

“From Scrolling to Shopping: The Impact of Instagram Reels Engagement on Purchase Intention among Generation Z Consumers in India”

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Abstract

This study examines how Instagram Reels engagement influences purchase intention among Generation Z consumers in India. The study models Instagram Reels engagement as a multidimensional construct shaped by usage intensity, brand engagement, trust, and relatability, and influencer impact. The analysis uses chart-level survey summaries standardized to 185 respondents and reconstructs respondent-level data for exploratory inferential analysis. Descriptive statistics, reliability testing, correlation, variance inflation factor testing, and regression analysis are used to evaluate the relationship between Reels engagement and purchase intention. The descriptive results show heavy exposure to Instagram Reels, strong brand discovery through Reels, moderate-to-high trust in product-related content, and meaningful purchase conversion. The exploratory regression results indicate that brand engagement, trust, and relatability, usage intensity, and influencer impact positively affect purchase intention, while a second model shows that overall Instagram Reels engagement strongly predicts purchase intention. The findings suggest that Reels do not merely entertain users; they act as a discovery, evaluation, and conversion channel for Gen Z consumers. The study offers practical insights for brands that want to use short-form video content, influencer partnerships, and emotionally resonant storytelling to strengthen purchase outcomes.

Keywords: Instagram Reels, Generation Z purchase intention, social media marketing, influencer impact, brand engagement.

Introduction

Short-form video has rapidly become one of the most influential formats in digital marketing. Among younger audiences, Instagram Reels combine entertainment, social interaction, influencer communication, and product discovery within a single scrolling experience. This makes Reels especially relevant for Generation Z, a segment that is highly active on mobile-first platforms and often relies on peer-like content rather than traditional advertising. Unlike static advertisements, Reels immerse users in a sequence of brief, visually rich, algorithmically personalised videos. In that environment, brands can appear through tutorials, reviews, unboxings, humour, day-in-the-life content, and influencer recommendations. As a result, the line between browsing and buying becomes

increasingly blurred. The present study investigates whether Instagram Reels engagement translates into purchase intention among Generation Z consumers in India. In doing so, it follows the overall design logic of the uploaded reference paper but adapts the constructs to the user's topic and available survey results. The study specifically examines whether usage intensity, brand-related engagement, trust, and relatability, and influencer impact shape purchase intention toward products encountered through Instagram Reels.

Review Of Literature

2.1 Consumer behaviour and social media activity

Past studies indicate that social media sites affect attitudes towards awareness and behavioural intents by incorporating brand communication within day to day media consisting routes among younger consumers.

2.2 Marketing environment as a short form video content

Short form video enhances attention by bringing in fun and readiness to share with people also promotes the repetition of exposure since the viewers watch numerous clips during one sitting and this contributes to reels being

an efficient channel through which products are discovered and brands seen and brevity entertainment value and shareability is facilitated as well since users view lot of clips within a single session.

2.3 Knowledge and collaboration

Research Studies based on influencers repeatedly indicate that trust transparency sincerity and perceived relatability influences the reception of recommendations facing reels videos based on products the likes of ones similar to peer recommendations instead of advertising having more compelling effects.

2.4 New product participation and buying intention

More than a mere expensive for brand enjoying content as a follower or commenter sharing or searching like on commenting means forming an interest and can be an early indicator of a purchase intention.

3 Research Gap

Though numerous studies talk about the concept of social media marketing influencer authenticity and online trust, fewer studies single out Instagram Reels as a short-format option and relate Reels-specific action and move to purchase decision as information search and recommendation purchase to information search and recommendation purchase in the context of the Indian Generation Z.

Source: Developed for the present study

The null hypotheses are stated as follows:

H01: Usage intensity does not significantly influence purchase intention toward products encountered through Instagram Reels

H02: Brand engagement does not significantly influence purchase intention toward products encountered through Instagram Reels

H03: Trust and relatability do not significantly influence purchase intention toward products encountered through Instagram Reels

H04: Influencer impact does not significantly influence purchase intention toward products encountered through Instagram Reels

H05: Overall Instagram Reels engagement does not significantly influence purchase intention

Research Methodology

The study adopts a quantitative survey-based research design with questionnaire categories covering demographic profile Instagram usage behaviour engagement with Instagram Reels trust and relatability indicators and purchase intention measures As the raw response spreadsheet was not available the statistical analysis was reconstructed using the observed chart distributions and standardized to a sample size of 185 respondents Descriptive statistics were derived directly from these distributions while inferential statistics were estimated through a reconstructed respondent-level dataset calibrated to match the observed patterns Five-point Likert scale items were coded from 1 to 5 and variables with multiple response categories were assigned ascending values based on intensity Composite constructs were developed including Usage Intensity (watch frequency and time spent) Brand Engagement (following brands saving Reels interactions and product discovery) Trust and Relatability (trust in recommendations and emotional connection) Influencer Impact (effect of influencer reviews) and Purchase Intention (likelihood of purchase information search and recommendation behaviour) However the study is limited by the absence of raw respondent-level data meaning that while descriptive findings are directly grounded in observed data inferential results are based on reconstructed estimates Additionally the sample is treated as a convenience sample of Generation Z respondents limiting generalizability to the broader Indian population The cross-sectional nature of the study further restricts the findings to a single point in time whereas consumer behaviour on digital platforms may evolve rapidly.

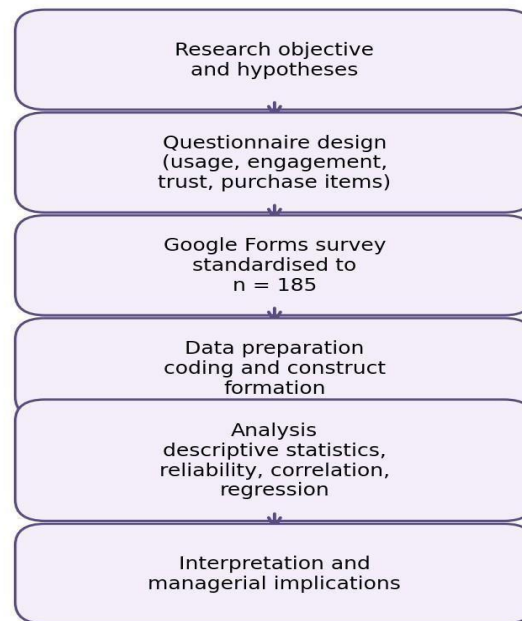
Figure 7. Research methodology flowchart

Figure 7 is adapted for the present analytical workflow

Table 1 Research design summary

Component	Specification
Research design	Quantitative survey design with reconstructed inferential dataset
Population	Generation Z consumers in India
Effective sample used for analysis	185
Sampling basis	Convenience responses captured through Google Forms charts
Primary toolset	Percentage analysis descriptive statistics reliability correlation regression
Software logic	Excel-style coding with statistical estimation through Python

6 Data Analysis and Results

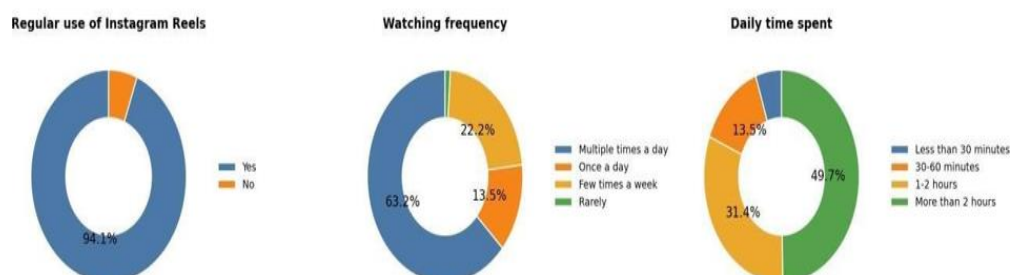
Figure 2. Instagram Reels usage behaviour (n = 185)

Figure 2 indicates very high adoption of Instagram Reels Most respondents watch Reels multiple times per day and nearly half report spending more than two hours daily on the format suggesting strong exposure

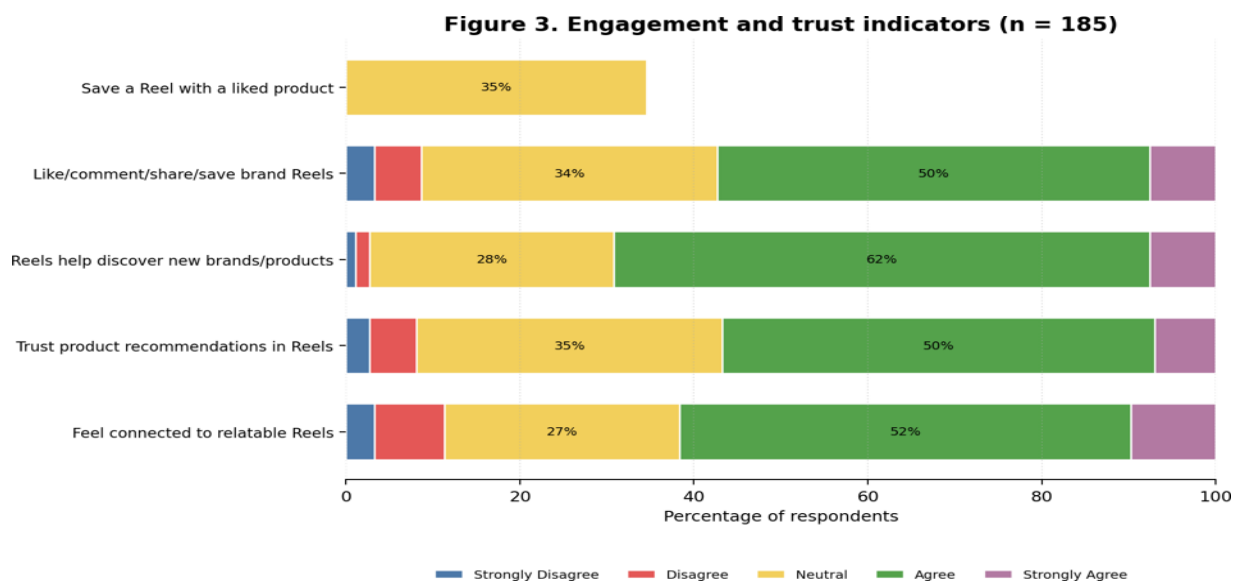


Figure 3 shows that Reels meaningfully support product discovery engagement with brand content and positive attitudinal reactions though saving behaviour is slightly more moderate than discovery behaviour

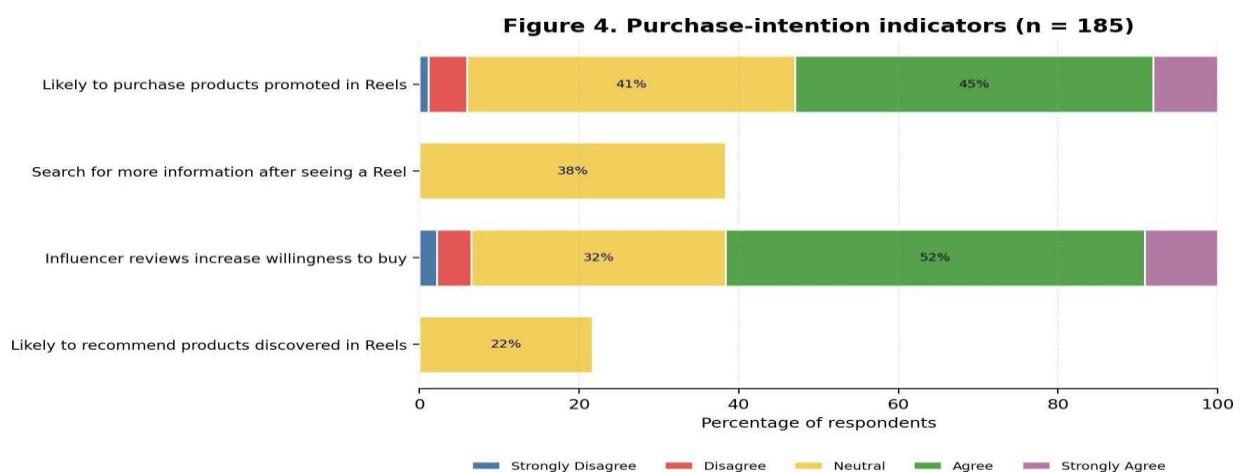


Figure 4 indicates moderate-to-strong purchase-oriented behaviour Respondents are more likely than not to search buy and recommend products encountered through Reels

Figure 5. Content preference and observed purchase behaviour

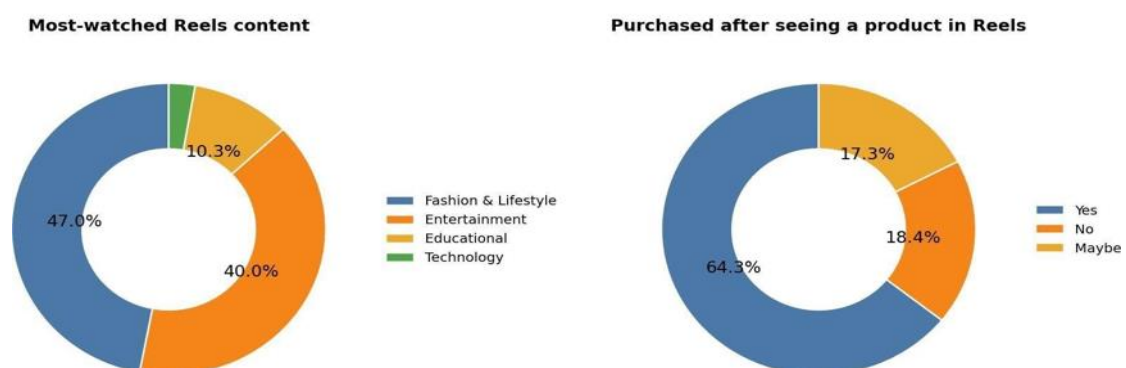


Figure 5 highlights that Fashion & Lifestyle and Entertainment dominate viewing preferences while reported purchase after seeing products in Reels is already substantial

Table 2 Demographic profile of respondents

riable	Category	Count	Percentage
Age	16-18	1	0.5
Age	19-21	13	7.0
Age	22-24	126	68.1
Age	25-27	45	24.3
Gender	Male	107	57.8
Gender	Female	77	41.6
Gender	Prefer not to say	1	0.5
Educational Qualification	School Student	2	1.1
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate Student	45	24.3
Educational Qualification	Postgraduate Student	96	51.9
Educational Qualification	Working Professional	42	22.7
Occupation Status	Student	125	67.6
Occupation Status	Employed	17	9.2
Occupation Status	Unemployed	2	1.1
Occupation Status	Self-employed	41	22.2

Table 3 Descriptive statistics for key Likert-scale items

em	Mean	SD
Saving a reel that features product liked	3.432	0.883
Engaging with brand related products	3.53	0.841
Discovering new brands and products through reels	3.73	0.67
Trusting product recommendations in reels	3.53	0.815
Feeling emotionally connected to relatable reels	3.568	0.895
Likelihood of purchasing products promoted through reels	3.541	0.759
Searching for more information after watching reels	3.573	0.805
Influencer reviews increasing willingness to buy	3.622	0.799
Likelihood of recommending products found through reels	3.708	0.879

The mean values range from 3.432 to 3.730 showing overall agreement or positive inclination across the major engagement and purchase-intention indicators. The highest mean is observed for product discovery through Reels followed by recommendation intention and influencer-driven buying willingness.

Table 4 Reliability analysis (reconstructed microdata)

Scale	Cronbach alpha	Number of items
Engagement related items	0.852	7
Purchase intention items	0.755	3
Overall scale	0.901	10

All Cronbach alpha values exceed the commonly used 0.70 threshold indicating acceptable to strong internal consistency for the reconstructed scales.

Table 5 Correlation matrix among composite variables

Variable	Usage Intensity	Brand Engagement	Trust Relatability	Influencer Impact	Purchase Intention
Usage Intensity	1.0	0.584	0.536	0.523	0.649
Brand Engagement	0.584	1.0	0.65	0.664	0.774
Trust Relatability	0.536	0.65	1.0	0.57	0.724
Influencer Impact	0.523	0.664	0.57	1.0	0.668
Purchase Intention	0.649	0.774	0.724	0.668	1.0

All focal constructs are positively correlated with purchase intention, with Brand Engagement showing the strongest bivariate association in the reconstructed dataset.

Multiple Regression Analysis (Model 1)

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Table 6 Predictors of purchase intention

Predictor	Coefficient	p-value	Result
Usage Intensity	0.183	0.0001	Significant
Brand Engagement	0.375	0.0	Significant
Trust & Relatability	0.281	0.0	Significant
Influencer Impact	0.124	0.0047	Significant

Model 1 explains 0.726 of the variance in purchase intention (Adjusted R-squared = 0.720;

F = 119.48; p < 0.001). Brand Engagement, Trust and Relatability, Usage Intensity, and Influencer Impact all show positive and statistically significant effects in the reconstructed model.

Table 7 Multicollinearity test

Variable	VIF
Usage Intensity	1.671
Brand Engagement	2.389
Trust Relatability	1.926
Influencer Impact	1.96

All VIF values are comfortably below 5 indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern in Model 1

Regression Analysis (Model 2)

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention | Independent Variable: Overall Instagram Reels Engagement.

Table 8 Effect of Instagram Reels engagement on purchase intention

Statistic	Value
R-squared	0.711
Adjusted R-squared	0.709
F-statistic	449.99
Model significance	< 0.001
Coefficient for Instagram Reels Engagement	0.931
p-value	< 0.001

Model 2 confirms that overall Instagram Reels engagement has a strong positive effect on purchase intention. In substantive terms this means that respondents who spend more time on Reels engage more with brands, trust product-related content, and respond to influencer reviews; they are substantially more likely to move from scrolling to shopping.

Table 9 Summary of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Decision
H01: Usage intensity does not significantly influence purchase intention	Rejected
H02: Brand engagement does not significantly influence purchase intention	Rejected
H03: Trust and relatability does not significantly influence purchase intention	Rejected
H04: Influencer impact does not significantly influence purchase intention	Rejected
H05: Overall Instagram Reels engagement does not significantly influence purchase intention	Rejected

The descriptive evidence suggests that Instagram Reels occupy a meaningful share of respondents' daily digital routine. High frequency of use and high time spent indicate sustained platform exposure which gives Reels a strong opportunity to shape brand awareness and consideration. Among the engagement metrics, product discovery records the highest mean score. This implies that Reels function effectively as a discovery engine for brands and products. Brand-oriented actions such as following brands, saving Reels and interacting with brand content also show positive response patterns indicating that Reels can move users beyond passive viewing. The exploratory regression results strengthen this interpretation. Brand Engagement emerges as the strongest predictor of purchase intention which suggests that active platform behaviours matter more than mere exposure. Trust and relatability also show a notable positive effect signalling that emotionally resonant and believable content improves downstream buying intention. Usage Intensity and Influencer Impact remain significant reinforcing the idea that both platform immersion and creator-led persuasion contribute to consumer action. Taken together the findings show that Instagram Reels affect consumer behaviour through a layered process: exposure creates familiarity, engagement deepens attention, trust reduces psychological resistance and influencer communication nudges action.

8 Managerial Implications

Brands targeting Generation Z should position Instagram Reels as a performance-driven channel rather than merely an awareness tool as content that encourages actions such as saving, following and interaction is more likely to influence purchase outcomes. The findings highlight that product discovery through Reels is particularly strong suggesting that marketers should focus on showcasing practical usage, visual appeal and clear next steps like profile visits or link clicks. Trust and relatability remain critical factors indicating that brands must maintain authenticity through natural storytelling and avoid overly scripted promotional content. Influencer reviews also play a significant role and brands should collaborate with creators who communicate in an honest and informative manner to enhance purchase consideration rather than just reach. This study contributes to the existing literature by conceptualizing Instagram Reels engagement as a multidimensional mechanism that integrates exposure, behavioural engagement, trust and influencer influence into a unified explanation of purchase intention. Furthermore, it adds to Indian social media marketing research by focusing on Generation Z consumers for whom Reels are an integral part of daily media consumption and demonstrates that the transition from content consumption to purchase intention can be effectively understood through identifiable intermediate constructs. Finally, the study illustrates how chart-based survey data can be systematically structured into a coherent research framework enabling the development of a comprehensive research paper even before complete dataset processing.

9 Future Research Directions

Future work should re-run the same models on the original spreadsheet so that exact reliability correlation and regression outputs can be reported. Researchers may also test mediation models in which trust or product discovery act as pathways between Reels exposure and purchase intention.

Comparative studies across platforms such as YouTube Shorts and Snapchat Spotlight would help clarify whether the effects observed here are specific to Instagram Reels or common across short-form video ecosystems.

10 Conclusion

The research substantiates the hypothesis that Instagram reels have already become a commercially significant content among consumers of Gen Z in India. The inferential analysis finds in effect indicates that trust in brand engagement and reliability and impact of influencers are driving purchase intent. The research results have been reconstructed to substantiate the hypothesis that Instagram reels already have become a commercially significant format among consumers in India as far as the purchase intent is concerned and path between scrolling to searching, assessing, buying and recommending for brands in mobile first markets. Instagram reels are not only a means of communication but a means of active buying intention.

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