

Role of Short-Form Video Content in Consumer Buying Behavior in India

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Abstract: *This paper studies how short-form video content on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts affects the buying decisions of consumers in India. Short-form videos are brief videos between 15 seconds and 3 minutes long that have changed the way people discover and buy products. The study collected primary data from 120 respondents through a structured questionnaire of 20 questions. All data was analyzed in Microsoft Excel using percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation. Results show that 73.4% of respondents have purchased a product after watching a short-form video. Product discovery scored the highest mean of 4.47, and clear product demonstration with honest reviews scored 4.42. The Pearson correlation between video content elements and purchase decisions was $r = 0.81$, showing a very strong positive relationship. Both alternate hypotheses were accepted. The study concludes that short-form video content is a primary driver of consumer buying behavior in India today*

Keywords: Short-Form Video Content, Consumer Buying Behavior, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, Purchase Intention.

I. INTRODUCTION

India is one of the largest and fastest growing digital markets in the world. With over 900 million internet users and affordable mobile data, hundreds of millions of Indians now watch short videos on their phones every single day. What started as entertainment has quietly become one of the most powerful forces shaping what people buy, when they buy, and how much they spend.

Short-form video content refers to brief videos that are usually between 15 seconds and 3 minutes long. Platforms like Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts have made this format part of daily life for a massive number of Indian consumers. These videos are vertical, fast, algorithm-driven, and built for mobile screens. They require no major time commitment from the viewer, and they deliver product information, entertainment, and recommendations all at once.

What makes short-form video different from traditional advertising is the way it reaches people. A television advertisement interrupts what a person is watching. A short video on Instagram or YouTube appears naturally in a person's feed while they are already watching content they enjoy. The consumer does not feel like they are being advertised to - they feel like they are being shown something interesting. This difference in how the content is received makes it significantly more effective at influencing buying decisions.

The Indian consumer market has changed dramatically as a result of this shift. People now discover products through 30-second Reels. They evaluate products through influencer reviews on YouTube Shorts. They make purchase decisions in the minutes following a video they just watched. This is a fundamental change in consumer behavior that was not possible before short-form video platforms became mainstream.

This research paper studies this change. It examines which specific elements of short-form video content are most effective in influencing purchase decisions and what the overall relationship is between short-form video consumption and buying behavior among Indian consumers. The study is based entirely on primary data collected from 120 respondents in India, analyzed through Microsoft Excel.



II. BACKGROUND AND INDUSTRY CONTEXT

2.1 The Digital Media Landscape in India

India's digital infrastructure has grown at a pace that very few countries have matched. Cheap internet data, affordable smartphones, and a young population have together created one of the most active digital consumer bases in the world. Instagram has over 360 million users in India. YouTube has over 460 million monthly active users. Indians spend an average of 3 to 4 hours per day on their phones, and a large share of that time is spent watching short videos.

This level of digital consumption has created an environment where product information travels through video feeds faster than through any other medium. A product that gets featured in a Reel that goes viral can go from unknown to sold out within days. This speed of product discovery and purchase has no equivalent in traditional retail or advertising.

2.2 The Rise of Social Commerce

Social commerce is the practice of buying and selling products directly through social media platforms. Instagram now allows users to click on a product in a Reel and reach the product page within the same app. YouTube Shorts allows creators to link products directly below their videos. The gap between watching and buying has collapsed.

The social commerce market in India was valued at approximately USD 2 billion in 2023 and is expected to cross USD 16 billion by 2030. A significant share of this growth is being powered by short-form video content. Short videos are no longer just advertisements - they are the storefront, the salesperson, and the product demonstration all in one.

2.3 The Content Creator Economy

The growth of short-form video has created an entire economy around content creation. Brands pay creators - commonly called influencers - to make short videos about their products. These videos reach audiences that trust the creator more than they trust the brand. The influencer marketing industry in India was estimated at over INR 2,200 crore in 2024 and continues to grow rapidly. Even small businesses and home-based entrepreneurs are now using short-form video to compete with large corporations at a fraction of the advertising cost.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mehta, Dubey, and Kaur (2022) studied influencer-created short videos on Instagram and found that they generated significantly more trust and buying confidence among Indian consumers compared to brand advertisements, primarily because the content felt more honest and personal.

Sharma, Jain, and Tiwari (2022) found that social media video content combining emotional storytelling with product features had a stronger pull on purchase intention, and that consumers who spent more time on social media were more likely to make unplanned purchases.

Gupta and Verma (2023) found that short videos using trending audio combined with a clear product demonstration in the first five seconds had the highest rate of triggering impulse purchases among Indian users.

Pandey, Rastogi, and Chopra (2023) found that product discovery through Instagram Reels happened through what they called soft discovery - consumers encountered products while being entertained, making them more open to purchasing.

Bansal, Khanna, and Ahuja (2023) found that short videos containing social proof elements had a 40% higher rate of generating purchase intent compared to videos without such elements.

Sinha, Roy, and Bose (2024) found that YouTube Shorts were particularly effective at introducing consumers to new brands they had never heard of before, especially in electronics, and that this discovery led to a higher likelihood of eventual purchase.

Joshi, Kapoor, and Gill (2024) found that creator authenticity was a stronger predictor of purchase influence than follower count, with micro-influencers driving more purchases per viewer than celebrity creators.

Bhasin, Arora, and Walia (2024) found a direct relationship between FOMO-inducing short video content and impulse purchases, but also noted that such purchases had a higher rate of post-purchase regret.

Das, Mukherjee, and Ghosh (2025) found that consumers who bought products after watching short videos had a higher rate of post-purchase regret compared to those who bought through traditional research, due to expectation mismatch between video presentation and actual product experience.



Saxena, Garg, and Bhardwaj (2025) found that user-generated low-production videos consistently outperformed high-production brand videos in generating purchase intent, because consumers perceived them as more honest.

Ramesh, Krishnaswamy, and Bala (2026) noted growing consumer awareness of sponsored content and early signs of influencer fatigue, but found that genuinely helpful and educational short videos continued to perform strongly.

Research Gap: Most existing studies are limited to a single platform, a single product category, or a single city. Very few studies use structured quantitative analysis with a sufficient sample to measure the overall relationship between short-form video content elements and purchase decisions across multiple platforms and categories in India. This study addresses that gap.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

4.1 Objectives

Objective 1: To identify the elements of short-form video content that influence consumer buying behavior on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts.

Objective 2: To analyze the relationship between short-form video content consumption and the buying behavior of consumers in India.

4.2 Hypotheses

H₀1: Short-form video content does not have a significant impact on consumer buying behavior in India.

H₁1: Short-form video content has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior in India.

H₀2: There is no significant relationship between the elements of short-form video content and the purchase decisions of consumers in India.

H₁2: There is a significant relationship between the elements of short-form video content and the purchase decisions of consumers in India.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

This study uses a descriptive research design. The goal is to describe and measure how short-form video content is currently affecting buying behavior among Indian consumers - not to create a new experiment or test a new situation. Descriptive design works well with a structured questionnaire and Excel-based statistical analysis.

5.2 Research Approach

The approach is quantitative. Data is collected in numerical form through Likert scale questions and analyzed using statistical tools in Microsoft Excel.

5.3 Data Source

This study is based entirely on primary data. No secondary datasets were used for analysis. Data was collected directly from 120 Indian consumers through a structured online questionnaire.

5.4 Sampling Design

Parameter	Details
Target Population	Indian consumers who regularly watch short-form videos on Instagram or YouTube
Sampling Method	Convenience sampling
Sample Size	120 respondents
Age Group	18 to 40 years
Geography	Pan-India, urban and semi-urban
Mode	Online via Google Forms



5.5 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire with 20 questions divided into three sections:

Section A: 5 demographic questions with closed-ended options

Section B: 8 Likert scale statements measuring short-form video elements and buying behavior (Objective 1)

Section C: 7 Likert scale statements measuring short-form video consumption and purchase decisions (Objective 2)

Likert Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

5.6 Data Analysis Tools

All data was analyzed in Microsoft Excel using:

Percentage analysis for demographic questions

Mean to find the average level of agreement per statement

Standard deviation to measure variation in responses

Pearson correlation to measure the strength of relationship between video content elements and purchase decisions

Bar charts and pie charts for visual representation

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Demographic Analysis

Table 1: Age Group of Respondents

Age Group	Respondents	Percentage
Below 18	6	5.0%
18 to 25	58	48.3%
26 to 35	38	31.7%
36 to 45	14	11.7%
Above 45	4	3.3%
Total	120	100%

The 18 to 25 age group dominates at 48.3%. The 18 to 35 group together makes up 80% of the sample, confirming that young adults are the primary consumers of short-form video content and the most purchase-influenced group.

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Male	52	43.3%
Female	63	52.5%
Prefer not to say	5	4.2%
Total	120	100%

Female respondents form a slight majority at 52.5%. The near-equal distribution ensures findings represent both genders fairly.

Table 3: Daily Time Spent Watching Short-Form Videos

Time Per Day	Respondents	Percentage
Less than 30 minutes	11	9.2%
30 minutes to 1 hour	29	24.2%
1 to 2 hours	47	39.2%
More than 2 hours	33	27.5%
Total	120	100%

66.7% of respondents watch more than one hour of short-form video per day. This confirms the sample consists of heavy regular users whose buying behavior is highly relevant to study.



Table 4: Platform Most Used

Platform	Respondents	Percentage
Instagram Reels	44	36.7%
YouTube Shorts	31	25.8%
Both equally	40	33.3%
Others	5	4.2%
Total	120	100%

Instagram Reels leads at 36.7%, but 33.3% use both platforms equally. 95.8% use either Instagram or YouTube, confirming both platforms are the right focus for this study.

Table 5: Purchase Made After Watching a Short Video

Response	Respondents	Percentage
Yes, many times	41	34.2%
Yes, once or twice	47	39.2%
No, but felt like buying	24	20.0%
No, never	8	6.7%
Total	120	100%

73.4% of respondents have actually purchased a product after watching a short video. This is the most important demographic finding and directly proves that short-form video drives real purchase behavior.

6.2 Section B - Short-Form Video Elements and Buying Behavior

Table 6: Mean and Standard Deviation - Section B

Q. No.	Statement	Mean	Std Dev
Q6	Real-life product usage videos increase buying interest	4.31	0.74
Q7	Influencer recommendation builds purchase confidence	4.08	0.83
Q8	Product demonstration and honest reviews speed up decisions	4.42	0.69
Q9	Trending videos create curiosity and push to buy	3.97	0.91
Q10	Before-and-after result videos influence purchase decision	4.18	0.77
Q11	Repeated product across multiple creators builds desire to buy	3.86	0.94
Q12	Direct purchase links and discount codes motivate immediate buying	4.22	0.81
Q13	Visual quality and editing affect product trust	3.78	0.98
Overall Mean		4.10	

Interpretation of Section B:

The overall mean for Section B is 4.10, which shows strong agreement that short-form video content elements positively influence buying behavior. Q8 - product demonstration with honest reviews - scored the highest at 4.42 with the lowest standard deviation of 0.69, meaning it is the most universally effective element. Q13 - visual quality - scored the lowest at 3.78, showing that production value matters less than content authenticity. Q12 - direct purchase links and discount codes - scored 4.22, confirming that removing buying friction is highly effective. Q7 - influencer recommendation - scored 4.08, showing strong but slightly variable influence. The consistent means above 4.0 across most statements confirm that multiple elements of short-form video content work together to build purchase intent.

6.3 Section C - Short-Form Video Consumption and Purchase Decisions

Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviation - Section C

Q. No.	Statement	Mean	Std Dev
Q14	Added product to cart directly after watching a short video	4.26	0.78
Q15	Short videos introduced new brands and products never heard of before	4.47	0.66



Q16	Urgency messaging in videos creates pressure to buy fast	3.82	0.97
Q17	Real customer videos are trusted more than brand advertisements	4.33	0.72
Q18	Monthly purchases have increased due to short video watching	4.11	0.84
Q19	Post-purchase regret after buying from short video influence	3.54	1.02
Q20	Overall, short-form video plays a major role in buying decisions	4.38	0.71
Overall Mean		4.13	

Interpretation of Section C:

The overall mean for Section C is 4.13, confirming a strong positive relationship between short-form video consumption and purchase decisions. Q15 - product discovery - is the highest scoring statement in the entire study at 4.47 with the lowest standard deviation of 0.66, showing near-universal agreement that short videos introduce consumers to new brands and products. Q20 - the overall summary statement - scored 4.38 with 89.1% agreement, providing the clearest confirmation of the study's central argument. Q17 - trust in real customer videos - scored 4.33, showing that consumer-created content is trusted more than brand advertising. Q19 - post-purchase regret - scored 3.54 with the highest standard deviation of 1.02, indicating a real and widespread problem of expectation mismatch between what short videos show and what products actually deliver. Q16 - urgency messaging - scored 3.82 with high variation, showing that FOMO tactics work on some consumers but are being increasingly resisted by others.

6.4 Correlation Analysis

Table 8: Pearson Correlation Result

Variables Compared	Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r)
Section B (Video Content Elements) vs Section C (Purchase Decisions)	r = 0.81

Table 9: Correlation Strength Reference

Correlation Value	Strength
0.00 to 0.20	Very weak or no relationship
0.21 to 0.40	Weak relationship
0.41 to 0.60	Moderate relationship
0.61 to 0.80	Strong relationship
0.81 to 1.00	Very strong relationship

Interpretation:

The Pearson correlation between Section B and Section C is $r = 0.81$. This falls in the very strong positive relationship category. It means that as a respondent's agreement with short-form video content elements increases, their agreement that these videos shape their purchase decisions also increases very strongly. This directly supports H₂ and confirms that a significant and very strong relationship exists between short-form video content elements and consumer purchase decisions in India.

6.5 Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 10: Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Basis	Result
H ₀ 1: Short-form video has no significant impact on buying behavior	Overall mean 4.11, 73.4% purchased after short video, Q20 mean 4.38	Rejected
H ₁ 1: Short-form video has significant impact on buying behavior	Same evidence above	Accepted
H ₀ 2: No significant relationship between video elements and purchase decisions	Pearson $r = 0.81$	Rejected
H ₁ 2: Significant relationship exists between	Pearson $r = 0.81$	Accepted



video elements and purchase decisions		
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VII. KEY FINDINGS

The following are the most important findings from the complete data analysis:

- 73.4% of respondents have purchased a product after watching a short-form video, establishing direct proof of purchase behavior driven by this content format.
- Product discovery is the strongest outcome of short-form video content, with Q15 scoring the highest mean of 4.47 and the lowest standard deviation of 0.66 in the entire study.
- Clear product demonstration combined with honest reviews is the most effective single element of short-form video content for influencing purchase decisions, scoring a mean of 4.42 in Section B.
- Real customer videos are trusted significantly more than brand advertisements, with Q17 scoring 4.33 and 87.5% agreement across the sample.
- Direct purchase links and discount codes are highly effective conversion tools, with Q12 scoring 4.22 and 85% agreement.
- Short-form video consumption increases the overall monthly frequency of online purchases, with Q18 scoring 4.11 and 81.7% agreement.
- Post-purchase regret is a real and growing concern, with Q19 scoring 3.54 and 65.8% of respondents agreeing they have regretted a purchase influenced by a short video.
- Urgency and FOMO-based messaging is becoming less universally effective, with Q16 scoring 3.82 and a high standard deviation of 0.97, showing growing consumer resistance.
- The Pearson correlation of $r = 0.81$ confirms a very strong positive relationship between short-form video content elements and consumer purchase decisions.
- Both alternate hypotheses H_{11} and H_{12} are accepted based on the evidence from the data.

VIII. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study align strongly with the existing research reviewed in the literature section. The dominance of honest product demonstration as a purchase driver is consistent with Mehta et al. (2022) and Gupta et al. (2023), both of whom found that authentic, real-use content outperforms promotional content in driving purchase confidence.

The product discovery finding - the highest mean of 4.47 - confirms and extends the work of Sinha et al. (2024) and Pandey et al. (2023), who separately found that short-form video was the most effective discovery channel for new brands among Indian consumers.

The trust finding - that real customer videos are more trusted than brand advertisements - directly supports Saxena et al. (2025) and Joshi et al. (2024), who found that authenticity and user-generated content consistently outperform professionally produced brand content in driving purchase trust.

The FOMO finding - a lower mean of 3.82 with high variation - partially challenges earlier studies like Bhasin et al. (2024) and Chatterjee et al. (2025), who found stronger FOMO effects. The lower score in this study suggests that Indian consumers in 2025–26 are becoming more aware of urgency-based marketing tactics and are beginning to resist them, consistent with the trend observed by Ramesh et al. (2026).

The post-purchase regret finding - mean of 3.54 with 65.8% agreement - directly confirms Das et al. (2025), who found that short-video-influenced purchases had higher regret rates due to expectation mismatch. This is the most important warning signal in the study and represents an area where the industry needs to self-correct.

The Pearson correlation of $r = 0.81$ provides a stronger and more comprehensive quantitative measure of the video-to-purchase relationship than most earlier studies, which relied on qualitative methods or smaller samples.



IX. CONCLUSIONS

Short-form video content has become a primary driver of consumer buying behavior in India. The evidence from this study is clear, consistent, and strong across all measures.

What works best in short-form video is honest, real, and demonstration-based content. Consumers want to see a product being used genuinely, by a real person, with an honest explanation of what it does well and what it does not. This type of content outperforms everything else - expensive production, urgency messaging, and even influencer follower counts.

Product discovery is the single greatest contribution of short-form video to the consumer journey. Before a product can be bought, it must be known. Short-form video introduces new brands and products to consumers more effectively than any other tool available in the Indian market today.

Indian consumers are becoming more aware and more selective. Urgency tactics and FOMO messaging are losing some of their effectiveness as more consumers recognize them for what they are - marketing strategies. The brands and creators that will remain effective are those who build genuine trust through honest content, not those who rely on psychological pressure tactics.

Post-purchase regret is a real problem that the industry must address. Brands that exaggerate in their short videos may see strong initial sales but will face returns, negative reviews, and loss of customer trust over time. Honest representation of products in short videos is not just ethical - it is a better long-term business strategy.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

For Brands: Focus on real product demonstration with honest reviews. Include direct purchase links and discount codes in every short video. Invest in micro-influencers over celebrities. Encourage real customers to create and share short videos about their product experiences. Be honest about product performance to reduce post-purchase regret and build long-term loyalty.

For Content Creators: Prioritize authenticity over sponsorship income. Recommend only products genuinely used and believed in. Show products in real everyday use rather than in promotional settings. Be transparent about sponsored content - it builds long-term audience trust more effectively than hiding commercial relationships.

For Digital Marketers: Measure actual conversion, not just views and likes. Test different short-form video formats systematically with specific audiences. Invest in regional language content to reach consumers in South and East India more effectively. Add post-purchase support touchpoints to reduce the gap between video promise and product reality.

For Consumers: Be aware of the psychological tools used in short-form video marketing. Research products beyond the video before making significant purchases. Wait before buying from urgency-based videos - the product will usually still be available tomorrow. Use short-form video as a discovery starting point, not a purchase endpoint.

XI. LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study used convenience sampling with 120 respondents, which limits generalizability to the broader Indian population. The sample covered only the 18 to 40 age group and may not represent consumers above 40. Self-reported data may not perfectly reflect actual purchase behavior. The study was cross-sectional, capturing behavior at one point in time.

Future research should use larger samples of 500 or more respondents. Studies should include consumers above 40, who are a growing short-form video audience. Product-category-specific research - comparing how video elements work differently for skincare versus electronics versus food - would add significant practical value. A longitudinal study tracking the same consumers over 12 to 24 months would reveal how video influence on buying behavior changes over time. Research partnerships with e-commerce platforms could provide actual transaction data rather than relying on self-reporting.



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Questionnaire

Instructions: This questionnaire is for academic research purposes only. All responses are anonymous and confidential. Please answer all questions honestly. For Section B and C, rate each statement from 1 to 5 where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Section A - Demographic Information

Q1. What is your age group?

- Below 18
- 18 to 25
- 26 to 35
- 36 to 45
- Above 45

Q2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say



Q3. How many hours per day do you spend watching short-form videos on Instagram Reels or YouTube Shorts?

- Less than 30 minutes
- 30 minutes to 1 hour
- 1 to 2 hours
- More than 2 hours

Q4. Which platform do you use most for watching short-form videos?

- Instagram Reels
- YouTube Shorts
- Both equally
- Others

Q5. Have you ever bought a product after watching a short-form video about it?

- Yes, many times
- Yes, once or twice
- No, but I felt like buying
- No, never

Section B - Short-Form Video Elements and Buying Behavior

Rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)

Q6. Short-form videos showing a product being used in real life make me more interested in buying that product. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Q7. When an influencer recommends a product through a short video, I feel more confident about buying it. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Q8. Short videos with clear product demonstrations and honest reviews help me make faster purchase decisions. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Q9. Trending short videos about a product make me curious and push me to search for and buy that product. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Q10. A short video that shows before-and-after results of a product strongly influences my decision to purchase it. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Q11. When I see a product featured repeatedly in short videos from different creators, I start feeling the need to buy it. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Q12. Short videos that include a direct purchase link or a discount code motivate me to buy the product immediately. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Q13. The visual quality, editing style, and presentation of a short video affect whether I trust the product being shown. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Section C - Short-Form Video Consumption and Purchase Decisions

Rate each statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)

Q14. I have added a product to my online shopping cart directly after watching a short video about it. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Q15. Short-form videos have introduced me to new brands and products that I had never heard of before watching the video. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Q16. I feel a sense of urgency to buy a product when a short video says it is trending or selling out fast. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Q17. I trust a product more when I see real customer short videos about it compared to formal brand advertisements. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Q18. Watching short-form videos has increased the total number of online purchases I make every month. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5



Q19. I sometimes regret buying a product after being influenced by a short video, because it did not match my expectations. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Q20. Overall, short-form video content on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts plays a major role in shaping my buying decisions. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

