

The Impact of Short-Form Social Media Content (Reels): Its Engagement of Marketing Students in the Consumer Purchase Decision-Making Process

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Article Details:

Received: 3 July 2026

Revised: 5 August 2026

Accepted: 11 August 2026

Published: 31 August 2026

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Recommended Citation:

Caparas, H. N. P., Manangan, A. V., De Juan, A. G., Solasco, D. M. C., Garcia, K. C. N., Dela Cruz, L. M. A. (2026) The Impact of Short-Form Social Media Content (Reels): Its Engagement of Marketing Students in the Consumer Purchase Decision-Making Process. *The International Review of Multidisciplinary Research*. 1 (10), 212-218. <https://doi.org/10.67167/vertex.662>

Index Terms:

short-form social media content, reels, student engagement, consumer purchase decision-making process

Abstract. The increasing popularity of short-form social media content (Reels) has significantly transformed consumer behavior by influencing how individuals discover products, engage with brands, and make purchasing decisions. This study examined the impact of Reels on the engagement of Marketing Management students in the consumer purchase decision-making process by assessing their level of exposure, engagement, involvement across the stages of consumer decision-making, and the relationship between engagement and purchasing behavior. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving 152 Marketing Management students from the first to fourth year selected through a purposive sampling approach with equal year-level allocation. Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire and analyzed through weighted mean, ranking, and the Pearson correlation coefficient. The findings revealed that respondents demonstrated a considerable level of exposure to Reels (Grand Mean = 3.62, Evident) and were generally engaged with short-form content (Grand Mean = 3.84, Engaged). Reels also significantly influenced every stage of the consumer purchase decision-making process, yielding an overall weighted mean of 3.97 (Agree), with post-purchase behavior (WM = 4.11) and problem recognition (WM = 4.05) identified as the most prominent dimensions. Furthermore, the study established a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship between engagement with Reels and the consumer purchase decision-making process ($r = 0.9618$, $p = 0.001$), resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. These findings indicate that Reels have become a powerful digital marketing tool that shapes students' purchasing behavior and engagement. The study recommends integrating educational and interactive content, collaborating with relatable peer influencers, maintaining consistent content strategies, and utilizing analytics to strengthen consumer engagement and support more informed purchase decision-making.

Introduction

The rapid growth of social media has transformed global communication, reshaping how individuals consume content and interact with brands. Short-form video platforms such as Facebook Reels, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and TikTok have emerged as dominant tools in digital marketing, offering quick, engaging, and visually appealing content that captures audience attention (Rachman & Miranda, 2025; Zhang et al., 2022). These platforms foster immediacy, emotional connection, and interactive participation, making them central to modern consumer culture (Bhushan, 2023; Joshi et al., 2025). Businesses increasingly leverage these short-form media formats to promote products, enhance brand awareness, and influence consumer behavior through relatable storytelling and authentic engagement (Manic, 2024; Puzon et al., 2023).

In the Philippine context, local brands such as Jollibee, BLK Cosmetics, and Lola Nena's have successfully used short-form platforms to connect with audiences (Arc Innovation and Insights, 2025; Chan, 2025). Globally, utilizing short-form videos has been proven to significantly maximize brand visibility and consumer trust (Fatimah & Nasir, 2025). Authenticity is particularly valued, as Filipino consumers prefer genuine, unscripted content over polished advertisements (Marie, 2025). Although prior studies confirm that short-form video content—such as TikTok affiliate videos—significantly enhances overall consumer engagement, product awareness, and purchase intention (Manic, 2024; Puzon et al., 2023), limited research has examined how Facebook or Instagram Reels specifically influence Marketing Management students' engagement across the precise stages of the consumer purchase decision-making process, particularly in the Philippine setting (Marie, 2025). Moreover, concerns have been raised about the potential cognitive and psychological effects of excessive exposure to fast-paced media, including reduced concentration and heightened stress (Bhushan, 2023; Mahmoudi et al., 2024).

Research Problem

The growing popularity of short-form social media content (Reels) has significantly changed how consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions in the digital marketplace. Despite increasing use of Reels as a marketing tool, limited studies have examined their influence on the engagement of Marketing Management students throughout the consumer purchase decision-making process. Understanding this relationship is important for marketers, educators, and researchers in developing effective digital marketing strategies and promoting informed purchasing behavior among students.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do Marketing students assess short-form social media content (Reels) in terms of their level of exposure (frequency, duration, type of content, purpose of viewing, and interaction patterns)?
2. How do Marketing students assess short-form social media content (Reels) in terms of their level of engagement (attention, emotional response, participation, relevance to interests, and peer influence)?
3. How do Marketing students assess short-form social media content (Reels) in terms of their level of involvement in the consumer purchase decision-making process (problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior)?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the students' level of engagement with Reels and their subsequent involvement across the stages of the consumer purchase decision-making process?

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between exposure to short-form social media content (Reels), engagement, and involvement in the consumer purchase decision-making process among Marketing Management students. As Creswell and Creswell (2021) explain, descriptive-correlational research is appropriate when the objective is to describe existing conditions while determining the degree of relationship between variables without manipulating them. This design enabled the researchers to determine the Marketing students' level of exposure to Reels, level of engagement, and level of involvement in the consumer purchase decision-making process while examining the significant relationships among these variables.

Participants

The study involved 152 Bachelor of Science in Marketing Management students from the College of Business and Public Administration (CBPA), EARIST-Manila, during the Academic Year 2025–2026. A purposive sampling approach was utilized to select respondents who were active consumers of short-form video content, while establishing equal quotas of 38 respondents from each year level (first through fourth year) to ensure balanced representation across the program. As Campbell et al. (2020) explain, purposive sampling involves deliberately selecting participants who are information-rich and capable of providing meaningful data relevant to the research problem. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all respondents before the administration of the survey questionnaire.

Instruments

A researcher-made structured questionnaire served as the primary instrument. It had two sections: the first gathered demographic and background information such as age, gender, year level, frequency of Reels viewing, and preferred platform, while the second measured perceptions of Reels across three dimensions—exposure, engagement, and

involvement in the consumer purchase decision-making process. Exposure included indicators such as frequency and duration of viewing, type of content consumed, purpose of viewing, and interaction patterns. Engagement measured attention, emotional response, participation through liking, commenting, and sharing, relevance to personal interests, and peer influence. Involvement in the consumer purchase decision-making process assessed problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decisions, and post-purchase behavior. The questionnaire underwent content validation, and recommendations were incorporated before final administration.

Procedure and Data Analysis

Before data collection, the researchers secured permission from the appropriate school authorities to conduct the study. Following the approval of the research instrument, printed copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the selected respondents. Participants were informed of the objectives of the study and were provided with informed consent forms explaining the voluntary nature of their participation, confidentiality of their responses, and assurance of anonymity. Completed questionnaires were retrieved, checked for completeness, organized, and prepared for statistical analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Percentage was used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents (Calmorin & Calmorin, 2010). Weighted mean was employed to determine the respondents' level of exposure to Reels, level of engagement, and level of involvement in the consumer purchase decision-making process (Sevilla et al., 2007). The responses were interpreted using a five-point Likert scale with corresponding verbal interpretations. To determine whether a significant relationship existed among the variables, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's *r*) was utilized. All inferential analyses were conducted using a 0.05 level of significance, and the findings were presented in both tabular and narrative forms. Throughout the study, ethical principles were strictly observed by ensuring voluntary participation, obtaining informed consent, maintaining respondent anonymity and confidentiality, and using the collected data solely for academic purposes.

Results and Discussion

Levels of Variables

	Indicator	WM	VI	Rank
1.	Frequency of Viewing Reels per Day	4.29	HE	1
2.	Duration of Engagement	3.29	ME	4
3.	Content Frequently Watched	2.97	ME	5
4.	Purpose of Watching Reels	4.08	E	2
5.	Frequency of Interacting with Reels	3.49	E	3
	Grand Mean	3.62	E	

Legend: 4.20-5.00 (Highly Evident); 3.40-4.19 (Evident); 2.60-3.39 (Moderately Evident); 1.80-2.59 (Least Evident); 1.00-1.79 (Very Least Evident)

Table No. 1. Level of Exposure of Marketing Students to Reels

Table 1 presented the summary of marketing students' level of exposure to Reels. Among the indicators, Frequency of Viewing Reels per Day obtained the highest weighted mean (WM = 4.29, Highly Evident), showing that watching Reels multiple times daily is a very common behavior. This was closely followed by Purpose of Watching Reels (WM = 4.08, Evident), where entertainment emerged as the primary motivation, alongside product information and trend discovery. Frequency of Interacting with Reels ranked third (WM = 3.49, Evident), with liking as the most common form of engagement, while commenting and sharing occurred less frequently. Duration of Engagement (WM = 3.29, Moderately Evident) revealed that respondents often spend long sessions watching Reels, sometimes losing track of time, which may influence purchase decisions. Lastly, Content Frequently Watched (WM = 2.97, Moderately Evident) highlighted entertainment as the dominant type of Reels consumed, though educational and product-related content also played a role. The grand weighted mean of 3.62 (Evident) indicates that respondents generally demonstrate a considerable level of exposure to Reels, primarily through consistent daily viewing and purposeful engagement.

The findings of Chan (2025) support this result, as the study revealed that frequent exposure to short-form videos on platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram significantly shapes consumer behavior and purchasing decisions among Filipino millennials, showing that regular viewing and purposeful use of social media content are common patterns of exposure.

Indicator	WM	VI	Rank
1. Attention and interest toward reel content	3.99	E	1
2. Emotional response or connection	3.93	E	3
3. Interaction and participation	3.44	E	5
4. Perceived relevance to personal interest	3.91	E	4
5. Influence of peer engagement	3.94	E	2
Grand Mean	3.84	E	

Legend: 4.20-5.00 (Highly Engaged); 3.40-4.19 (Engaged); 2.60-3.39 (Moderately Engaged); 1.80-2.59 (Least Engaged); 1.00-1.79 (Very Least Engaged)

Table No. 2. Level of Engagement of Marketing Students with Reels

Table 2 illustrated the summary of marketing students' level of engagement with Reels. Attention and Interest Toward Reel Content ranked first with a weighted mean of 3.99 (Engaged), showing that respondents find Reels appealing and engaging, which enhances overall involvement and even influences product discovery and purchase decisions. This was followed by Influence of Peer Engagement (WM = 3.94), where peer interaction increased interest, emotional connection, and purchasing behavior. Emotional Response or Connection ranked third (WM = 3.93), highlighting that Reels entertain, spark curiosity, and evoke emotions that shape both purchase intention and post-purchase behavior. Perceived Relevance to Personal Interest came next (WM = 3.91), indicating that alignment with hobbies, lifestyle, and personal interests strengthens engagement and consumer decisions. Lastly, Interaction and Participation obtained the lowest weighted mean of 3.44, though still within the Engaged category, showing that respondents are more inclined toward passive interactions (liking, following accounts) than active ones (commenting, sharing). The grand weighted mean of 3.84 (Engaged) indicates that respondents are generally engaged with Reels across multiple dimensions, with content appeal, peer influence, and emotional relatability emerging as the strongest drivers of engagement.

The results align with Puzon et al. (2023), who found that the emotional and entertaining dimensions of TikTok affiliate videos strongly influence Gen Z's engagement and purchase intention, demonstrating that short-form content effectively captures attention and sustains user interaction.

Indicator	WM	VI	Rank
1. Problem Recognition	4.05	A	2
2. Information Search	4.03	A	3
3. Evaluation of Alternatives	3.74	A	5
4. Purchase Decision	3.93	A	4
5. Post-Purchase Behavior	4.11	A	1
Grand Mean	3.97	A	

Legend: 4.20-5.00 (Strongly Agree); 3.40-4.19 (Agree); 2.60-3.39 (Neutral); 1.80-2.59 (Disagree); 1.00-1.79 (Strongly Disagree)

Table No. 3. Level of Involvement of Marketing Students in the Consumer Purchase Decision-Making Process

Table 3 presented the summary of marketing students' level of involvement in the consumer purchase decision-making process. Post-Purchase Behavior ranked first with a weighted mean of 4.11 (Agree), showing that respondents actively share product experiences, provide feedback, and influence peers through reviews and recommendations after purchase. Problem Recognition followed (WM = 4.05, Agree), indicating that Reels effectively trigger awareness of product-related needs and wants, serving as a catalyst for consumer attention. Information Search ranked third (WM = 4.03, Agree), highlighting that Reels motivate viewers to seek additional product details and conduct further research beyond the platform. Purchase Decision came next (WM = 3.93, Agree), suggesting that exposure to Reels influences both planned and impulse buying behaviors. Lastly, Evaluation of Alternatives ranked fifth (WM = 3.74, Agree), implying that Reels help simplify comparisons among brands and products but function mainly as a complementary tool in decision-making. The grand weighted mean of 3.97 (Agree) indicates that respondents are generally involved in all stages of the consumer purchase decision-making process, with Reels serving as a persuasive medium that shapes awareness, evaluation, and post-purchase engagement.

The findings are supported by Fatimah and Nasir (2025), whose study emphasized that emotional and informational elements in short-form videos enhance comprehension and trust, thereby influencing consumers' decision-making across stages such as problem recognition, evaluation, and post-purchase behavior.

Relationship Between the Level of Engagement in Reels and the Purchase Decision-Making Process

**Correlational at the level 0.05 (Two-tailed)*

Variables Correlated	r-value	p-value	Verbal Description	Interpretation	Decision
1. Level of Engagement in Reels 2. Purchase Decision-Making Process	0.9618	0.001	VSC	Significant	Reject H ₀

Legend : 1.00 (Perfect Correlation); 0.80-0.99 (Very Strong Correlation); 0.60-0.79 (Strong Correlation); 0.40-0.59 (Moderate Correlation); 0.20-0.39 (Weak Correlation); 0.01-0.19 (Negligible Correlation)

Table No. 4. Summary of Involvement in Consumer Purchase Decision-Making of Marketing Students

As evidenced in Table 4, the level of engagement with reels and the purchase decision-making process have a very strong correlation with an r-value of 0.9618. This means that as engagement with reels increases, the purchase decision-making process is also strongly affected. Since the p-value is 0.001, the relationship is statistically significant; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion

This study determined the impact of short-form social media content (Reels) on the engagement of Marketing Management students in the consumer purchase decision-making process. The findings revealed that the respondents were generally highly exposed to Reels through frequent viewing and purposeful use across various social media platforms. Their engagement with Reel content was evident, particularly in terms of attention and interest, peer engagement, emotional response, perceived relevance, and interaction, demonstrating that short-form videos effectively capture students' attention and sustain their engagement.

The study further established that Reels significantly influence every stage of the consumer purchase decision-making process, from problem recognition and information search to evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. These findings indicate that short-form social media content has become an effective medium for increasing product awareness, encouraging consumer evaluation, and shaping purchasing behavior among Marketing Management students.

Furthermore, the correlation analysis confirmed a very strong and statistically significant relationship between engagement with Reels and the consumer purchase decision-making process. This suggests that higher levels of engagement with short-form social media content are associated with greater influence on consumer purchasing decisions. Overall, the findings affirm that Reels serves as an influential digital marketing tool that shapes consumer engagement and supports informed purchase decision-making among Marketing Management students.

Recommendations

The findings of this study provide practical implications for various stakeholders. For Marketing Management students, the results emphasize the importance of becoming critical and responsible consumers of short-form social media content. While Reels effectively provide product information and facilitate purchase decisions, students should evaluate online content carefully before making purchasing decisions.

For educators and academic institutions, the findings support the integration of digital marketing, consumer behavior, and responsible social media engagement into classroom instruction. Incorporating real-world examples of short-form content into teaching strategies may help students better understand contemporary marketing practices and consumer decision-making.

For business owners and marketers, the study highlights the value of developing engaging, informative, and relevant Reel content to increase product awareness, strengthen consumer engagement, and influence purchasing behavior. Marketing

strategies that combine entertainment, authenticity, and useful product information may produce more meaningful interactions with target audiences.

Finally, this study serves as a valuable reference for future researchers interested in digital marketing and consumer behavior. Future investigations may examine different respondent groups, emerging short-form platforms, or additional variables that influence consumer engagement and purchasing decisions to expand the understanding of short-form social media marketing.

Acknowledgements

The researchers extend their sincere gratitude to Sir Arci V. Manangan, their adviser, for his invaluable guidance and support, and to the panel members for their constructive feedback, which strengthened this study.

Special appreciation is given to the Marketing Management students of Eulogio “Amang” Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology – Nagtahan, Sampaloc, Manila, whose participation as respondents was vital in completing this research.

The researchers also thank their families and friends for encouragement, and above all, express deep gratitude to God Almighty for wisdom and strength throughout this journey.

Funding

This research received no external funding from any public, commercial, or not-for-profit funding agency, and no organization provided financial support for the conduct of the study, authorship, or publication of this article.

Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

The primary empirical findings are contained herein, and supplementary secondary data are accessible via the cited references. To maintain participant confidentiality, raw datasets are restricted but may be disclosed by the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.