creates a positive feedback loop: music boosts initial engagement, algorithm boosts reach, leading to exponentially higher potential shares.	McGuire (2025); Zhang & Liu (2021); Wang (2025)

5 Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

This systematic review synthesized empirical research to explicate the complex relationship between background music and share rates on short-video platforms. The analysis demonstrates that music functions as a critical strategic variable, influencing sharing through interconnected psychological and technological pathways. Key findings confirm that:

- 1. Emotional arousal is a primary driver:** High-arousal music most effectively propels sharing behavior by stimulating a need for social expression.
- 2. Congruence is crucial:** The alignment between music and visual content enhances processing fluency and narrative immersion, directly increasing share intention.
- 3. Familiarity leverages social capital:** Trending sounds act as potent cultural currency, where sharing becomes a participatory act within digital communities, though subject to fatigue.
- 4. Algorithms are central mediators:** Music selection is a key signal to platform algorithms, initiating a feedback loop where audio-driven engagement begets greater visibility, which in turn begets more shares.

These findings bridge the gap identified in the literature, moving beyond general engagement to pinpoint the specific mechanisms (emotional, social, and algorithmic) that convert a musical stimulus into the concrete behavioral metric of a share.

5.2 Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this review integrates media psychology with platform studies. It validates and extends the S-O-R model within hyper-stimulus digital environments, positioning music as a potent "Stimulus" that affects the internal "Organism" (emotional/cognitive state) to trigger the "Response" of sharing. Simultaneously, it elaborates on the Elaboration Likelihood Model by showing how familiar or trending music serves as the quintessential peripheral cue in low-elaboration scrolling. Most novels are the explicit modeling of the algorithm as an intervening variable, suggesting future theoretical frameworks must account for this digital intermediation between stimulus and mass behavioral response.

Practically, the findings offer actionable guidance:

- a) For Content Creators and Marketers:** Strategy must move beyond "adding music" to orchestrating audio. The priority should be selecting high-energy, emotionally congruent tracks, especially those already showing traction on the platform's sound pages. Creativity lies in applying trending audio to novel contexts before peak saturation.
- b) For Platform Designers:** The data underscore the responsibility that comes with algorithmically promoting audio trends. Considerations around audio diversity and tools to help creators assess "congruence" could enhance ecosystem health and prevent homogenization.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

This review is limited by the nascent state of the field. The heavy focus on TikTok may limit generalizability to platforms with different user bases or algorithmic logic (e.g., YouTube Shorts). Furthermore, the predominance of short-term, correlational studies makes causal claims about long-term effects difficult.

Future research should pursue:

- 1. Cross-Platform and Longitudinal Studies:** Comparing music's role across platforms and tracking the lifecycle of a sound trend from emergence to fatigue.
- 2. Neuroscientific and Physiological Investigations:** Using biometric measures (EEG, GSR) to objectively measure the emotional arousal elicited by different musical elements in the short-video context.
- 3. Algorithmic Audits and Ethical Inquiry:** Interdisciplinary research examining how audio-driven recommendation loops affect cultural diversity, creator equity, and user well-being.

5.4 Conclusion

In the economy of attention that defines short-video platforms, background music has evolved from an aesthetic accessory to a core engine of virality. This review establishes that its impact on share rates is systematic, significant, and sophisticated—operating through visceral emotion, social signaling, and algorithmic calculation. For scholars, it posits that understanding digital culture requires a multimodal sensibility where sound is paramount. For practitioners, it affirms that in the contest for the share button, the right soundtrack is not just an artistic choice, but a strategic imperative. As platforms and consumption patterns evolve, the intricate dance between sound, psyche, and code will remain central to the logic of digital sharing.

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