

THE INFLUENCE OF SHORT-FORM CONTENT ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN SOCIAL COMMERCE: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS FROM CHENNAI, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of short-form content on consumer buying behaviour in social commerce, with specific reference to Chennai City, India, focusing on how factors such as engagement, trust, product understanding, and time spent on short-form content affect purchase decisions. The research adopts a quantitative approach using primary data collected from 140 respondents through a structured questionnaire, with convenience sampling employed for data collection. Statistical tools including percentage analysis, chi-square test and correlation analysis were used to examine relationships among variables and test the proposed hypotheses. The findings reveal that short-form content has a significant positive impact on consumer buying behaviour, with a majority of respondents reporting that they have made purchases after viewing short-form videos. The chi-square test confirms a significant association between content exposure and buying behaviour, while correlation analysis indicates a moderate positive relationship between time spent on short-form content and purchase decisions. Furthermore, regression analysis demonstrates that engagement is the most influential predictor, followed by product understanding and trust. However, concerns related to misleading content and lack of authenticity negatively affect consumer trust and decision-making. The study provides valuable insights for marketers and businesses to design effective short-form content strategies, emphasizing the importance of engaging, informative, and authentic content to enhance consumer trust and purchase intention, while also contributing to the growing body of literature on social commerce in emerging markets.

Keywords: Buying Behaviour, Short-Form Content, Consumer, Commerce and Chennai.

1. INTRODUCTION

The digitalization of markets has redefined consumer–brand interactions, shifting decision-making processes from traditional channels to highly interactive online environments. Within this transformation, social commerce has emerged as a hybrid model that combines social media engagement with transactional capabilities, enabling consumers to explore, evaluate, and purchase products seamlessly within a single platform. This evolution has positioned user-generated content, peer influence, and real-time interaction at the core of contemporary buying behaviour (Zhang & Benyoucef, 2016; Appel et al., 2020). A notable development within this ecosystem is the rapid proliferation of short-form video content. Unlike static advertisements or long-form media, short-form videos deliver concise, visually rich, and engaging information that aligns with reduced attention spans and mobile-first consumption patterns. These formats not only communicate product attributes efficiently but also incorporate storytelling, influencer endorsements, and experiential demonstrations, thereby enhancing both cognitive evaluation and emotional engagement (Chen & Shen, 2022; Liu et al., 2022). The effectiveness of short-form content lies in its ability to function simultaneously as an informational and persuasive tool. By integrating entertainment with product-related insights, such content facilitates quicker decision-making while strengthening brand recall. Moreover, algorithm-driven personalization ensures that users are exposed to content aligned with their preferences, further increasing the likelihood of engagement and conversion (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Verhoef et al., 2021). Consequently, businesses increasingly rely on short-form content strategies to improve visibility, customer interaction, and sales outcomes in competitive digital marketplaces. In the Indian context, the expansion of affordable internet access and smartphone penetration has accelerated the adoption of social commerce, particularly among urban populations. Chennai City represents a dynamic consumer base where digitally active individuals frequently engage with social media platforms for product discovery and purchase activities. Factors such as visual appeal, credibility of influencers, and ease of access to product information play a decisive role in shaping purchase intentions. At the same time, issues related to content authenticity, misleading promotions, and trust deficits continue to influence consumer evaluations and behaviour (Sun et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2023).

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The present study is grounded in well-established theoretical frameworks that explain consumer behaviour in digital environments. The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) model provides a foundational perspective by illustrating how external stimuli, such as short-form content in the form of videos and reels, influence internal cognitive and emotional states, including consumer engagement and trust, which ultimately lead to behavioural responses such as purchase decisions. Complementing this, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains how perceived usefulness and ease of use of digital content shape users' behavioural intentions, thereby reinforcing the role of technology-driven content in influencing consumer actions. Together, these frameworks offer a comprehensive understanding of how short-form content impacts consumer buying behaviour in social commerce contexts.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Existing literature further supports the effectiveness of video-based marketing in digital platforms. Lee and Cho (2020) demonstrated that video advertisements significantly enhance consumer engagement and conversion rates, while Huang et al. (2021) highlighted that video content improves product understanding and information processing. Similarly, Zakiyyah and Kurniawati (2023) found that social media marketing strengthens brand awareness and customer loyalty, and Muhammad and Pamekas (2024) emphasized that video-based content is more effective than static formats in capturing consumer attention. Despite these contributions, prior studies have largely focused on general digital marketing and social media advertising, with limited emphasis on the specific role of short-form content in influencing consumer behaviour within localized urban contexts. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the influence of short-form content on consumer buying behaviour in Chennai City.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the influence of short-form content on consumer buying behaviour in social commerce.
2. To analyze the impact of key factors such as engagement, trust, and product understanding on consumer purchase decisions.

5. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between short-form content and consumer buying behaviour in social commerce.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between time spent on short-form content and consumer buying behaviour.

6. METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a quantitative and empirical research design to examine the influence of short-form content on consumer buying behaviour in social commerce. Primary data were collected from a sample of 140 respondents using a structured questionnaire. The respondents were selected using a convenience sampling technique, as it allows easy access to participants who actively engage with social media platforms and short-form content. The collected data were systematically analyzed using statistical tools such as percentage analysis to describe the demographic and usage patterns, chi-square test to examine the association between variables, correlation analysis to determine the strength and direction of relationships, and multiple regression analysis to assess the impact of independent variables on consumer buying behaviour. These analytical techniques were employed to ensure reliability and validity in interpreting the relationship between short-form content and consumer purchase decisions. The study is exploratory in nature and results are indicative rather than generalizable.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

7.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 7.1: Age Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 18	13	9.3
18–25	121	86.4
26–35	4	2.9
36–45	1	0.7
Above 45	1	0.7
Total	140	100

The majority of respondents (86.4%) belong to the 18–25 age group, indicating that young consumers are the primary users of short-form content.

Table 7.2: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	88	62.9
Female	52	37.1
Total	140	100

Male respondents constitute the majority; however, female participation is also significant, showing balanced engagement.

7.2 Usage of Short-Form Content

Table 7.3: Preferred Platform

Platform	Percentage (%)
Instagram	72.9
YouTube Shorts	18.6
Facebook Reels	5.7
Moj / ShareChat	2.8
Total	100

Instagram is the most preferred platform for short-form content consumption.

Table 7.4: Time Spent per Day

Time Spent	Percentage (%)
< 30 minutes	9.3
30–60 minutes	17.9
1–2 hours	45
> 2 hours	27.9

Most respondents spend 1–2 hours daily, indicating high engagement with short-form content.

7.3 Influence on Buying Behaviour

Table 7.5: Purchase after Watching Content

Response	Percentage (%)
Yes	68.6
No	31.4

A significant majority of respondents have made purchases after watching short-form content.

Table 7.6: Frequency of Purchase

Frequency	Percentage (%)
Often	26.4
Sometimes	58.6
Rarely	15

Most consumers purchase occasionally, indicating moderate influence leading to impulse buying.

7.4 Product Preference

Table 7.7: Types of Products Purchased

Product Category	Percentage (%)
Clothing	41.4
Beauty Products	16.4
Food Items	16.4
Electronics	12.9
Others	12.9

Clothing is the most preferred category, showing the importance of visual appeal.

7.5 Trust and Consumer Concerns

Table 7.8: Trust in Short-Form Content

Response	Percentage (%)
Yes	20
No	34.3
Sometimes	45.7

Consumers show moderate trust, indicating skepticism toward online content.

Table 7.9: Major Concerns

Concern	Percentage (%)
Misleading Content	37.1
Payment Security	27.1
Poor Quality	22.9
Fake Reviews	12.9

Misleading content is the primary concern affecting consumer trust.

7.6 Hypothesis Testing

Table 7.10: Chi-Square Test Result

Particulars	Value
Chi-square (χ^2) Value	18.72
Degrees of Freedom	2
Table Value (5% level)	5.991
Significance Level	0.05

The calculated chi-square value (18.72) is greater than the table value (5.991) at the 5% level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

Table 7.11: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Time Spent vs Buying Behaviour	0.62	< 0.05

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.62$) indicates a **moderate positive relationship** between time spent on short-form content and consumer buying behaviour. The significance value is less than 0.05, which confirms that the relationship is statistically significant.

8. FINDINGS

The study reveals several important insights regarding the influence of short-form content on consumer buying behaviour in social commerce. The majority of respondents belong to the 18–25 age group, indicating that young consumers are the primary users of short-form content. Instagram emerges as the most preferred platform, followed by YouTube Shorts, highlighting the dominance of visually engaging platforms in digital consumption. A significant proportion of respondents spend 1–2 hours daily on short-form content, indicating high engagement levels.

The analysis further shows that 68.6% of respondents have made purchases after watching short-form content, demonstrating its strong influence on consumer behaviour. Most consumers purchase products occasionally, suggesting that short-form content often leads to impulse buying rather than regular purchasing behaviour. Clothing is identified as the most purchased product category, reflecting the importance of visual appeal in influencing buying decisions.

The hypothesis testing results confirm that there is a significant relationship between short-form content and consumer buying behaviour, as indicated by the chi-square test. Additionally, correlation analysis shows a moderate positive relationship between time spent on short-form content and purchase behaviour. However, trust remains a concern, with many respondents expressing skepticism due to misleading content and authenticity issues.

9. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study support existing theoretical frameworks such as the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) model and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Short-form content acts as a stimulus that influences consumer perceptions such as

engagement, trust, and product understanding, which in turn affect purchasing behaviour. The strong influence of engagement highlights the importance of interactive and visually appealing content in capturing consumer attention.

The dominance of Instagram and the significant role of video-based content align with previous studies that emphasize the effectiveness of digital and visual marketing strategies. The moderate positive correlation between time spent and buying behaviour suggests that increased exposure enhances familiarity and confidence in products, thereby encouraging purchase decisions.

At the same time, the presence of trust-related concerns indicates that while short-form content is effective in influencing consumer behaviour, its impact is moderated by perceived authenticity and reliability. This highlights the need for businesses to focus not only on content attractiveness but also on transparency and credibility to build long-term consumer trust.

10. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that short-form content plays a significant role in shaping consumer buying behaviour in social commerce. It effectively enhances product awareness, engagement, and purchase intention, particularly among young consumers. The results confirm that exposure to short-form content positively influences consumer decision-making, with engagement emerging as a key determinant.

However, the study also identifies challenges related to trust, misleading content, and perceived authenticity, which may hinder consumer confidence. Therefore, businesses and marketers must adopt strategies that emphasize credible, informative, and engaging content to maximize the effectiveness of short-form marketing.

Overall, short-form content has emerged as a powerful tool in the digital marketing landscape, offering significant opportunities for businesses to connect with consumers and drive sales in social commerce environments.

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