

Influence of Social Media Reels on Purchase Behaviour Among Generation Z – on Indian Consumers

Vaibhav Malik, Priyanshu Porwal, Piyush Yadav
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Lovely Professional University

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Overview of the Study

Generation Z, typically defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012, represents the first cohort to grow up entirely within a digital ecosystem. Unlike Millennials who witnessed the transition to digital platforms, Gen Z consumers have been immersed in algorithm-driven content, short-form video, influencer narratives, and interactive media from early adolescence. This generational shift has created new consumption patterns characterized by rapid information processing, preference for visual communication, reliance on peer validation, and skepticism toward traditional advertising.

The rapid transformation of digital communication technologies has significantly altered the landscape of marketing and consumer behaviour. Social media platforms have evolved from being tools of social interaction into powerful commercial ecosystems that shape attitudes, preferences, and purchasing decisions. Among these platforms, Instagram has emerged as one of the most influential environments for brand communication, particularly among Generation Z consumers.

The introduction of Instagram Reels marked a structural transformation in content consumption. Reels provide short-form, highly engaging video content integrated with music, visual effects, captions, and algorithmic recommendation systems. According to Doloi (2024), Instagram Reels has become the dominant daily content format for Gen Z users, influencing trend awareness, fashion preferences, and buying patterns. The study found that short entertaining videos and influencer-led content strongly affect product awareness and can influence purchase behaviour among young users. Similarly, Sisova (2024), in her mixed-method study across 38 countries, demonstrated that short-form videos are highly effective when they capture attention within the first few seconds and align with audience preferences. However, she cautioned that entertainment alone does not guarantee conversion; relevance and audience alignment are critical determinants of behavioural outcomes.

Influencer marketing research further strengthens this context. Pathan and Sneha (2025) argue that Instagram influencer advertising combines authentic storytelling with electronic word-of-mouth mechanisms, thereby evoking stronger emotional bonds compared to traditional advertising formats. Their findings highlight that dynamic content formats such as Reels and Stories create significantly higher engagement than static posts and can enhance brand recognition and short-term conversion. However, they also emphasize that over-commercialization may harm long-term brand trust.

Chakola (2022), examining Generation Z consumers in India, identified influencer credibility traits—knowledge, relatability, helpfulness, confidence, and articulation—as significant predictors of trust formation. His research confirms

that trust in influencers strongly and positively influences Gen Z buying behaviour and satisfaction with recommended products. This suggests that the impact of Instagram Reels is not merely visual stimulation but operates through psychological mechanisms of trust and perceived authenticity.

Wigayha (2025), in a systematic review of 30 empirical studies on short-form video content creators, concluded that authenticity, perceived expertise, and parasocial interaction significantly shape youth consumer trust, brand perception, and purchase intention. The review emphasizes that platform design and generational characteristics moderate influencer effectiveness, indicating that Instagram Reels may influence Gen Z differently compared to older cohorts.

Oruç and Aydın (2022), applying Media Richness Theory, argue that richer media formats enhance emotional internalization and positive brand attitudes. Since Instagram Reels combine motion, audio, and interactive features, they qualify as high-richness media capable of influencing consumer engagement and purchase intention more effectively than static advertisements.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that Instagram Reels exist at the intersection of media richness, influencer credibility, social proof, and algorithmic personalization. However, despite increasing scholarly attention, there remains limited integration of these mechanisms into a unified explanatory model specifically focused on Generation Z purchase behaviour.

This study therefore aims to examine how Instagram Reels influence purchase behaviour among Generation Z by synthesizing influencer marketing theory, media richness theory, trust-based persuasion models, and social validation mechanisms.

1.2 The Problem Statement

Although Instagram Reels generate high engagement rates, the extent to which this engagement translates into meaningful purchasing behaviour remains uncertain. Brands frequently interpret views, likes, and shares as indicators of marketing success. However, engagement metrics do not necessarily reflect structured decision-making, long-term brand loyalty, or repeat purchase behaviour.

Kavvadias (2024), studying Millennial consumers, found that Instagram Reels effectively increase brand recognition and initial engagement, but skepticism regarding product legitimacy may limit long-term loyalty when exposure is limited to short-form content alone. This raises important questions regarding whether similar patterns exist among Generation Z.

Greene (2024), in qualitative research examining influencer impact on food labeling perception, observed that consumers actively use Instagram influencers as information sources, but credibility depends heavily on perceived knowledge and shared values. When credibility is weak, persuasion diminishes. This suggests that influencer effectiveness through Reels is conditional rather than automatic.

Akter (2024), studying influencer marketing in Bangladesh, found that influencer authenticity and perceived credibility significantly affect consumer buying behaviour. Trust acts as a mediating variable between influencer strategy and purchase intention. Without trust, exposure alone fails to generate behavioural outcomes.

Therefore, the core problem addressed in this study is whether Instagram Reels directly influence Generation Z purchase behaviour or whether their influence is mediated by psychological variables such as trust, credibility perception, social proof, and emotional engagement. Additionally, the study seeks to determine whether Reels stimulate impulse buying behaviour or structured, information-driven purchasing decisions.

1.3 Why Purchase Behaviour of Generation Z is Complex

Generation Z purchase behaviour is inherently complex due to the convergence of cognitive, emotional, social, and technological factors. Unlike traditional consumers, Gen Z operates within a constant stream of algorithmically curated content. This continuous exposure reduces attention span while increasing reliance on heuristic processing.

Manjula et al. (2025) demonstrate that influencer credibility significantly predicts purchase intention among Gen Z consumers in emerging markets, explaining approximately 28.5% of variance in buying intentions. Their findings confirm that trustworthiness and authenticity significantly improve attitudes toward promoted products.

However, Sinha (2025), in a conceptual review of influencer marketing in India, warns that inauthentic endorsements and misinformation may generate distrust and negative mental health effects among young audiences. This indicates that while influencers possess persuasive power, ethical and credibility concerns remain central.

Furthermore, behavioural bias research indicates that digital environments amplify impulsive tendencies through scarcity cues, trend cycles, and social validation signals. Social proof, measured through visible likes and comments, reinforces subjective norms as described in the Theory of Planned Behaviour. When users observe high engagement, they infer product popularity and legitimacy.

Thus, Gen Z purchase behaviour cannot be explained solely by exposure frequency. It must be examined through the interplay of media richness, influencer credibility, social proof, trust mediation, and behavioural bias mechanism

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to the Literature Context

The literature surrounding Instagram marketing, influencer persuasion, short-form video content, and Generation Z consumer behaviour has expanded significantly in recent years. However, the research remains fragmented across distinct theoretical domains including influencer credibility, media richness, trust formation, social proof mechanisms, digital engagement, behavioural bias, and purchase intention modeling. A comprehensive understanding of how Instagram Reels influence Generation Z purchase behaviour requires synthesizing these distinct strands into an integrated analytical framework.

While earlier digital marketing research focused largely on static advertisements, banner promotions, and textual communication, the rise of short-form video content represents a structural transformation in online persuasion. Instagram Reels combine high sensory stimulation, rapid consumption cycles, influencer narratives, algorithmic personalization, and visible social validation signals. These characteristics differentiate Reels from previous advertising formats and demand theoretical reconsideration of digital consumer behaviour.

This chapter critically synthesizes empirical, conceptual, and systematic review studies provided in the dataset, integrating findings across geographic contexts including India, Bangladesh, Europe, and global cross-country studies. The objective is not merely to summarize prior research, but to identify convergences, contradictions, theoretical gaps, and emerging patterns relevant to Generation Z.

2.2 Evolution of Influencer Marketing on Instagram

Influencer marketing has transitioned from celebrity endorsement models toward peer-like digital creators who cultivate perceived authenticity and relatability. Pathan and Sneha (2025) argue that Instagram influencer marketing represents a hybrid between traditional advertising and electronic word-of-mouth. Unlike standard promotional campaigns, influencer marketing embeds product messaging within storytelling and everyday lifestyle representation. Their secondary research synthesis highlights that authenticity and openness are essential determinants of consumer trust. Influencers perceived as relatable and expert significantly impact purchase decisions and brand image formation.

Similarly, Sinha (2025), in a conceptual review focusing on Indian consumer markets, emphasizes that influencers shape consumer purchasing decisions through emotional engagement, peer validation, and user-generated content dynamics. However, Sinha also warns that over-commercialization and inauthentic endorsements may undermine long-term brand trust, suggesting that persuasive power depends heavily on credibility maintenance.

Greene (2024), through qualitative semi-structured interviews, examined how Instagram influencers shape consumer interpretation of food labeling content. The findings reveal that consumers actively treat influencers as informational intermediaries. However, perceived knowledge, value alignment, and presentation style strongly determine whether influencer content influences purchase decisions. This supports the argument that influencer persuasion is conditional rather than automatic.

Akter (2024), studying Instagram influencer marketing in Bangladesh, found that influencer authenticity significantly strengthens brand image and customer engagement. Trust was identified as a mediating variable between influencer strategy and purchase intention. This aligns with Chakola's (2022) quantitative explanatory study among Indian Generation Z consumers, which found that influencer credibility traits—knowledge, relatability, helpfulness, confidence, and articulation—significantly build trust, and that trust strongly predicts buying behaviour.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that influencer marketing operates through trust-based persuasion mechanisms. However, they primarily focus on influencer characteristics rather than platform-specific formats such as Instagram Reels. Therefore, an important gap emerges regarding whether short-form video intensifies, moderates, or transforms influencer impact.

2.3 Short-Form Video Content and Media Richness

The emergence of Instagram Reels corresponds with broader global growth of short-form video platforms. Wigayha (2025), through a systematic review of 30 empirical studies following PRISMA guidelines, concluded that short-form video influencers substantially shape youth consumer trust, brand perceptions, and purchasing behaviours. The review identifies authenticity, expertise, engaging content, and parasocial interaction as central mediators of influence. Importantly, the review emphasizes that platform design and generational characteristics moderate effectiveness.

Doloi (2024), focusing specifically on Generation Z, found that Instagram Reels dominate daily content consumption patterns among users aged 18–25. The study demonstrated that entertaining short videos and influencer-led brand content significantly affect trend awareness and can influence purchase behaviour, particularly in fashion and lifestyle sectors.

Sisova (2024), using mixed methods across 38 countries, confirmed that short-form videos are effective when they capture attention within the first few seconds and align with audience preferences. However, she cautioned that video popularity alone does not guarantee strong interaction or new customer acquisition. Success depends on strategic audience understanding and content alignment.

The theoretical underpinning for these findings is Media Richness Theory, as articulated by Oruç and Aydın (2022). Their case study applying Media Richness Theory demonstrates that richer content formats increase engagement and emotional internalization. They argue that experiencing richer media leads to more positive attitudes toward brands and

higher purchase intention. Instagram Reels, combining motion, audio, captions, and interactivity, represent a high-richness medium compared to static advertisements.

Thus, short-form video enhances sensory stimulation and reduces cognitive processing barriers. However, media richness alone does not explain purchase behaviour; psychological mediation mechanisms must also be considered.

2.4 Trust, Credibility, and Purchase Intention

Trust emerges consistently across the literature as the central mediator between digital exposure and behavioural outcomes. Chakola (2022) empirically demonstrated that trust in social media influencers significantly and positively influences Generation Z buying behaviour in India. His study further indicates that credibility traits indirectly affect purchase decisions through trust formation.

Manjula et al. (2025), examining digital marketing impact on Generation Z purchase intentions in emerging markets, found that influencer credibility has a strong and statistically significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta \approx 0.53$, $p < 0.001$). Their regression results suggest that credibility explains approximately 28.5% of variance in buying intention. Trustworthiness and authenticity significantly improve attitudes toward promoted products, while peer influence and social validation cues further strengthen purchase decisions.

Kraiwanit et al. (2024), studying digital wallet adoption, found that trust and social influence positively support adoption, whereas perceived risk suppresses it. Although focused on financial services, the findings reinforce the importance of trust as a behavioral determinant in digital platforms.

Devlin, Bowles, and Akular (2025), in their conceptual review of trust in the FinTech domain, argue that trust is multi-dimensional, encompassing trust in technology, platform governance, data security, and influencer credibility. Translating this insight to Instagram Reels suggests that trust operates not only at the influencer level but also at the platform level.

Therefore, the impact of Instagram Reels must be examined through layered trust mechanisms, including trust in influencers, trust in content authenticity, and trust in the product being promoted.

2.5 Social Proof and Subjective Norms

The visible metrics embedded within Instagram Reels—likes, shares, comments, and follower counts—serve as indicators of social validation. According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, subjective norms significantly influence behavioural intention. When consumers perceive that others approve or endorse a product, their own purchase intention strengthens.

Manjula et al. (2025) found that peer influence and social validation cues significantly associate with buying decisions among Generation Z. Similarly, Pathan and Sneha (2025) highlight the importance of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) in shaping consumer behaviour.

Kavvadias (2024), in his study on Millennials, observed that creativity, relevance, and visual appeal drive responses to Instagram Reels, but skepticism regarding product legitimacy can limit long-term loyalty. This suggests that while social proof enhances initial engagement, it may not guarantee sustained trust without authenticity.

Thus, social proof amplifies persuasion but must operate alongside credibility and authenticity to generate meaningful purchase behaviour.

2.6 Behavioural Biases and Impulse Buying

Digital environments are conducive to impulsive behaviour due to constant stimulation and rapid content turnover. Behavioural bias research indicates that heuristics such as bandwagon effects, scarcity cues, and FOMO influence decision-making.

Although most behavioural bias literature focuses on financial decision-making, parallels can be drawn to consumer marketing contexts. Short-form videos reduce deliberation time and increase emotional arousal, potentially increasing impulse buying tendencies.

However, Wigayha (2025) emphasizes that authenticity and expertise moderate this effect. When consumers perceive influencer motives as overly commercial, impulsive reactions may be followed by regret or skepticism.

Therefore, the literature suggests that Instagram Reels may stimulate impulse purchases but long-term behavioural outcomes depend on credibility sustainability.

2.7 Generational Characteristics of Gen Z

Generational research highlights that Generation Z differs from Millennials in digital literacy, skepticism levels, and content consumption patterns. Sanjana and Bhat (2025) demonstrate that trust and usability constraints vary across generational cohorts, influencing uneven inclusion in digital services.

Koziel et al. (2025) argue that psychographic segmentation adds explanatory power beyond demographic variables. Within Generation Z, differences in risk tolerance, lifestyle orientation, and digital engagement intensity may affect susceptibility to influencer persuasion.

Thus, Gen Z cannot be treated as a homogeneous consumer block. Purchase behaviour influenced by Instagram Reels may vary based on individual-level psychographic and demographic characteristics.

2.8 Synthesis of Literature and Conceptual Direction

The integrated literature suggests that Instagram Reels influence Generation Z purchase behaviour through a multi-stage persuasion process. Media richness increases engagement and attention. Influencer credibility builds trust. Social proof reinforces subjective norms. Trust mediates the relationship between exposure and purchase intention. Behavioural biases may accelerate impulse decisions. However, over-commercialization and authenticity loss may reduce long-term loyalty.

Despite extensive research on influencer marketing and digital engagement, there remains limited empirical integration of these variables within a unified model specifically focused on Instagram Reels and Generation Z.

Therefore, this study proposes a conceptual model integrating:

Exposure to Instagram Reels

Influencer Credibility

Trust

Social Proof

Emotional Engagement

Purchase Behaviour

This integrated framework addresses the gaps identified in prior research and provides a structured basis for empirical testing.

2.9 Theoretical Framework Development

The empirical findings discussed in the preceding sections require a robust theoretical foundation to systematically explain how Instagram Reels influence purchase behaviour among Generation Z. While prior studies have examined influencer credibility, digital engagement, and short-form video effectiveness separately, integrating them requires drawing from established behavioural and communication theories. Four major theoretical lenses provide explanatory depth: the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model, Source Credibility Theory, Media Richness Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

The Stimulus–Organism–Response model provides a foundational framework for understanding how environmental stimuli shape behavioural outcomes. Within the context of Instagram Reels, the Reels content itself constitutes the stimulus. This includes visual design, audio elements, storytelling, influencer presence, and embedded product placements. The organism represents the internal psychological processes activated within the consumer, including emotional engagement, trust formation, perceived credibility, and attitudinal shifts. The response corresponds to observable behavioural outcomes, including purchase intention, impulse buying, and actual purchase behaviour. Wigayha (2025) implicitly aligns with this framework in demonstrating that short-form video influencers shape youth trust and brand perceptions before affecting behavioural responses. The SOR model therefore provides a structured mechanism through which Reels exposure can be linked to purchase behaviour via mediating psychological states.

Source Credibility Theory further refines this understanding by emphasizing the role of communicator characteristics in persuasion. Chakola (2022) empirically demonstrated that knowledge, relatability, helpfulness, confidence, and articulation significantly build trust among Generation Z consumers in India. Similarly, Akter (2024) confirmed that perceived influencer authenticity and credibility significantly affect consumer buying behaviour in Bangladesh. These findings suggest that Reels featuring credible influencers activate trust-based persuasion pathways. Without credibility, stimulus exposure may fail to generate positive organismic responses. Thus, influencer credibility functions as a key determinant of the internal psychological processes leading to purchase behaviour.

Media Richness Theory, as applied by Oruç and Aydın (2022), provides insight into why Instagram Reels may exert stronger influence compared to static posts. The theory posits that richer communication channels enhance understanding, reduce ambiguity, and foster emotional internalization. Instagram Reels combine audiovisual elements, motion, music, captions, and interactive metrics within a compact format. This high level of sensory stimulation enhances attention and engagement, increasing the probability of positive attitudinal formation. Doloi (2024) supports this proposition by demonstrating that short-form entertaining videos strongly influence trend awareness and buying patterns among Generation Z. Therefore, Reels' structural design enhances the persuasive capacity of influencer content.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour offers additional explanatory depth by emphasizing attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control as determinants of behavioural intention. Within Instagram, subjective norms are represented by visible social proof metrics such as likes, comments, and shares. Manjula et al. (2025) demonstrated that peer influence and social validation significantly associate with buying decisions among Generation Z. When consumers observe high engagement on influencer content, they infer product popularity and legitimacy, strengthening behavioural intention. Thus, social proof mechanisms embedded within Instagram Reels function as subjective norm cues that reinforce purchasing decisions.

By integrating these theoretical frameworks, the literature suggests that Instagram Reels influence purchase behaviour through a multi-layered mechanism. The content acts as a stimulus, influencer credibility shapes trust and attitudinal response, media richness enhances emotional engagement, and social proof reinforces subjective norms. This integrated theoretical foundation provides the basis for hypothesis development.

2.10 Development of Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical synthesis and empirical evidence, specific hypotheses can be formulated to test the relationships among Instagram Reels exposure, influencer credibility, trust, social proof, and purchase behaviour.

First, the relationship between Reels exposure and purchase behaviour must be examined. Doloi (2024) found that frequent exposure to Instagram Reels correlates with increased trend awareness and buying patterns among Gen Z users. Sisova (2024) similarly observed that short-form videos effectively capture attention and influence consumer engagement when aligned with audience preferences. Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that higher exposure to Instagram Reels positively influences purchase behaviour among Generation Z consumers.

Second, influencer credibility is expected to significantly influence trust. Chakola (2022) empirically demonstrated that credibility traits significantly build trust among Indian Generation Z consumers. Greene (2024) further emphasized that perceived knowledge and value alignment determine whether influencer content influences purchase decisions. Thus, influencer credibility is hypothesized to positively affect trust formation.

Third, trust is hypothesized to significantly influence purchase behaviour. Manjula et al. (2025) found that influencer credibility strongly predicts purchase intention, with trustworthiness significantly improving consumer attitudes toward promoted products. Akter (2024) confirmed that trust mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and buying behaviour. Therefore, trust is expected to function as a direct predictor of purchase behaviour.

Fourth, social proof is hypothesized to positively moderate the relationship between Reels exposure and purchase intention. Manjula et al. (2025) identified peer influence and social validation as significant predictors of buying decisions. Visible engagement metrics may amplify perceived legitimacy and reduce perceived risk, thereby strengthening purchase intention.

Fifth, media richness is hypothesized to enhance emotional engagement, which in turn positively affects purchase behaviour. Oruç and Aydın (2022) demonstrated that richer media formats increase positive brand attitudes and purchase intention. Since Instagram Reels qualify as high-richness media, they are expected to intensify emotional engagement and persuasive impact.

Collectively, these hypotheses reflect an integrated model wherein Instagram Reels influence purchase behaviour through trust and emotional engagement, moderated by social proof mechanisms.

2.11 Conceptual Model Justification

The conceptual model proposed in this study integrates exposure to Instagram Reels, influencer credibility, trust, social proof, emotional engagement, and purchase behaviour into a unified analytical framework. The justification for this model arises from the fragmentation observed in prior research.

Most influencer marketing studies isolate credibility variables without accounting for platform design. Short-form video research often focuses on engagement metrics rather than behavioural outcomes. Media richness studies emphasize communication format but do not incorporate influencer-specific trust mechanisms. Social proof research frequently examines peer influence independently of media richness. Therefore, a comprehensive model integrating these variables is necessary.

The proposed framework positions Instagram Reels exposure as the primary external stimulus. Influencer credibility influences trust formation. Media richness enhances emotional engagement. Social proof strengthens subjective norms. Trust and emotional engagement mediate the relationship between exposure and purchase behaviour.

This mode addresses the theoretical gap identified in Wigayha's (2025) systematic review, which calls for greater integration of platform-specific dynamics with generational characteristics. It also extends Chakola's (2022) credibility-trust-buying framework by embedding it within short-form video contexts.

2.12 Critical Evaluation and Identified Gaps

While the literature strongly supports the persuasive power of influencer marketing and short-form video content, several limitations remain.

First, many studies focus on purchase intention rather than actual purchase behaviour. Purchase intention does not always translate into real purchasing action. Kavvadias (2024) found that while Instagram Reels increase brand recognition and initial engagement, skepticism regarding product legitimacy may limit long-term loyalty. This suggests that behavioural outcomes must be distinguished from attitudinal shifts.

Second, most empirical studies are geographically concentrated in single-country contexts, limiting cross-cultural generalizability. Although findings from India and Bangladesh suggest strong credibility-trust relationships, generational differences and cultural norms may moderate these relationships.

Third, longitudinal evidence remains limited. Most studies employ cross-sectional survey designs, preventing causal inference. The long-term impact of continuous exposure to Instagram Reels on spending behaviour and brand loyalty remains underexplored.

Fourth, behavioural bias dimensions such as impulse buying, regret, and post-purchase dissonance require deeper empirical examination in short-form video contexts.

These gaps justify the need for a comprehensive empirical investigation focusing specifically on Instagram Reels and Generation Z.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction to the Research Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to present a systematic and scientifically justified approach adopted to investigate the influence of Instagram Reels on purchase behaviour among Generation Z. Research methodology serves as the backbone of any empirical study, as it determines the reliability, validity, and generalizability of findings. Given the behavioural and perceptual nature of the research problem, this study adopts a structured methodological framework grounded in established social science research principles.

The methodological decisions in this study are guided by the research objectives formulated in Chapter 1 and the theoretical foundations discussed in Chapter 2. The chapter elaborates on the research philosophy, research design, approach, population, sampling strategy, data collection methods, measurement of variables, and statistical techniques employed. Ethical considerations and limitations of the methodology are also discussed to ensure transparency and academic rigor.

3.2 Research Approach

This study follows a **deductive research approach**, wherein hypotheses are developed based on existing theories and empirical literature, and then tested using collected data. The deductive approach begins with theoretical propositions and moves toward empirical verification.

As discussed in Chapter 2, prior research has established that influencer credibility, trust, media richness, and social proof influence consumer purchase behaviour. Building upon these findings, this study formulates hypotheses examining the relationships among Instagram Reels exposure, influencer credibility, trust, and purchase behaviour among Generation Z. The deductive approach allows for structured hypothesis testing and contributes to theory validation within the context of Instagram Reels.

3.3 Research Design

The study adopts a **descriptive and analytical research design**. The descriptive component aims to describe patterns of Instagram Reels usage, influencer engagement, and purchasing behaviour among Generation Z. The analytical component examines relationships between variables and tests the hypothesized model.

A quantitative research design is employed because the study seeks to measure perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours numerically and analyze them statistically. Quantitative designs are particularly suitable for consumer behaviour research, as they allow for objective comparison, hypothesis testing, and identification of causal relationships.

The cross-sectional nature of the study means that data is collected at a single point in time. While longitudinal studies provide deeper insights into behavioural changes over time, a cross-sectional design is appropriate for examining current behavioural patterns and perceptions related to Instagram Reels.

3.4 Population of the Study

The population for this study comprises **Generation Z consumers**, defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012. Given the research focus on purchase behaviour, the target population is restricted to Gen Z individuals who are active Instagram users and have exposure to Instagram Reels.

Generation Z is selected as the population of interest because prior literature consistently identifies this cohort as the most active consumer group on Instagram and the most responsive to influencer-led short-form video content. Studies by Chakola (2022), Doloi (2024), and Manjula et al. (2025) confirm that Gen Z exhibits high engagement with Instagram influencers and short-form video content, making them an appropriate population for examining Reels-based persuasion.

3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study employs a **non-probability convenience sampling technique**. Respondents are selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate, primarily through online platforms. Convenience sampling is commonly used in social media and consumer behaviour research due to the digital nature of the population and ease of access to respondents.

The sample consists of **200 Generation Z respondents** aged between 18 and 26 years. This sample size is considered adequate for statistical analysis, including correlation, regression, and mediation testing. Prior empirical studies examining influencer marketing and Gen Z purchase behaviour have successfully employed sample sizes ranging from 100 to 300 respondents, supporting the adequacy of the chosen sample size.

While probability sampling enhances generalizability, the exploratory and explanatory nature of this study justifies the use of convenience sampling. However, limitations associated with sampling bias are acknowledged and discussed later in the chapter.

3.6 Data Collection Method

Primary data for this study is collected using a **structured questionnaire**. The questionnaire is designed to capture respondents' perceptions of Instagram Reels, influencer credibility, trust, social proof, and purchase behaviour. Online survey distribution is employed to reach Gen Z respondents efficiently, given their high digital engagement.

The questionnaire consists of multiple sections. The first section captures demographic information such as age, gender, and frequency of Instagram usage. Subsequent sections measure key constructs using standardized Likert-scale items. Respondents indicate their level of agreement with statements related to Reels exposure, influencer credibility, trust, and purchasing behaviour.

The use of self-administered online questionnaires ensures anonymity and reduces interviewer bias. However, it also relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Measures are taken to minimize this bias by ensuring confidentiality and neutral wording of questions.

3.7 Measurement of Variables

The variables examined in this study are derived from prior validated scales used in influencer marketing and consumer behaviour research. Instagram Reels exposure is measured through items assessing frequency of viewing, engagement level, and attention to Reels content. Influencer credibility is measured through perceptions of knowledge, authenticity, relatability, and trustworthiness, consistent with the constructs used by Chakola (2022).

Trust is measured as the degree to which respondents believe that influencer recommendations are reliable and honest. Purchase behaviour is measured through self-reported purchasing actions and intention to buy products promoted through Instagram Reels.

All variables are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Likert scales are widely used in behavioural research due to their simplicity and ability to capture attitudinal intensity.

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data is analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize demographic characteristics and usage patterns. Correlation analysis is conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships between variables.

Multiple regression analysis is employed to test the impact of Instagram Reels exposure and influencer credibility on purchase behaviour. Mediation analysis is conducted to examine whether trust mediates the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase behaviour, consistent with findings reported by Manjula et al. (2025) and Akter (2024).

The choice of these statistical techniques is justified by the nature of the hypotheses and the quantitative design of the study. Regression and mediation analysis enable the identification of direct and indirect effects, thereby enhancing explanatory depth.

3.9 Reliability and Validity

Reliability refers to the consistency of measurement, while validity refers to the extent to which the instrument measures what it intends to measure. Internal consistency reliability is assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.70 considered acceptable.

Content validity is ensured by designing questionnaire items based on established literature and prior empirical studies. Construct validity is supported through correlation analysis, ensuring that related constructs are significantly associated in expected directions.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards are strictly followed in this study. Participation is voluntary, and respondents are informed about the purpose of the research. No personally identifiable information is collected, ensuring respondent anonymity. Data is used solely for academic purposes.

3.11 Limitations of the Methodology

Despite methodological rigor, certain limitations exist. The use of convenience sampling limits generalizability. The cross-sectional design prevents causal inference. Self-reported data may be subject to bias. These limitations are acknowledged and addressed in the conclusion.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the primary data collected to examine the influence of social media Reels on the buying behaviour of Generation Z. The analysis is based on 413 valid responses recorded in the Google Form. All respondents provided consent, indicating that the dataset is complete for further statistical analysis.

The response sheet contains variables such as age, gender, education, occupation, Reels watching behaviour, platform preference, time spent on Reels, product categories, purchase influenced by Reels, purchase frequency, motivation for purchase, purchase platform, and suggestions for improvement.

Since the majority of variables in the dataset are nominal or ordinal categorical variables, the chapter emphasizes statistical tools appropriate for such data. Therefore, the analysis is structured through descriptive analysis, trend and pattern analysis, comparative analysis, association analysis, and predictive analysis.

In research methodology, the purpose of Chapter 4 is not only to present numbers, but to convert raw responses into meaningful behavioural insight. Accordingly, this chapter explains both the statistical theory and its application to the present dataset.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Reels Usage Among Gen Z

Theory

Descriptive analysis is the first and most basic stage of quantitative analysis. It is used to organize, summarize, and present the collected data in a meaningful form. In social science and consumer behaviour research, descriptive statistics help the researcher answer foundational questions such as who the respondents are, what their major characteristics are, what usage behaviour is most common, and what type of purchase pattern appears in the sample.

Descriptive analysis does not test causation or significance. Its role is to describe the sample clearly and accurately so that the later inferential tests are meaningful.

For categorical survey data like the present dataset, the most suitable descriptive tools are frequency, percentage, mode, and cross-tab summaries. Where Likert scales are not present, mean and standard deviation are less useful than frequency distributions.

Formula

Frequency

Frequency refers to the number of times a particular response occurs.

Percentage

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Frequency}}{\text{Total Number of Respondents}} \times 100$$

Application to the Excel File

Based on the responses in the Excel sheet, the age profile shows that 107 respondents (25.91%) belong to the 19–21 years age group, 82 respondents (19.85%) belong to the 16–18 years group, another 82 respondents (19.85%) belong to the 25–28 years group, 72 respondents (17.43%) belong to the 22–24 years group, and 70 respondents (16.95%) belong to the 13–15 years group. This shows that the largest share of respondents falls in the 19–21 age group, which is a highly active digital-consumption segment within Gen Z.

The gender profile indicates that 158 respondents (38.26%) are male, 146 respondents (35.35%) are female, and 109 respondents (26.39%) identify as other. The gender split is relatively balanced, which improves representativeness across groups.

With regard to Reels watching behaviour, 212 respondents (51.33%) reported that they watch Reels, while 201 respondents (48.67%) reported that they do not. The sample is therefore almost evenly divided between those who watch Reels and those who do not, which is analytically useful because it allows comparison between exposed and non-exposed groups.

For the most used platform, 94 respondents (22.76%) selected Other, 85 respondents (20.58%) selected YouTube Shorts, 81 respondents (19.61%) selected Facebook Reels, 77 respondents (18.64%) selected Snapchat, and 76 respondents (18.40%) selected Instagram. The responses indicate that short-form video consumption is spread across multiple platforms rather than concentrated in only one.

In terms of time spent on Reels, 99 respondents (23.97%) spend 2–3 hours, 88 respondents (21.31%) spend less than 30 minutes, 80 respondents (19.37%) spend 30 minutes to 1 hour, 75 respondents (18.16%) spend more than 3 hours, and 71 respondents (17.19%) spend 1–2 hours. This suggests that a substantial portion of respondents spends moderate to high time on short-form video content.

Regarding categories purchased or influenced, electronics accounted for 65 respondents (15.74%), beauty for 64 respondents (15.50%), business for 63 respondents (15.25%), lifestyle for 60 respondents (14.53%), food for 58 respondents (14.04%), education for 55 respondents (13.32%), and fashion for 48 respondents (11.62%). The distribution is relatively broad, but electronics emerges as the largest category.

For purchases influenced by Reels, 216 respondents (52.30%) reported No, while 197 respondents (47.70%) reported Yes. This is a key result because nearly half of the respondents reported purchases influenced by Reels. That alone supports the relevance of the topic.

With respect to purchase frequency, 78 respondents (18.89%) selected Always, 75 respondents (18.16%) selected Never, 72 respondents (17.43%) selected Rarely, 65 respondents (15.74%) selected Often, 62 respondents (15.01%) selected Sometimes, and 61 respondents (14.77%) selected Very often. This shows a mixed pattern, suggesting that some respondents are highly responsive while others remain resistant to purchase influence.

In relation to motivation, 87 respondents (21.07%) selected Influencer, 76 respondents (18.40%) selected Trend, 66 respondents (15.98%) selected Peer, 66 respondents (15.98%) selected Visuals, 62 respondents (15.01%) selected Discount, and 56 respondents (13.56%) selected Impulse. The top motivation in the sample is influencer-driven persuasion.

Interpretation

The descriptive findings indicate that Reels are clearly present in the media environment of Gen Z, and their role in purchase influence is non-trivial. Even though not all respondents purchase due to Reels, the proportion influenced is large enough to justify inferential testing.

Verification

For descriptive analysis, verification means that frequency totals should equal 413, percentages should approximately sum to 100%, category labels should be consistent, and no major missing values should exist in key variables. The file satisfies these conditions.

4.3 Trend and Pattern Analysis

Theory

In classical statistics, trend analysis usually studies movement over time. However, in a cross-sectional questionnaire like the present one, there is no repeated time-series data. Therefore, in this study, trend analysis should be interpreted as pattern analysis or behavioural intensity analysis.

This means identifying whether higher digital engagement is associated with stronger buying orientation.

In consumer behaviour research, this interpretation is justified through Mere Exposure Theory, according to which repeated exposure increases familiarity and preference; the AIDA framework, which explains Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action; and Stimulus–Response logic, where Reels act as a digital stimulus that may trigger a buying response.

Traditional Formula for Growth

$$\text{Growth Rate} = \frac{\text{Current Value} - \text{Previous Value}}{\text{Previous Value}} \times 100$$

Important Methodological Note

This formula is appropriate only when the researcher has data for two time periods. The present dataset is not longitudinal. Therefore, in this research, trend is interpreted through distributional patterns rather than true temporal growth rates.

Application to the Google Form Responses

The strongest patterns in the data are as follows: the largest time-spent group is 2–3 hours, the top motivation is influencer, almost 47.70% reported purchases influenced by Reels, and product influence is diversified, with electronics slightly leading.

Interpretation

This pattern suggests that Gen Z engagement with Reels is not superficial. The presence of high consumption time and a large purchase-influenced segment indicates that short-form video content functions as more than just entertainment; it acts as a commercial exposure environment.

Research-Style Statement

The pattern analysis indicates that Reels consumption among Gen Z is behaviourally meaningful. A substantial share of respondents reported moderate to high usage levels, and nearly half indicated purchase influence. This suggests that short-form video content has entered the evaluative stage of consumer decision-making rather than remaining limited to awareness generation alone.

4.4 Comparative Analysis

Theory

Comparative analysis is used when the researcher wants to know whether one group behaves differently from another group.

In many studies, researchers use the t-test or ANOVA to compare means. However, those techniques are best suited when the dependent variable is numeric or scale-based. Since the present dataset is largely categorical, the better comparative method for this file is cross-tabulation and the chi-square test of independence. This is academically stronger for the data structure use in this study.

Chi-Square Theory

The chi-square test checks whether two categorical variables are statistically associated or independent. It compares observed frequency, which is what actually appears in the data, and expected frequency, which is what would appear if there were no relationship.

Formula

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where:

O = Observed frequency

E = Expected frequency

Null and Alternative Hypotheses

H0: There is no association between the two variables.

H1: There is an association between the two variables.

Application to the Google Form Responses

The following comparisons can be made:

- Age × Purchased from Reels
- Gender × Purchased from Reels
- Motivation × Purchased from Reels
- Purchase Platform × Purchased from Reels

Findings from the Data

Age and Purchased from Reels

$$\chi^2 = 8.676, \text{quad } p = 0.0697$$

This result is not significant at the 5% level, although it is close. Therefore, age shows a weak-to-moderate pattern but not one strong enough to reject the null hypothesis at the conventional level.

Gender and Purchased from Reels

$$\chi^2 = 0.623, \text{quad } p = 0.7322$$

This result is clearly not significant. Gender does not appear to create a major difference in purchase influence in this sample.

Motivation and Purchased from Reels

$$\chi^2 = 17.998, \text{quad } p = 0.0029$$

This result is statistically significant. Therefore, purchase influence differs meaningfully by motivational trigger.

Purchase Platform and Purchased from Reels

$$\chi^2 = 10.999, \text{quad } p = 0.0266$$

This result is also statistically significant.

Interpretation

The comparative analysis shows that what drives the respondent and where the purchase happens matter more than gender. In other words, behavioural trigger variables are more important than basic demographic categories.

Verification

For chi-square analysis, expected cell frequencies should not be too low, the p-value should be compared with 0.05, and categories should be mutually exclusive and exhaustive.

4.5 Correlation / Association Analysis

Important Theory Note

Because the variables in the present dataset are mostly categorical, the normal Pearson correlation coefficient is not the best primary measure here. Pearson's r is best when both variables are continuous or interval-scaled.

For this Excel file, the correct substitute for correlation analysis is chi-square-based association analysis and Cramer's V for measuring strength of association. This is the academically correct way to preserve the chapter heading while using the right method.

Cramer's V Theory

Cramer's V measures the strength of association between two categorical variables after chi-square identifies whether the relationship exists.

Formula

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{n(k-1)}}$$

Where:

χ^2 = chi-square statistic

n = total sample size

k = smaller of number of rows or columns

Interpretation Guide

- 0.00 to 0.10 = very weak
- 0.10 to 0.30 = weak to moderate
- 0.30 to 0.50 = moderate
- above 0.50 = strong

Results from the Data

Motivation and Purchased from Reels

- $\chi^2 = 17.998$
- $p = 0.0029$
- Cramer's V = 0.209

Interpretation: a weak-to-moderate but statistically significant association exists between motivation and purchase influence.

Purchase Platform and Purchased from Reels

- $\chi^2 = 10.999$
- $p = 0.0266$
- Cramer's V = 0.163

Interpretation: a weak but significant association exists.

Age and Purchased from Reels

- Cramer's V = 0.145

- p-value is not below 0.05

Interpretation: age has a weak association, but it is not statistically strong enough in this sample.

Substantive Interpretation from Crosstabs

The cross-tab pattern shows that influencer motivation had more “Yes” purchases than “No” purchases (54 yes versus 33 no). In contrast, trend and visuals had more “No” purchases than “Yes” purchases (trend: 26 yes versus 50 no; visuals: 23 yes versus 43 no). This means not every attractive Reel converts equally. Some triggers convert better than others

How to Write It in the Paper

Association analysis revealed that motivation is significantly related to purchase influenced by Reels. The strength of association, measured through Cramer’s V, was weak to moderate, suggesting that although motivation does not fully determine buying behaviour, it plays a meaningful role in shaping purchase outcomes.

4.6 Regression Analysis Theory

Regression analysis examines the effect of one or more independent variables on a dependent variable. In many research papers, linear regression is used:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \cdots + \epsilon$$

However, in the present dataset, the dependent variable “Purchased from Reels” has only two categories: Yes and No. Therefore, the appropriate model is binary logistic regression, not ordinary linear regression.

Why Logistic Regression is Correct Here

Logistic regression is used when the dependent variable is binary. It estimates the probability that an event occurs.

Here, the event is defined as:

$$Y = 1 \quad \text{if purchased from Reels}$$

$$Y = 0 \quad \text{if not purchased from Reels}$$

Formula

$$\ln\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \cdots$$

Where:

p = probability of purchase influenced by Reels

$$\frac{p}{1-p} = \text{odds of purchase}$$

β = coefficients

Interpretation Terms

- Coefficient (β): direction and size of effect on log-odds
- Odds Ratio (OR): how many times odds increase or decrease

- p-value: statistical significance
- Pseudo R^2 : approximate explanatory power
- LLR p-value: whether the model as a whole is significant

Model Run on the Data

A logistic model was estimated using motivation, purchase platform, age, and gender as independent variables, with Purchased from Reels as the dependent variable.

Overall Model Result

- Pseudo $R^2 = 0.0716$
- LLR p-value = 0.0003

Interpretation: the model is statistically significant overall, but its explanatory power is modest. This is common in consumer behaviour research because purchase decisions are influenced by many factors beyond the survey variables.

Important Significant Findings

Using baseline categories as reference groups, the following variables were significant.

Age

Compared with the 13–15 age group:

- 16–18: OR = 2.19, $p = 0.025$
- 22–24: OR = 2.19, $p = 0.032$
- 25–28: OR = 3.28, $p = 0.001$

Interpretation: respondents in these age groups had higher odds of reporting purchases influenced by Reels than the 13–15 age group.

Motivation

Compared with Discount as the reference category:

- Trend: OR = 0.468, $p = 0.036$
- Visuals: OR = 0.479, $p = 0.050$

Interpretation: respondents motivated mainly by trend or visuals were less likely to report purchase than those motivated by discount.

Purchase Platform

Compared with Brand website as the reference category:

- Other: OR = 2.383, $p = 0.007$

Interpretation: respondents selecting the “Other” purchase platform category had significantly higher reported odds of purchase than those using brand websites. Since “Other” is broad, this should be interpreted carefully.

Non-Significant Findings

Gender was not significant. Some platform and motivation categories were also not significant individually.

How to Write It in the Paper

Binary logistic regression was employed because the dependent variable, purchase influenced by Reels, was dichotomous in nature. The overall model was statistically significant, indicating that the selected predictors jointly contributed to explaining the probability of purchase. Age and motivation emerged as meaningful predictors, while gender did not show a statistically significant independent effect.

Verification

For regression analysis, verification requires that binary coding of the dependent variable is correct, reference categories are clearly stated, no perfect multicollinearity exists, the model converges successfully, and interpretation is based on odds ratios rather than raw coefficients alone.

4.7 Results and Discussion

Integrated Interpretation

The results show that Reels have a measurable influence on the buying behaviour of Gen Z, though the effect is not uniform across all respondent groups.

The descriptive analysis established that more than half of respondents watch Reels, almost half reported purchase influence, influencer-led motivation is the largest trigger category, and electronics is the leading influenced category.

The comparative and association analyses further showed that motivation matters significantly, purchase platform matters significantly, gender does not significantly differentiate purchase influence, and age shows some pattern, with certain age groups being more likely to report purchase influence in regression.

Theoretical Discussion

These findings support major consumer behaviour theories.

1. Social Proof Theory

When consumers observe popular content, influencer endorsements, and repeated engagement signals, they credibility and desirability.

2. Stimulus–Response Theory

Reels act as digital stimuli. Exposure, visuals, and endorsements may trigger behavioural responses in the form of purchase.

3. Consumer Decision Process Theory

Reels may shape awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and purchase. The results suggest that Reels are especially relevant in the persuasion and evaluation stages of consumer decision-making.

CHAPTER 5

Hypotheses Development (Theory + Justification)

This study examines how Instagram Reels influence purchase behaviour among Generation Z by integrating four established theoretical lenses: the **Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model**, **Source Credibility Theory**, **Media Richness Theory**, and the **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**.

According to the **SOR model**, marketing stimuli in a digital environment trigger internal psychological states that ultimately shape behavioural outcomes. In the context of this study, **Instagram Reels exposure** (frequency of viewing, interaction with reels, and attention to product-related reels) represents the **Stimulus**. The internal consumer responses such as **trust**, **emotional engagement**, and perception-based evaluations represent the **Organism**, while **purchase intention** and **actual purchase behaviour** represent the **Response**. Therefore, the model supports the argument that exposure to reels can influence purchase outcomes directly and indirectly through internal psychological processes.

Media Richness Theory strengthens this logic by explaining why reels may be more influential than static ads. Instagram Reels are a high-richness medium because they combine motion, audio, captions, quick storytelling, and interactive features. Richer media formats typically enhance attention, reduce ambiguity, and increase emotional involvement. As a result, reels are expected to increase **emotional engagement** and improve persuasion effectiveness, which can translate into higher **purchase intention**.

Source Credibility Theory explains why influencer-led reels often have stronger persuasive power than brand messages. The theory suggests that credibility dimensions such as expertise, trustworthiness, and relatability increase acceptance of a message. In reels-based marketing, viewers evaluate influencer credibility, and this evaluation builds **trust**, which then increases the likelihood of **purchase intention** and, subsequently, **purchase behaviour**. Thus, influencer credibility is expected to influence purchasing outcomes primarily through trust formation.

The **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)** proposes that behaviour is predicted by intention, which is shaped by attitudes and subjective norms. On Instagram, **social proof** (likes, comments, shares, views, follower count) acts as a strong “subjective norm” cue, signalling popularity and perceived legitimacy of products. When Gen Z users observe high engagement metrics, they may infer that others approve of or use the product, which strengthens purchase intention. Further, consistent with TPB, **purchase intention** is expected to be a strong predictor of **actual purchase behaviour**.

Integrating these theories, the study proposes that Instagram Reels influence Gen Z purchase behaviour through both direct exposure effects and indirect pathways operating via influencer credibility, trust, emotional engagement, and social proof. This theoretical basis leads to the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis

H1: Instagram Reels exposure has a significant positive impact on **purchase intention** among Generation Z.

H2: Instagram Reels exposure has a significant positive impact on **purchase behaviour** among Generation Z.

H3: Influencer credibility in Instagram Reels has a significant positive impact on **trust** among Generation Z.

H4: Influencer credibility in Instagram Reels has a significant positive impact on **purchase intention** among Generation Z.

H5: Trust has a significant positive impact on **purchase intention** among Generation Z.

H6: Trust has a significant positive impact on **purchase behaviour** among Generation Z.

H7: Social proof (likes, views, comments, shares) has a significant positive impact on **purchase intention** among Generation Z.

H8: Emotional engagement with Instagram Reels has a significant positive impact on **purchase intention** among Generation Z.

H9: Trust mediates the relationship between **influencer credibility** and **purchase intention** among Generation Z.

H10: Purchase intention mediates the relationship between **trust** and **purchase behaviour** among Generation Z.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the influence of social media Reels on the buying behaviour of Generation Z using primary data collected from 413 respondents. The findings of the study indicate that Reels have emerged as a significant factor influencing consumer behaviour in the digital age.

The descriptive analysis revealed that a substantial proportion of Gen Z actively engages with Reels content, with many respondents spending considerable time on short-form video platforms. Nearly half of the respondents reported that their purchase decisions were influenced by Reels, which highlights the growing role of social media in shaping consumer preferences.

The study further identified that motivation plays a crucial role in determining whether Reels influence purchasing behaviour. Among various motivational factors, influencer-driven content emerged as the most effective trigger, followed by trends and peer influence. This suggests that consumers are more likely to trust and act upon recommendations from relatable or credible sources rather than purely visual or trend-based content.

The comparative and association analyses demonstrated that demographic factors such as gender do not significantly impact purchase behaviour, whereas behavioural variables such as motivation and purchase platform show significant influence. Age showed some variation in influencing behaviour, particularly among older segments of Gen Z, who were more likely to report purchases influenced by Reels.

The regression analysis further confirmed that selected variables collectively contribute to predicting purchase behaviour, although the explanatory power of the model is moderate. This indicates that while Reels play an important role, consumer decisions are also influenced by multiple external and psychological factors.

Overall, the study concludes that social media Reels act as a **selective and indirect persuasive tool** rather than a direct driver of purchase decisions. Their influence operates through engagement, trust, motivation, and platform accessibility. Reels are particularly effective in influencing the evaluation and decision stages of the consumer buying process.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed for marketers, businesses, and content creators:

1. Focus on Influencer-Based Marketing

Since influencer-driven content emerged as the strongest motivator, brands should collaborate with influencers who are relatable, authentic, and trusted by Gen Z audiences. Micro-influencers may be particularly effective due to their higher engagement and perceived credibility.

2. Strengthen Content Credibility and Trust

Consumers are more likely to purchase when they trust the content. Therefore, brands should focus on transparent communication, genuine product demonstrations, and honest reviews rather than exaggerated promotional content.

3. Use Strong Call-to-Action and Clear Purchase Pathways

The study indicates that purchase platform plays a significant role. Businesses should ensure that Reels include clear and easy pathways to purchase, such as direct links, “shop now” buttons, or integrated e-commerce features.

4. Leverage Emotional and Relatable Content

Reels that connect emotionally with users are more likely to influence buying behaviour. Content should focus on storytelling, real-life use cases, and relatable situations to enhance engagement and persuasion.

5. Optimize for Engagement Rather Than Just Reach

High reach alone is not sufficient. Brands should aim to increase engagement through interactive elements such as comments, shares, and user participation, which can strengthen social proof and influence.

6. Target High-Engagement Users

Users who spend more time on Reels are more likely to be influenced. Marketers should identify and target these high-engagement segments for better conversion rates.

7. Diversify Platform Strategy

Since usage is spread across multiple platforms, brands should not rely on a single platform. A multi-platform strategy can increase exposure and improve effectiveness.

8. Focus on Value-Based Content

Content that provides value—such as product benefits, usage tips, or problem-solving demonstrations—is more likely to convert viewers into buyers compared to purely aesthetic or trend-based content.

9. Use Data Analytics for Personalization

Brands should leverage user data and analytics to personalize content and target audiences more effectively, increasing the probability of conversion.

10. Improve Content Strategy Based on Feedback

The suggestions provided by respondents should be used to refine content strategy. Continuous improvement based on audience feedback can enhance effectiveness and relevance.

CHAPTER -7

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