
THE INFLUENCE OF SHORT-FORM VIDEO CONTENT ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENT: A STUDY ON INSTAGRAM REELS AND YOUTUBE SHORTS

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The recent growth of social media has brought tremendous changes, the way how consumers feel connected to a brand and make their purchasing decisions. There are various forms of video content which today's people consume, among which Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts have emerged as highly influential marketing tool. These videos are of short in duration, visual appeal and engaging nature. These videos are mostly watched for entertainment, information and for product discovery particularly among young people. This study tries to analyse the influence of short form video content on consumer's purchase decisions based on Instagram Reels and YouTube shorts.

The study is based on both primary data and secondary data. Primary data was collected through a questionnaire given to 63 respondents who watch short-form videos often. Secondary data is collected from journals, books, research articles and doctoral theses related to social media marketing. The analysis of this particular study focuses on viewing frequency, engagement levels, emotional appeal, influencer credibility, and platform preference. The findings show that short-form video content has meaningful impact on consumer's purchasing intention. Influencer-created videos show moderate influence through trust and relatability. Overall, the research concludes that Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts play a positive and moderate role in shaping consumer's buying behaviour in the Indian digital market.

Keywords: *Short-form videos, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, Influencer marketing, Consumer purchase intent.*

INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has brought a fundamental change in the way businesses interact with the consumers. Today, consumers depend on platforms such as YouTube or Instagram for making purchase decisions. They gather information, discover new products and form opinions on brands. One of the impactful developments on social media marketing is the rise of short form videos known as shorts (YouTube) and reels (Instagram). They are brief, visually engaging and lasts from 15 seconds to three minutes. Instagram reels and YouTube shorts are very popular platforms offering this type of video content especially in India.

The short form videos have increased in the past few years. A large population of young people engage themselves in watching these videos. Another important aspect is that the growing role of influencers. Influencers are persons who have built a loyal follower on social media and are perceived as credible and relatable to their audience. When influencers promote products through short videos, consumers often view these endorsements as genuine recommendations and not as direct advertisements.

Though there is an increase in the use of short-form videos by marketers, there is still less academic research specifically about their impact on consumer purchase intent, especially in the Indian context. It is to be noted that whether such content leads to actual buying decisions or merely generates temporary interest. The differences between platforms and between influencer-created and brand-created content need further exploration. This study attempts to address these issues by analysing how short-form video content influences consumer purchase intention, based on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Businesses today invest a lot of resources in creating short-form video content and collaborating with influencers on platforms like Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts. However, there is uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of such content. There is always a question whether these videos convert viewer engagement into actual purchase intention. The influencer-created videos are often perceived as authentic, but it is not clearly stated whether they are more effective than brand-generated content. Additionally, the comparative influence of Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts on consumer buying behaviour remains unclear. This lack of clarity creates challenges for marketers in deciding where and how to allocate their digital marketing efforts.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the impact that short-form video content make on consumer purchase intention.
- To analyse the contribution of influencers in shaping consumer's purchase intent through Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts.
- To study the effect of engagement with short-form videos on consumer buying behaviour.
- To compare the influence of Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts on consumer purchase intention.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**Hypotheses: 1**

- H₀: Short-form video content does not have significant influence on consumer purchase intention.
- H₁: Short-form video content has significant influence on consumer purchase intention.

Hypotheses: 2

- H₀: There is no difference between influencer-created and brand-created short-form videos in influencing purchase intention.
- H₁: Influencer-created short-form videos have a greater influence on purchase intention than brand-created videos.

Hypotheses: 3

- H₀: There is no significant difference in purchase intention between consumers exposed to Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts.
- H₁: There is a significant difference in purchase intention between consumers exposed to Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts.

Scope of the Study

This study is to analyse the influence of Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts on consumer's purchase in India. It focuses on consumers who actively watch short-form video content, particularly young and middle-aged users. The study examines consumer perceptions, engagement behaviour, emotional response, and purchase intention but does not analyse actual sales or revenue outcomes. Other platforms and long-form video content are excluded from the scope of the study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data to ensure better analysis. Primary data provides first-hand insights, while secondary data supports theoretical understanding and contextual background.

Primary Data

Primary data were collected through a structured, and closed-ended questionnaire administered online to respondents who regularly watch Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts. The questionnaire included questions related to demographic profile, frequency of watching short-form videos, engagement behaviour, credibility of content creators, emotional appeal, and purchase intention. A total of 63 valid responses were collected and used for analysis.

Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from academic journals, books, research articles, doctoral theses, and online sources related to social media marketing, and consumer behaviour which helped to have conceptual knowledge to support the primary data.

Statistical Tools Used

The data were analysed using percentage analysis, mean analysis, correlation interpretation, and descriptive interpretation. Excel was used as a backend tool for computation, while results were interpreted in words and diagram.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous studies have shown that the growing influence of media on consumer's behaviour. Dwivdi (2022) stated that the social media advertisement, and peer opinions and influencer endorsements affect individual's purchase. It is also noted that the importance of influencer's opinion and relatability in shaping brand attitudes.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) discussed how interactive digital platforms enhance consumer’s engagement and brand involvement. Cialdini (2007) explained the role of social proof like share, likes, and comments, in influencing consumer decisions, act as psychological cues of trustworthiness. While existing studies provide insights into social media marketing, limited research focuses specifically on short-form videos as a distinct content format. This gap justifies the present study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The primary data collected from 63 respondents were analysed to understand consumer behaviour related to short-form video content.

The analysis is as follows:

1. Age-wise Analysis

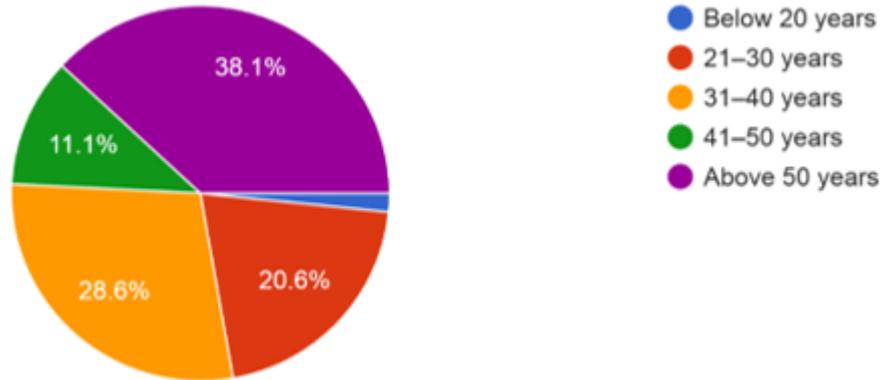


Chart 1.1 - Age-wise Analysis

Chart 1 shows that a majority of respondents that is 38.1% and 28.6% belong to the age group of 50 and above, 21-30 age groups simultaneously. This indicates that young and early middle-aged consumers are active viewers of short-form video content. The findings from the chart shows that this age group is more exposed to Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts, making them more likely to be influenced in purchase decisions.

2. Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

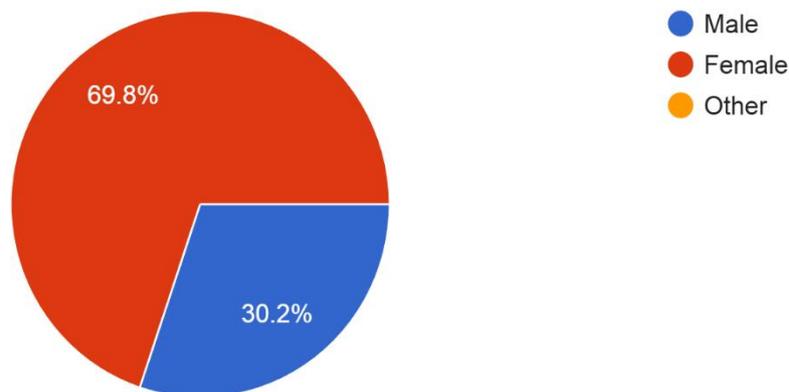


Chart 1.2 - Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

Chart 2 reveals that female respondents constitute a slightly higher proportion of 69.8% compared to male respondents - 30.2%. This clearly states that women tend to engage more actively with short-form video platforms. Higher engagement among female users may result in greater exposure to influencer-led content and product promotions.

3. Education Level of Respondents

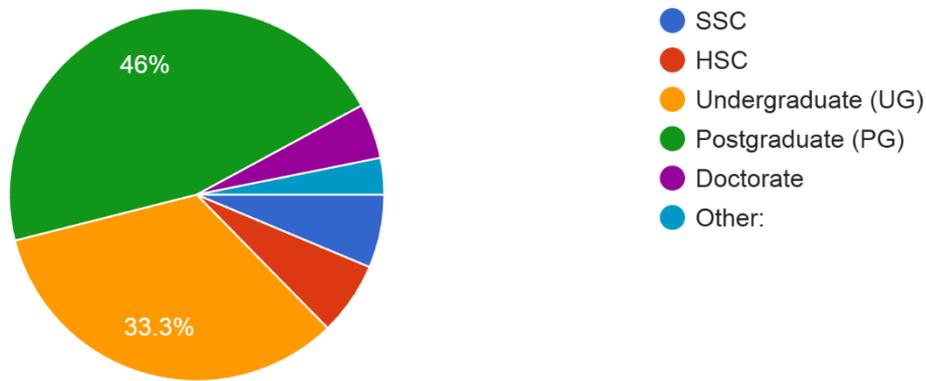


Chart 1.3 – Education Level of Respondents

This chart indicates that a majority of respondents are graduates (33.3%) and postgraduates (46%). This is an indication that educated people consume more of short-form video platforms. This could be higher education levels may contribute to better understanding of digital content and are tech savvy, leading to greater influence on purchase intention.

4. Occupation of Respondents

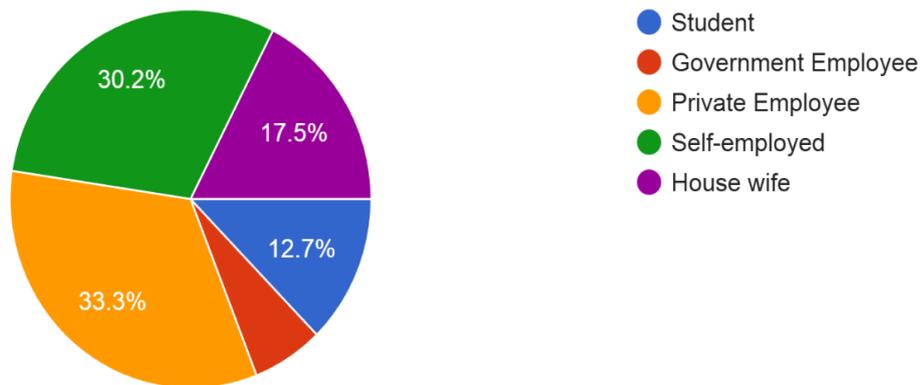


Chart 1.4 - Occupation of Respondents

The data shows that a majority of the respondents are private employees (33.3%) and self-employed (30.2%) which shows that private employees and self-employed people more exposed to short form videos. There are chances that these users may be influenced by the videos and make their purchase decisions as they are exposed to such contents.

5. Regular Viewing of Short-form Videos (Reels/Shorts)

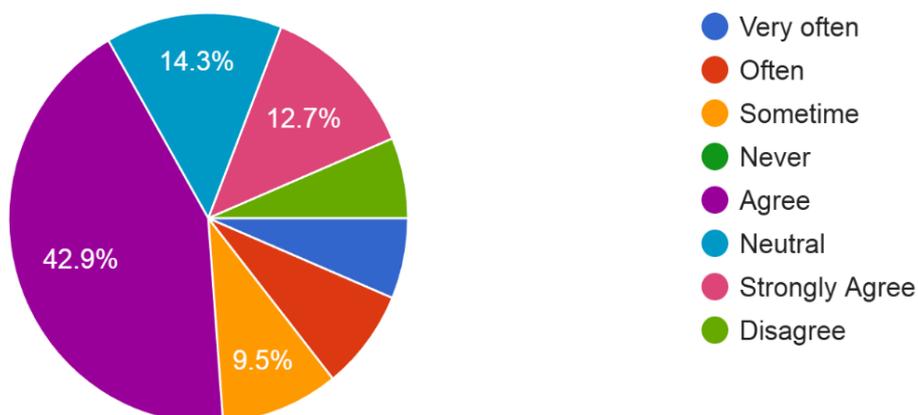


Chart 1.5 - Regular Viewing of Short-form Videos (Reels/Shorts)

Most respondents about 4.9% of them in the above questions agreed that they regularly watch short-form videos. This confirms that Reels and Shorts are an important part of daily media consumption. Regular viewing increases familiarity with brands and advertised products which increases the interest for purchase.

6. Type of short-form video that influences purchase decision

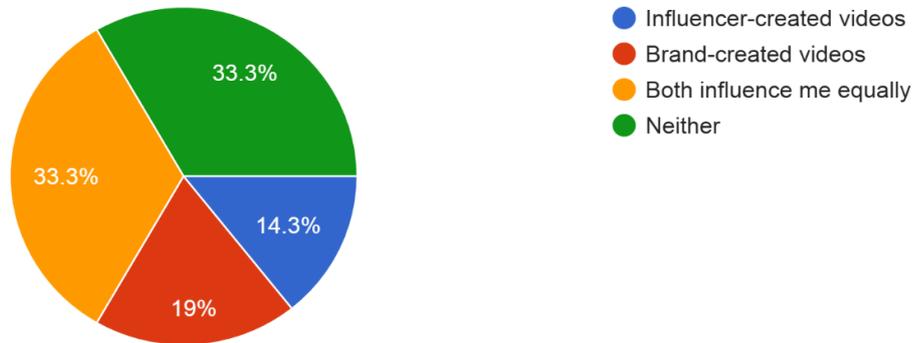


Chart 1.6 - Type of short-form video that influences purchase decision

The chart shows that 33.3% people are influenced by both Influencer-created videos Brand-created video. At the same time there are 33.3% people say that neither of them influences them to purchase. This states that consumers under both influencer-created and brand-created videos as equally impactful, while a considerable number remains unaffected by promotional content.

7. Purchase of a product happens when it is promoted by an influencer

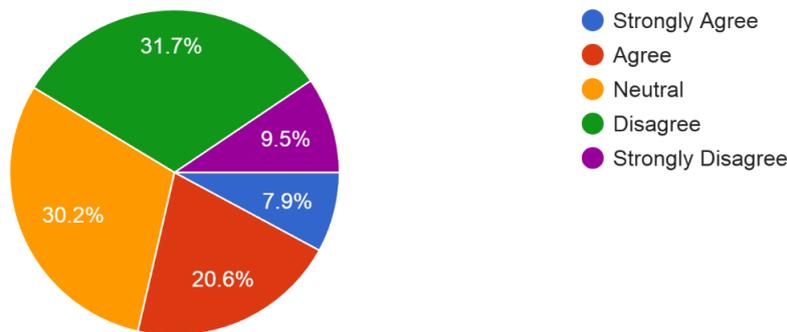


Chart 1.7 – The product is purchased when it is promoted by an influencer

The purchase decision is not so much influenced by the influencer as it shows only 20.6% agree to it and around 30.2% remain neutral. 31.7% people directly disagree to it. So, the findings show that the influencer’s demonstration of the content is not so much appealing. The respondents are not carried away. Though the findings cannot ignore the 20.6% of them who agree that they make a choice.

8. Influencers on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts influence on the customer

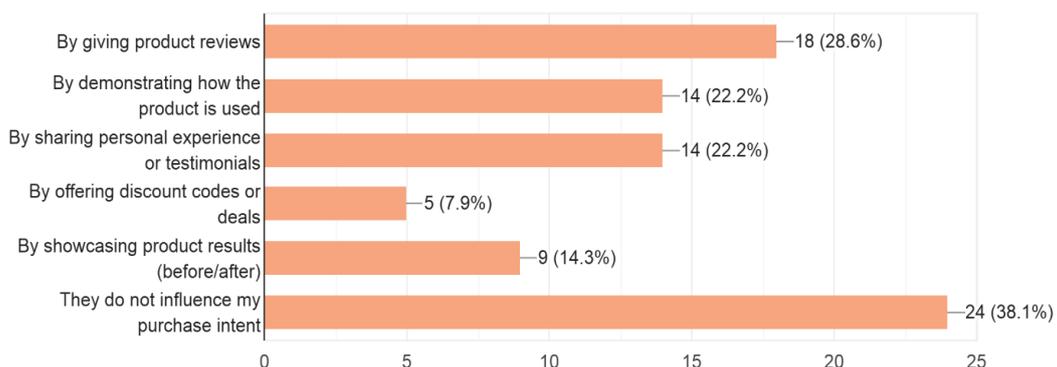


Chart 1.8 – Influencers on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts influence on the customer

The provided data from a survey of 63 responses states that 38.1% respondents are not influenced in their purchase intent by influencers on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts. For those who are influenced, product reviews are the most effective method (28.6%), followed by product demonstrations and personal testimonials (both 22.2%). The respondents are not much affected by offering of discount codes or show case of product results.

9. Engagement with Short-form Videos (Likes, Comments, Shares)

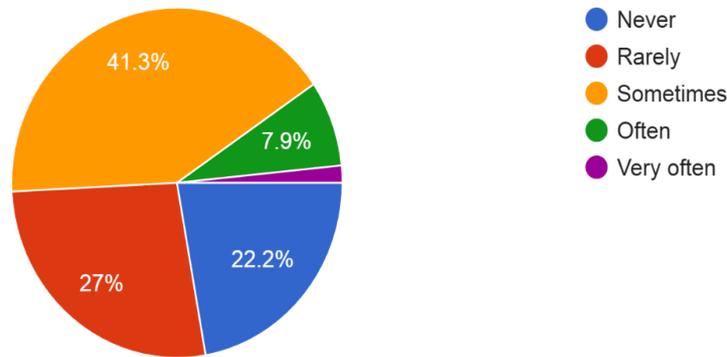


Chart 1.9 – Engagement with Short-form Videos

The chart reveals that respondents actively engage with short-form videos. Engagement activities reflect strong interest and involvement with the content. Higher engagement can positively influences buying decisions.

10. Engagement in short-form video improve the purchase likelihood

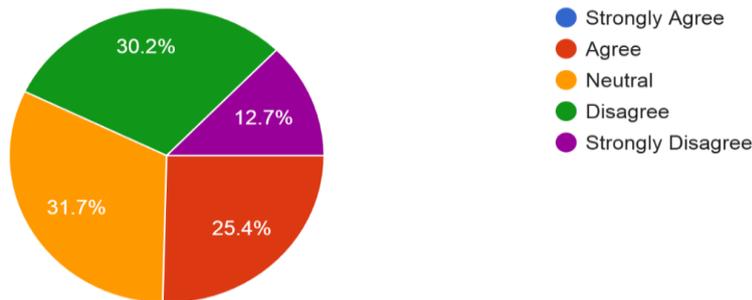


Chart 1.10 - Engagement in short-form video improve the likelihood of purchase

The 31.7% of the respondents are neutral about the purchase after watching short-form videos where as 30.2% disagree. This indicates though there is a frequent exposure to promotional and influencer content the respondents are not likely to purchase. Repeated exposure do not have much role in shaping consumer interest and purchase intention.

11. Comparison Between Instagram Reels and other platforms (YouTube)

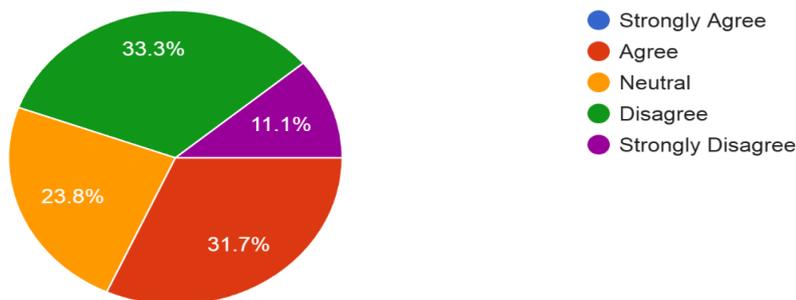


Chart 1.11 – Comparison Between Instagram Reels and other platforms

The chart shows that Instagram Reels (31.7%) are preferred over YouTube Shorts yet 33.3% respondents say they are neutral. This suggests that Instagram offers a more engaging environment for short-form content but there is no clear distinction which has more impact. Higher engagement on Instagram increases its influence on consumer behaviour.

12. Comparison Between YouTube Shorts and other platforms (Instagram)

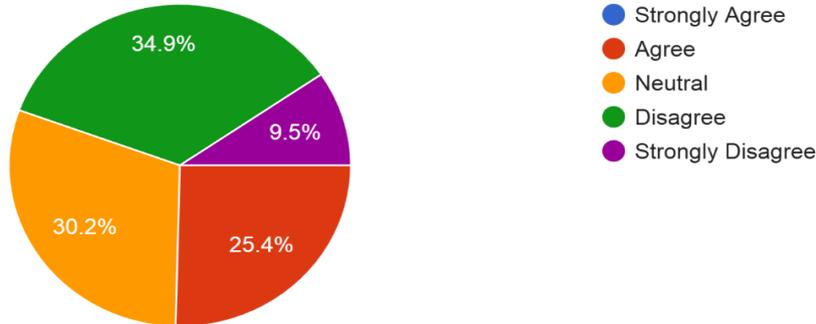


Chart 1.12 - Comparison Between YouTube Shorts and other platforms

The chart states that YouTube Shorts do not create much impact on the consumer’s purchase decision as 34.9% disagree that YouTube shorts create more impact. Instagram’s interactive features enhance engagement levels. However, YouTube Shorts also play a significant (that is 25.5%) supporting role.

13. Satisfaction level of purchase decision

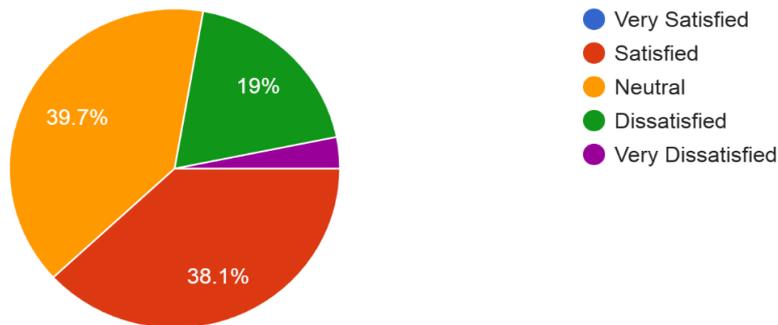


Chart 1.13 - Satisfaction level of purchase decision

The data shows higher trust in influencer-created videos (38.1%) compared to brand-created content. Influencers are perceived as more relatable and authentic. This trust significantly enhances the effectiveness of product recommendations.

14. Influence of Short-form Videos on Purchase Intention

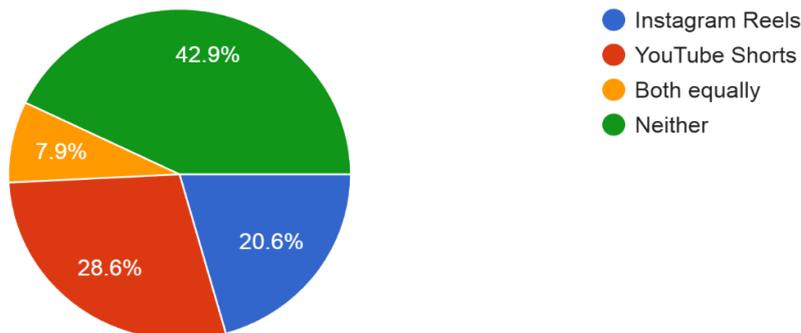


Chart 1.14 - Influence of Short-form Videos on Purchase Intention

The 42.9% participants say that the short-form videos do not influence their purchase intention. There are also other respondents 28.6% from YouTube and 20.6% from Instagram say that they are influenced. This indicates that such content plays an active role in the consumer decision-making process. The study shows that the respondents do not enter into purchase as quick as it seems.

15. Unplanned Purchase After Watching Reels/Shorts

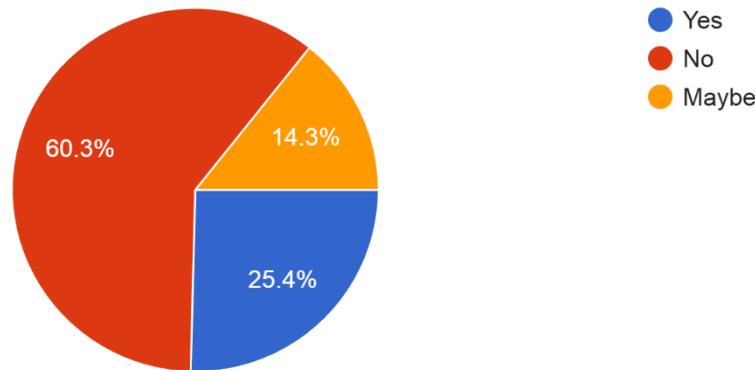


Chart 1.15 - Unplanned Purchase After Watching Reels/Shorts

The chart indicates that 60.3% respondents have not made unplanned purchases after watching short-form videos whether be it on Instagram or YouTube. This highlights that the respondents are not impulsively influenced of engaging video content. Short-form videos can trigger spontaneous buying behaviour to certain extent but not many inclined do it based on the chart.

16. Product Categories Influenced by Short-form Videos

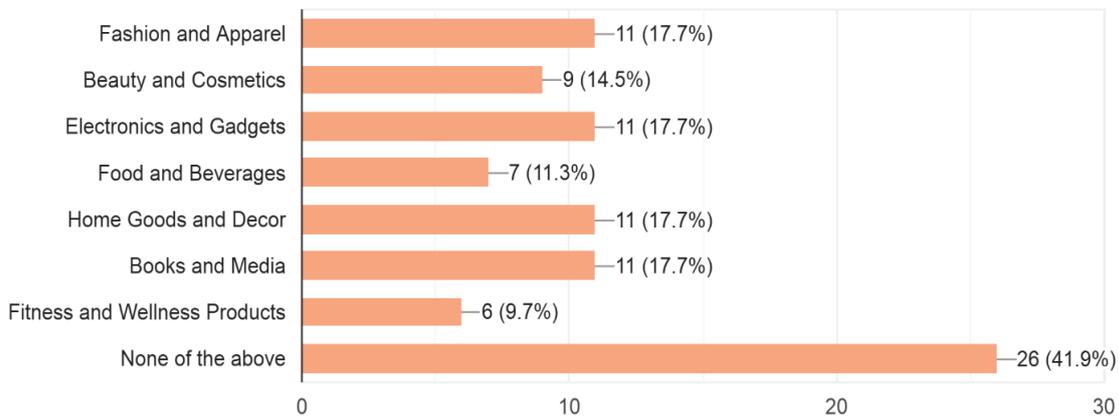


Chart 1.16- Product Categories Influenced by Short-form Videos

The data shows that fashion, electronic and gadgets, home goods and decor and electronic products are the most influenced categories. Visual presentation and demonstrations make the products appealing for short-form videos. This increases consumer interest and purchase consideration. Nonetheless 41.9% of the respondents state that none of the above product categories influence them to purchase.

Overall, the analysis indicates a positive but a moderate relationship between exposure to short-form video content and consumer purchase intention. Based on these findings, the null hypotheses are rejected, and the alternative hypotheses are accepted.

The analysis of responses related to purchase intention (Chart 1.14) shows that a majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that short-form video content influences their buying decisions. This suggests that shorts and reels have impact on the consumers in creating awareness and interest. However, 60.3% of respondents reported that they do not make unplanned purchases after watching Instagram Reels or YouTube Shorts (Chart 1.15). This indicates that the respondents are cautious and careful in making a decision. At the same time, 36.7% respondents show a clear positive relationship between exposure to short-form video content and consumer purchase intention making a purchase after watching short form videos. Hence, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H₁) is accepted.

The analysis of influencer-related questions (Charts 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, and 1.13) indicates that influencer-created content help engagement, but do not dominate purchase intention. Respondents expressed moderate confidence in influencer recommendations due to relatability and perceived authenticity and are careful in purchasing. Although, not all the respondents are directly influenced, the influencer created content contribute positively to make a choice. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

The comparative analysis between Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts (Charts 1.11 and 1.12) reveals that Instagram Reels have a slightly higher influence on consumer purchase intention. Higher engagement levels, interactive features, and frequent exposure on Instagram contribute to stronger consumer responses. Although YouTube Shorts also influence purchase behaviour, the difference observed indicates platform-based variation. Hence, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted.

The hypotheses were tested based on descriptive statistical analysis and logical interpretation of the data.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Short-form videos are widely consumed on a daily basis by consumers.
- Emotional appeal and engaging presentation influence to a certain to make a choice in purchase consideration.
- Influencer-created content and brand-created content influence the respondents equally. The findings show neutral.
- Engagement features such as likes, comments, and shares strengthen consumer trust and relatability.
- Instagram Reels show slightly higher engagement compared to YouTube Shorts.
- Short-form videos do have a positive but moderate impact on the consumer decision-making process.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study is based on a limited sample size and cannot be generalized.
- Data are self-reported and may involve respondent bias.
- The study focuses on purchase intention of the individual rather than actual purchase behaviour of them.
- Only two platforms are considered, that is YouTube and Instagram.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Brands should focus more on short-form video marketing, as it has a moderate influence on consumer purchase intention.
2. Collaborating with trusted influencers can improve consumer trust and engagement.
3. Instagram Reels should be given priority for promotional campaigns due to higher consumer interaction.
4. Content should be emotionally appealing and informative to encourage purchase decisions.
5. Future studies can include a larger sample size and apply advanced statistical tools for deeper analysis.

CONCLUSION

The study indicated that short-form video content has a positive but moderate influence on consumer's purchase intention. Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts are powerful platform for marketing that shape consumer attitudes, enhance brand recall, and support consumer decision-making buying decisions. Influencer credibility, emotional appeal, and engagement behaviour play important roles in determining the effectiveness of short-form videos. As digital consumption continues to grow, businesses must strategically use short-form video content to connect with consumers in an authentic and engaging manner.

Although, these platforms are powerful tools for making purchase decisions among the consumers, the study shows that people are careful and cautious while making a purchase. This shows that the consumers are not let away by the shallow and immediate attraction but are considerate as what they actually need.

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