



Short-Form Video Marketing and Consumer Psychology: A Study of Instagram Reels and Gen Z Purchasing Decisions

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Abstract-- This study synthesizes insights from multiple research works to examine how short-form video marketing, influencer strategies, and interactive content on platforms such as Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts influence engagement and purchasing behavior among Generation Z consumers. The findings indicate that these platforms play a significant role in shaping consumer preferences, enhancing brand awareness, and driving purchase decisions. Interactive features—including likes, comments, shares, and influencer-led content—substantially increase user engagement and exert a stronger influence on purchase intention compared to passive content consumption. The effectiveness of influencer marketing is largely determined by factors such as trust, relatability, and transparency, with micro-influencers often demonstrating greater impact than traditional celebrity endorsements.

Furthermore, visually appealing, trend-driven, and emotionally engaging content is found to stimulate impulse buying behavior, frequently reinforced by social-psychological triggers such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). Repeated exposure to short-form content enhances brand recall; however, long-term brand loyalty remains relatively unstable due to rapidly evolving trends and shifting consumer preferences.

The application of analytical approaches, including statistical techniques and machine learning models, reveals a measurable relationship between user engagement, personalization, and purchasing behavior. Overall, this paper highlights the growing significance of short-form digital content as a powerful tool for influencing the consumer behavior of Generation Z.

Keywords -- Short-Form Video Marketing, generation Z , influencer marketing, consumer behaviour, social media engagement.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era of digitalization, social media platforms have fundamentally transformed the way organizations communicate with consumers. Platforms such as Instagram and YouTube have become integral components of modern digital marketing strategies. Among various content formats, short-form videos—particularly Instagram Reels—have gained significant popularity due to their fast-paced nature, visual appeal, and high engagement potential.

Generation Z, as digitally native users, spend a considerable amount of time consuming such content. Their preferences, attitudes, and purchasing behavior are increasingly influenced by short-form video content and social media interactions. In this context, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful strategy, wherein content creators with substantial follower bases promote products and services, thereby shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions.

The growing prominence of short-form video platforms has been further accelerated by changing digital consumption patterns and increased accessibility of mobile internet. Instagram, launched in October 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, has evolved into a leading marketing platform, especially after the introduction of Reels in response to the rising demand for short-video content. From a market perspective, the importance of Generation Z as consumers is rapidly increasing. According to KPMG India, Gen Z is expected to contribute approximately 27% of India's consumer spending by 2030. This highlights the need for businesses to understand how digital content influences their engagement and purchasing behavior.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the impact of Instagram Reels, influencer marketing, and short-form video content on the engagement levels and buying behavior of Generation Z consumers.

II. REVIEWS OF LITERATURE

A. P. Kapoor and S. Banerjee (2021) examined the influence of social media influencers on purchase intention within the cosmetics and skincare sector. Their study highlights that **influencer credibility, authenticity, and content quality** are key determinants of consumer trust. The research further suggests that consumers are more likely to purchase products when influencers are perceived as genuine and knowledgeable, thereby strengthening brand-consumer relationships.

De Veirman et al. (2017) analyzed the effectiveness of influencer marketing by focusing on the relationship between follower count and brand perception.

Their findings indicate that influencers with a **larger follower base and higher perceived trustworthiness** tend to generate more positive brand attitudes. However, the study also notes that excessively large follower counts may sometimes reduce perceived authenticity, influencing consumer skepticism.

Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) focused on young female consumers and concluded that **micro-influencers are often more persuasive than celebrities**. This is primarily due to their relatability, accessibility, and perceived honesty, which foster stronger emotional connections with followers and increase the likelihood of influencing purchase decisions.

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Theory, developed by Albert Mehrabian and James A. Russell (1974), provides a foundational framework for understanding consumer behavior in digital environments. According to this theory, **external stimuli** (such as visually engaging social media content) influence the **internal emotional and cognitive state** of consumers (organism), which subsequently leads to a **behavioral response**, such as engagement or purchasing decisions. This framework is widely applied in digital marketing research to explain how online content affects user behavior.

Aleksandra Sisova (2023) employed a mixed-method approach to examine user interaction with Instagram Reels. The study revealed **high levels of user engagement**, with a significant proportion of users viewing Reels multiple times per day. It also found that users make rapid decisions about content (within seconds), emphasizing the importance of capturing attention quickly. Furthermore, the research establishes a strong connection between repeated exposure to short-form video content and increased purchase actions.

Casaló et al. (2018) investigated the role of influencer credibility and **parasocial interaction** (a one-sided psychological relationship between followers and influencers). Their findings suggest that **trust, perceived expertise, and emotional connection** significantly enhance user engagement and contribute to stronger brand loyalty. The study emphasizes that consumers often treat influencers as trusted advisors, which increases marketing effectiveness.

Lou and Yuan (2019) explored the effectiveness of social media advertising content. Their research demonstrates that content that is **informative, entertaining, and credible** leads to higher levels of consumer engagement and stronger purchase intentions. The study also highlights the importance of **content value** in capturing user attention and sustaining long-term interest in brands.

Despite the growing body of research on social media and consumer behavior, several gaps remain in the existing literature. Most studies tend to focus on individual aspects such as influencer marketing or short-form video content in isolation, rather than examining their combined impact. Limited research has been conducted on the integrated effect of Instagram Reels, influencer marketing, and purchasing behavior, particularly among Generation Z.

Furthermore, a majority of prior studies emphasize short-term outcomes such as user engagement and purchase intention, while relatively less attention has been given to long-term factors like brand loyalty and sustained consumer relationships. This creates a gap in understanding the durability of consumer behavior influenced by short-form digital content.

In addition, although social media platforms experienced significant growth after 2020, the rapid evolution of digital trends means that consumer behavior is continuously changing. As a result, existing research may not fully capture the current dynamics of short-form video platforms and their influence on purchasing decisions. Therefore, this study aims to bridge these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of the combined influence of Instagram Reels, influencer marketing, and short-form video content on both engagement and purchase behavior among Generation Z consumers.

III. OBJECTIVES

- 1) To analyze the impact of Instagram Reels on the engagement levels of Generation Z.
- 2) To evaluate the influence of influencer marketing on the purchasing behavior of Generation Z.
- 3) To examine the role of short-form video content in shaping consumer decision-making.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a **mixed-method approach**, combining both primary and secondary data to examine the impact of short-form video content and influencer marketing on consumer behavior.

1. Data Collection

Primary Data:

Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to **80 respondents**, primarily belonging to Generation Z. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and Likert scale-based questions to measure variables such as engagement, trust, relatability, and purchase intention related to platforms like Instagram Reels.



Secondary Data:

Secondary data was gathered from research papers, journals, and published articles related to social media marketing, influencer marketing, and consumer behavior.

A total of relevant studies were reviewed to support and compare the primary findings.

Sample Distribution

Table 1: Frequency of Instagram Reels Usage (n = 80)

Usage Frequency	Number of Respondents	percentage (%)
Daily (More than 5 times)	36	45%
Daily (1–5 times)	28	35%
Occasionally	10	12.5%
Rarely	6	7.5%
Total	80	100%

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: Most respondents (80%) use Reels daily shows high engagement level. The data indicates that nearly 80% of respondents use Instagram Reels on a daily basis, reflecting a consistently high level of engagement among Generation Z users. This frequent usage suggests that Reels has become an integral part of their daily digital consumption habits. High exposure to such content increases the likelihood of users interacting with videos through likes, comments, and shares.

It also enhances familiarity with brands and products featured in these videos. As a result, repeated viewing can strengthen brand recall and influence purchase decisions. Moreover, the continuous engagement indicates that short-form video content is more effective than traditional formats in capturing user attention. Overall, this trend highlights the strong potential of Instagram Reels as a powerful marketing tool for targeting Generation Z consumers.

2. Likert Scale Table (Mean Score Analysis)

(Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Table 2: Mean Score of Key Variables

Statement	Mean Score
Reels are engaging	4.3
Influencers are trustworthy	3.9
Influencer content is relatable	4.1
Reels influence my purchase decision	4.0
I buy products after watching Reels	3.8

Source: Primary data

Mean = $\sum X/N$

Example:

If total score = 320 →

Mean = $320 \div 80 = 4.0$

Interpretation: Mean > 3.5 indicates positive agreement and Reels strongly influence buying behavior. A mean score greater than 3.5 indicates that respondents generally agree with the given statements on the Likert scale. In this study, the high mean values suggest that Instagram Reels has a strong and positive influence on the buying behavior of Generation Z.

This reflects that most respondents perceive Reels content as engaging, relatable, and informative. The higher agreement level also implies that users are more likely to trust and respond to influencer-driven content. As a result, exposure to such content increases their intention to purchase products. It also highlights the effectiveness of short-form video marketing in shaping consumer decisions. Overall, the mean analysis confirms that Instagram Reels plays a significant role in influencing purchase behavior among Generation Z.

3. Engagement vs Purchase (Correlation)

Table 3: Correlation Result

Variables Compared	Correlation (r)
Engagement & Purchase Intention	+0.68
Trust & Purchase Intention	+0.72

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: Values close to +1 = strong positive relationship (high engagement = higher buying chances). Correlation values that are close to +1 indicate a strong positive relationship between the variables being studied. In this case, the results show that higher engagement on Instagram Reels—such as likes, comments, shares, and saves—is strongly associated with increased purchase intention among Generation Z users.

This means that as users interact more with content, their likelihood of buying products also rises. High engagement reflects greater interest, attention, and emotional connection with the content. It also suggests that interactive and appealing videos are more effective in influencing consumer decisions. Furthermore, frequent engagement helps build trust and familiarity with brands. Overall, the correlation analysis confirms that engagement plays a crucial role in driving buying behavior.

4. ANOVA Table

Table 4: ANOVA Result (Engagement vs Purchase)

Source	F Value	Significance (p-value)
Between Groups	4.25	0.018
Within Groups	—	—

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: $p < 0.05$ → Significant relationship exists and Engagement level affects purchase decision. A p-value less than 0.05 indicates that the results are statistically significant, meaning the relationship observed is unlikely to be due to chance.

In this study, it confirms that engagement levels on Instagram Reels have a meaningful impact on the purchase decisions of Generation Z. This suggests that variations in user engagement—such as likes, comments, and shares—lead to measurable differences in buying behavior.



Higher engagement levels are associated with stronger purchase intentions. The result supports the reliability of the findings and validates the research hypothesis. It also indicates that marketers can effectively influence consumers by increasing engagement. Overall, the analysis proves that engagement is a significant factor affecting purchase decisions.

2. Sampling Technique

A **convenience sampling method** was used to select respondents, focusing on individuals who actively use

4. Variables of the Study

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
Short-form video content	Purchase intention
Influencer marketing	Consumer behavior
Social media engagement	

5. Data Analysis Approach

The primary data collected from respondents was analyzed using statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean score, correlation, and ANOVA to identify patterns and relationships among key variables, including engagement, trust, relatability, and purchase intention. These techniques provided a clear understanding of how strongly Instagram Reels influences the behavior of Generation Z consumers.

The findings derived from the primary data were further compared with insights from existing literature and secondary sources to enhance the reliability and validity of the study. This comparative analysis helped determine whether the observed patterns were consistent with previous research or indicated new trends. A systematic analytical approach was adopted to interpret the results effectively, allowing the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions about the impact of digital content and influencer marketing on consumer engagement and purchasing behavior. Overall, this approach strengthens the credibility and accuracy of the research findings.

social media platforms and frequently engage with short-form video content.

3. Research Tools and Techniques

The study employed the following tools for data analysis:

- I. **Percentage Analysis**
- II. **Mean Score Analysis**
- III. **Correlation Analysis**
- IV. **ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)**

V. FINDINGS

The analysis of primary data collected from 80 respondents reveals several important insights into the impact of short-form video content and influencer marketing on consumer behavior.

- 1. *High Engagement with Short-Form Content:* A large proportion of respondents reported frequent usage of Instagram Reels, indicating that short-form videos are highly engaging and widely consumed among Generation Z.
- 2. *Positive Influence on Purchase Intention:* The results show that Instagram Reels significantly influence purchase decisions. Respondents expressed a higher likelihood of buying products after viewing engaging and visually appealing content.
- 3. *Role of Influencer Credibility and Relatability:* Influencer marketing was found to be highly effective. Factors such as **trust, authenticity, and relatability** play a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes. Micro-influencers were perceived as more trustworthy compared to celebrity influencers.

4. *Strong Relationship Between Engagement and Buying Behavior:* Statistical analysis (correlation) indicated a **positive relationship between engagement (likes, comments, shares)** and purchase intention. Higher interaction leads to increased chances of buying.
5. *Impact of Emotional and Trend-Based Content:* Content that is **trend-driven, visually appealing, and emotionally engaging** tends to trigger impulse buying behavior among respondents.
6. *Short-Term Influence vs Long-Term Loyalty:* While Instagram Reels effectively drive immediate purchase decisions, the findings suggest that **long-term brand loyalty is relatively weak** due to rapidly changing trends and preferences.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. *Focus on Engaging Content Creation:* Brands should create **short, visually appealing, and trend-based videos** to capture the attention of Generation Z users.
2. *Leverage Micro-Influencers:* Companies should collaborate with **micro-influencers**, as they are perceived to be more relatable and trustworthy, leading to stronger consumer influence.
3. *Enhance Interactivity:* Marketers should encourage **user interaction** through likes, comments, shares, polls, and challenges to increase engagement levels.
4. *Adopt Personalization Strategies:* Content should be **personalized and targeted** based on user preferences to improve relevance and effectiveness.
5. *Build Trust and Transparency:* Brands must ensure **honesty and transparency** in influencer promotions to strengthen consumer trust and credibility.
6. *Utilize FOMO and Limited-Time Strategies:* Since many users exhibit impulse buying behavior, marketers can use **limited-time offers and trending campaigns** to increase conversions.
7. *Focus on Long-Term Relationship Building:* In addition to short-term sales, brands should invest in **consistent engagement and value-driven content** to build long-term customer loyalty.

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