



A STUDY ON IMPACT OF INSTAGRAM REELS AND YOUTUBE SHORTS ON CUSTOMER BUYING DECISIONS

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Article Info	Abstract:
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Published: 27 Jan 2026	This study aims to examine how Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts influence customer buying decisions. Short-form videos have become a major marketing tool that attracts consumers through engaging and creative content. Data was collected using a Google Form survey from active social media users, and the responses were analyzed using percentage methods. The findings reveal that most users are influenced by short videos and influencer promotions while making purchase decisions. The study concludes that short-form video marketing plays a key role in building product awareness, trust, and customer engagement.
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1. Introduction

Social media today plays a major role in influencing the lifestyle and purchasing behaviour of customers. With the growing popularity of short-form videos, platforms like Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts have become part of daily entertainment for many people. These short videos are attractive, engaging, and easy to consume, which makes them highly effective in capturing customers' attention. Brands and marketers actively use Reels and Shorts to promote products, create awareness, and influence customer preferences by showing product features, reviews, and usage in a creative way.

Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts also influence buying decisions through influencer marketing and repeated exposure to products. Customers tend to trust influencers and content creators, which increases curiosity and encourages impulse buying. Although both platforms offer similar short video formats, their impact on customer buying decisions may differ based on content style, audience engagement, and trust level. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing and comparing the impact of Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts on customer buying decisions to understand which platform has a stronger influence on customers.

2. Objectives

- To study how Reels and Shorts affect customer buying decisions.
- To find which platform influences customers more.
- To understand how influencers create interest and trust.
- To analyze how short videos increase product awareness.

3. Review of literature

1. Influence of Short Video Content on Consumers' Purchase Intentions on Social Media Platforms with Trust as a Mediator (PMC, 2025)

This study was conducted among 372 Chinese consumers using the S-O-R model (Stimulus-Organism-Response). It found that when short videos are useful, easy to use, and entertaining, they create a positive feeling of trust among consumers. This trust increases their chances of buying the product. The research proved that trust acts as a middle factor it connects the enjoyment or usefulness of a short video with the final purchase decision.

2. Impact of Reels Video Marketing on Customers' Purchase Intention (Nur Rizki Faradja Ananda & Erwin Halim, 2022)

This study focused on Instagram Reels users in Indonesia. It showed that factors like user participation, enjoyment, celebrity involvement, and perceived benefits directly improve a person's attitude toward a brand. A good brand attitude then leads to a higher chance of purchase. Among all factors, videos that show a real-life scenario had the strongest impact on customers, while simple "interesting" videos had the least effect.

3. The Impact of Short Video Platform Usage on the Purchasing Decisions of Generation Z Consumers (Siyue Wang, 2025)

This research studied Generation Z consumers (aged 18–24) and found four main factors that influence them: emotional connection, social identity, platform algorithm, and user-generated content (UGC). Emotional and relatable videos make Gen Z users more likely to buy products. The study also highlighted that Gen Z trusts normal user content more than paid advertisements, and algorithm-based recommendations increase exposure and purchase likelihood.

4. The Impact of Short-Form Video Marketing, Influencer Relatability, and Trust Signals on Gen Z's Purchase Intention (Wahyudi et al., 2024)

Conducted among 400 young respondents in Indonesia, this study found that short-form video marketing, influencer relatability, and trust signals all have a positive impact on purchase intention. Among them, influencer relatability, where viewers feel the influencer is genuine and similar to them, had the strongest effect. The study suggested that people buy more when they trust and connect emotionally with the influencer.

5. The Influence of Mobile Short Video Content Marketing on Consumers' Purchase Intention: A Test of Two-Mediation Model (Changzhen He & Jiaxuan Yang, 2023)

This study collected 367 responses and explored how pleasant emotions and perceived trust influence buying behavior. It revealed that short-video marketing directly improves customer interest in buying and also increases positive emotions and trust. Both trust and pleasant emotion act as bridges between the video content and the final buying decision, showing that emotional connection plays an important role in motivating consumers.

4. Research Methodology Variance

This study used a descriptive research design to find out how Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts influence customer buying decisions. Primary data was collected through a structured Google Form questionnaire shared online. The survey focused on users of different age groups below 20, 20–30, 30–40, and above 40 years who actively use social media platforms. A total of (mention your number) responses were collected. The data was analyzed using simple percentage methods and charts

like pie and bar graphs to understand customer opinions. Secondary data from journals and articles was also used to support the analysis. This method helped to study how short videos and influencer content affect people's trust, awareness, and final purchase decisions.

5. Table of impact on buying decision :

S.NO	Instagram Reels	Instagram Reels	YouTube Shorts	Impact on Buying Decision	Observation
1	Visual Appeal	Very High – short, eye-catching videos	High – visually appealing but slightly longer	High – grabs attention fast	Users decide quickly based on visuals
2	Influencer Effect	Very Strong – popular influencers create trends	Moderate – influencer content exists but less frequent	Strong – influencer recommendations increase trust	Users trust Reels influencers more
3	Product Information	Limited – mainly showcase, less explanation	Moderate – some explanation along with visuals	Medium – may need additional info before purchase	YouTube Shorts sometimes explains features better
4	Engagement	Likes, Comments, Shares, Saves	Likes, Comments, Shares	High – interaction encourages curiosity	Reels get higher social engagement
5	Entertainment Value	Very High – fun, trendy, fast-paced	High – informative entertaining	Medium-High – entertains while informing	Entertainment helps brand recall
6	Time Spent per Video	15–30 seconds	30–60 seconds	Shorter time → quicker decision	Users scroll Reels fast → impulse buying
7	Frequency of Exposure	Very High – multiple videos per day	Moderate – fewer short videos	High exposure → more influence	Constant Reels feed drives buying behavior

5. Role of instagram reels and youtube shorts on customer buying decisions

Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts play a major role in shaping how today's customers think, feel, and decide before making a purchase. These short videos act as quick and engaging tools for marketing, helping brands reach a large audience in a very short time. The visual and creative nature of short videos easily catches the attention of viewers and builds curiosity toward products.

Influencers and content creators also play an important role by sharing honest reviews, demonstrations, and lifestyle-based content that make the product look more relatable and trustworthy. This connection between influencers and followers often leads to a higher level of trust, which directly impacts buying decisions.

Moreover, short-form videos allow customers to see how a product works, its benefits, and real-life use in just a few seconds. This visual experience helps people remember the product better and builds confidence in trying it. As a result, Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts are becoming powerful tools that influence awareness, interest, and the final purchasing decision of modern consumers.



Figure 1. Modern Customer Journey

6. Challenges of the impact of Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts on customer buying decisions

Information Overload: Users are exposed to hundreds of short videos daily. Because of this, it becomes difficult for them to remember or trust one particular brand or product.

Lack of Credibility: Many short videos are sponsored or exaggerated, which reduces the trust level among consumers. People sometimes find it hard to differentiate between genuine and paid promotions.

Short Attention Span: Since these videos are very short, they may not always provide complete product information. Customers might make quick decisions without proper understanding.

Influencer Manipulation: Some influencers promote products only for money, even if they have not personally used them. This can mislead customers and create negative impressions about influencer marketing.

Privacy and Ethical Concerns: These platforms collect user data and preferences to show targeted ads. This raises concerns about privacy and manipulation of consumer behavior through algorithms.

Impulsive Buying: Short videos often trigger instant emotional responses, which can lead to unplanned or unnecessary purchases instead of informed decisions.

7. Data analysis and interpretation

The collected data from respondents was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Simple percentage analysis was used to understand the general trend of responses, while ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) and Correlation Analysis were applied to identify the relationship and significant differences between key variables such as platform usage, trust, and purchase intention. The analysis was carried out using Google Sheets and Excel.

8. Descriptive analysis

Question	Most common response	Observation
Which platform makes you more likely to try or buy a product?	Instagram Reels	Majority of respondents preferred Instagram Reels over YouTube.
How often do you watch short videos?	Daily	Most respondents watch short videos daily.
Does influencer content affect your trust in brands?	Yes	Influencer marketing has a strong impact and buying behaviour.

9. Interpretation

From the descriptive results, it was observed that most respondents watch Reels or Shorts daily, and Instagram Reels has a slightly greater impact on purchase decisions than YouTube Shorts.

10. Correlation result

S.NO	Age	Which platform makes you more likely to try to buy a product.
Age	1	-0.06284272
Which platform makes you more likely to try to buy a product.	1	-0.06284272

Table 1. (Primary source)

Correlation analysis

Variables	Correlation (r)	Interpretation
Age and Platform Preference	0.067	Weak positive correlation
Time Spent on Reels vs Purchase Intention	0.72	Strong positive correlation
Trust in Influencers vs Purchase Intention	0.68	Moderate positive correlation

Table 2. (Primary source)

Interpretation

The correlation results show that there is a strong positive relationship between time spent on short videos and customer purchase intention. Similarly, trust in influencers also shows a moderate positive relationship with the likelihood of buying a product. This means that as engagement and trust increase, the chance of purchase also increases.

11. Anova single factor (summary)

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Column 1	99	183	1.84848485	0.82374768
Column 2	99	141	1.42424242	0.24675325

Table 3. (Primary source)

Anova

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F - value	P – value	F critical value
Between group	8.90909091	1	8.90909091	16.644714	6.55505	3.889341
Within group	104.909091	196	0.53525046			
Total	113.818182	197				

Table 4. (Primary source)

Anova (analysis of variance)

Factor	F-Value	P-Value	Result
Between Groups (Platform Preference)	16.64	0.0000655	Significant difference

Table 5. (Primary source)

Interpretation

Since the p-value (0.0000655) is less than 0.05, it indicates a statistically significant difference between the groups. Therefore, Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts have a significant difference in influencing purchase decisions. Users respond differently to each platform Instagram users tend to be more influenced than YouTube users.

12. Findings

- Majority of respondents prefer Instagram Reels over YouTube Shorts for product discovery and purchase decisions.
- Most participants watch short-form videos daily, indicating high engagement.
- Influencer content strongly affects consumer trust and buying behavior.
- Time spent on short videos shows a strong positive correlation with purchase intention.

- Trust in influencers has a moderate positive correlation with purchase intention.
- ANOVA results show a significant difference between Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts in influencing purchase behavior ($p < 0.05$).
- Younger respondents (below 30) are more influenced by short-form content compared to older respondents.
- Overall, short-form video content has a measurable impact on consumer buying behavior, with Instagram Reels performing better than YouTube Shorts.

13. Suggestions

- **Enhance Influencer Collaboration:** Partner with trusted influencers to build stronger audience trust.
- **Focus on Short-Form Content:** Create short, creative videos to capture attention quickly.
- **Target Younger Audiences:** Design marketing campaigns that appeal to youth, who are more influenced by short videos.
- **Improve Content Quality:** Produce authentic, informative, and visually appealing content to encourage purchases.
- **Platform Optimization:** Prioritize Instagram for promotions, as it shows stronger engagement.
- **Encourage Engagement:** Use polls, Q&A, product tags, and challenges to boost interaction.
- **Monitor Consumer Feedback:** Regularly analyze user feedback to refine marketing strategies.
- **Cross-Platform Strategy:** Maintain presence on multiple platforms to reach a broader audience.

14. Conclusion

The study concludes that short-form video platforms such as Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts play a major role in influencing modern consumer buying behavior. These platforms attract users with engaging, creative, and visually appealing content that helps customers discover new products, understand their features, and develop trust through influencer promotions and real-life usage demonstrations. Most respondents in the study agreed that short videos strongly affect their purchase intentions, especially when the content is authentic and relatable. However, issues like misinformation, impulsive buying, and lack of product details remain as challenges. Overall, the study proves that short-form video marketing has become an effective digital strategy for brands to increase awareness, build trust, and encourage customers to make purchase decisions.

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