



“THE ROLE OF INSTAGRAM REELS AND YOUTUBE SHORTS IN BUILDING BRAND AWARENESS AMONG GEN Z IN SOLAPUR CITY”

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ABSTRACT :

The rapid rise of short-video platforms such as Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts has significantly transformed the way young consumers engage with digital content and brands. This study examines how Gen Z consumers in Solapur City use and interact with these platforms and how short-video elements—including humor, emotions, influencer marketing, and authenticity—shape brand awareness, brand recall, and purchase intention. Using primary data collected from respondents aged 15–27 years, the study analyzes patterns of daily use, preferred content types, engagement behaviours, and the extent to which short videos influence consumer perceptions. The findings reveal that Gen Z actively uses short-video platforms for entertainment, information, and to discover new brands. Engaging, humorous, and authentic content, especially when endorsed by relatable influencers, significantly enhances brand visibility and consumer recall. The study concludes that short-video platforms are powerful tools for marketers aiming to build strong brand connections with Gen Z consumers in Solapur City.



KEYWORDS: Gen Z, Brand Awareness, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, Social Media Marketing, Solapur City

➤ INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, short-form video content has emerged as a powerful tool for brands seeking to connect with younger audiences. Platforms such as Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts are at the forefront of this transformation, providing bite-sized, vertical video formats that resonate strongly with Generation Z. These platforms enable brands to deliver messages that are visually engaging, authentic, and easy to consume — qualities that align well with Gen Z's media habits and preferences.

Generation Z, broadly defined as those born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, represents a critical demographic for brands: tech-savvy, socially conscious, and highly active on social media. Their consumption patterns reflect shorter attention spans, a strong preference for mobile-first content, and a desire for authenticity and relatability in brand interactions. Short-form videos like Reels and Shorts are tailor-made to satisfy these traits.

In the Indian context — and specifically in a tier-2 city like Solapur — the relevance of Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts takes on additional significance. While metropolitan areas may have saturated digital strategies, smaller cities are witnessing rapid growth in smartphone penetration,

affordable data, and social media adoption. As Gen Z in Solapur increasingly engage with these platforms, local and regional brands have an opportunity to leverage Reels and Shorts to build brand awareness, trust, and community in previously underexplored markets.

From a marketing perspective, Instagram Reels provides strong virality potential through Instagram's Explore tab, creator features, and its integration with e-commerce tools — making it ideal for lifestyle, fashion, or consumer goods brands targeting Gen Z. On the other hand, YouTube Shorts offers sustained discoverability: because Shorts are part of YouTube's broader ecosystem, they can continue to surface in users' feeds long after being posted, helping brands maintain visibility over time.

➤ **Significance of the Study**

This study explores how Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts help brands reach Gen Z in Solapur. It shows Gen Z uses these platforms daily and remembers brands through fun, real, and emotional videos. Local businesses in Solapur can use this to grow using low-cost, engaging short videos. The findings can guide marketing in small Indian cities beyond just big metros.

➤ **Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine the usage patterns and engagement behaviour of Gen Z consumers in Solapur City on short-video platforms such as Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts.
2. To analyze the influence of short-video content (humor, emotion, influencer marketing, authenticity) on brand awareness, recall, and purchase intention among Gen Z consumers in Solapur City.

➤ **Scope of the Study**

The study is limited to Gen Z respondents aged 15–27 years in Solapur City. It focuses on two short-video platforms — Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts — and their role in promoting brand awareness.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study uses a descriptive research design to analyze Gen Z consumers' behavior and perceptions regarding Reels and Shorts.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured Google Form questionnaire distributed online to Gen Z users in Solapur City.

Sample Size

A total of 58 respondents participated in the study.

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling was used to select respondents aged between 15 and 27 years.

Data Analysis Tools

Simple percentage analysis and graphical representations were used to interpret the data.

➤ Data Analysis & Interpretation

Table 1: Age Distribution

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21-23 years	32	55.2
18-20 ys	18	31.0
15-17 years	6	10.3
24-27 years	2	3.4
Total	58	100

Interpretation: The table shows that 86% of respondents belong to the Gen Z age group (18-23 years), with the majority (55.2%) in the 21-23 age range. This confirms a strong focus on the target demographic in Solapur City.

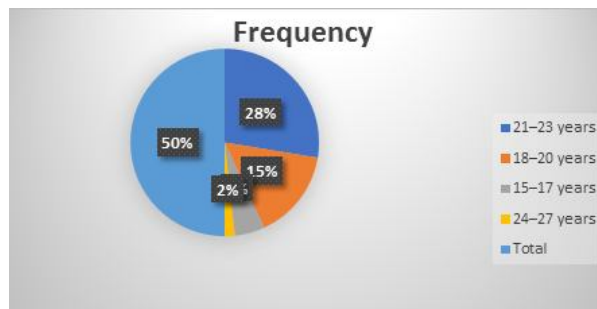
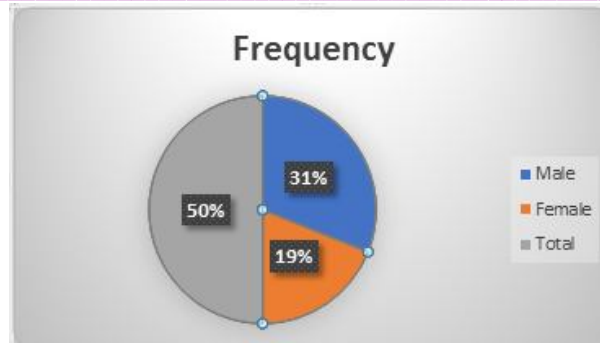


Table 2: Gender Distribution

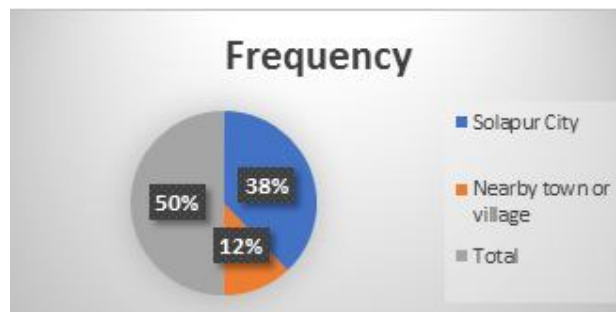
Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	36	62.1
Female	22	37.9
Total	58	100

Interpretation: The table indicates that males constitute 62.1% of the respondents, while females account for 37.9%. This provides a slightly male-dominant but balanced representation of Gen Z users for studying short-video platform usage.

**Table 3: City Distribution**

City	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Solapur City	44	75.9
Nearby town or village	14	24.1
Total	58	100

Interpretation: The table shows that most respondents (75.9%) are from Solapur City, while 24.1% are from nearby towns or villages. This indicates that the study's findings largely reflect urban Gen Z behavior.

**Table 4: Area Type Distribution**

Area Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Urban	32	55.2
Rural	18	31.0
Semi-urban	8	13.8
Total	58	100

Interpretation: The table indicates that urban respondents dominate at 55.2%, followed by rural (31.0%) and semi-urban (13.8%). This demonstrates diverse access and exposure to short-video platforms across Solapur's socio-economic zones.

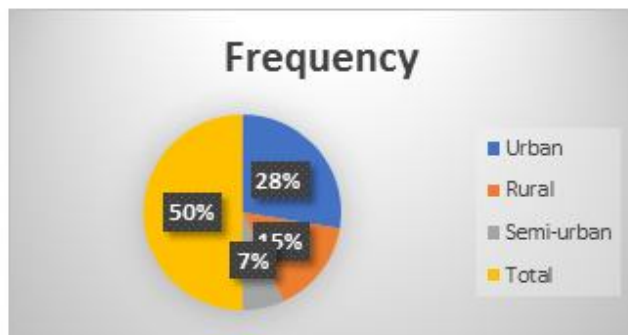


Table 5: Use Instagram Reels or YouTube Shorts.

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Multiple times a day	28	48.3
Once a day	24	41.4
A few times a week	4	6.9
Once a week or less	2	3.4
Total	58	100

Interpretation: The table shows that 48.3% of respondents use short-video platforms multiple times a day, and 41.4% use them once a day. This indicates that Reels and Shorts are deeply integrated into the daily digital habits of Gen Z.

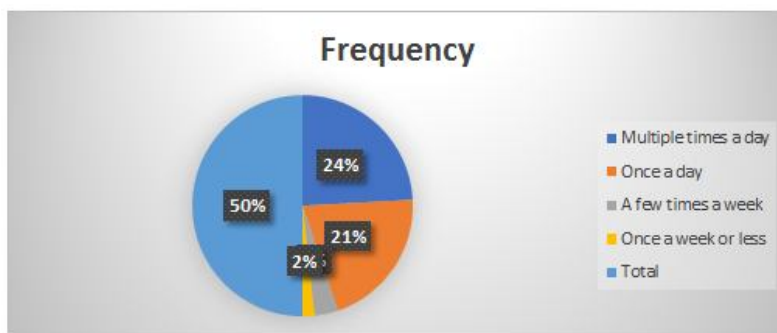
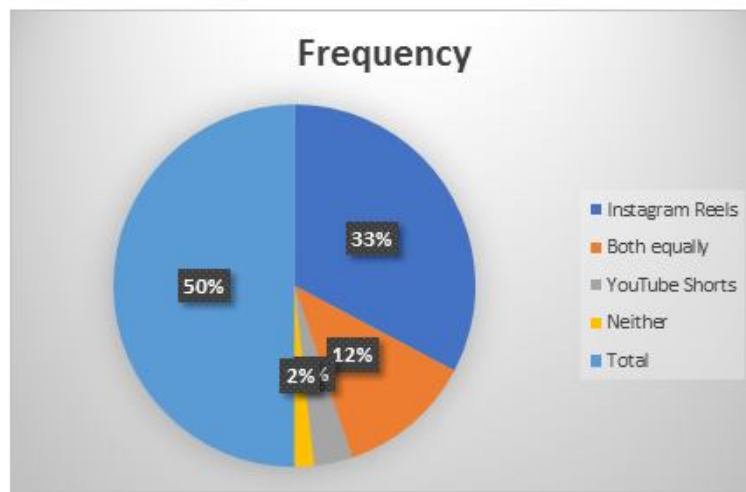


Table 6: Most Used Short-Video Platform

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Instagram Reels	38	65.5
Both equally	14	24.1
YouTube Shorts	4	6.9
Neither	2	3.4
Total	58	100

Interpretation: The table indicates that Instagram Reels is the preferred platform for 65.5% of respondents, while 24.1% use both platforms equally. This highlights Reels as the dominant short-video platform among Gen Z in Solapur.

**Table 7: Typical Actions When Watching Reels/Shorts**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Like	26	44.8
Share (send to friends)	26	44.8
Save or bookmark	4	6.9
Comment	2	3.4
Total	58	100

Interpretation: The table shows that respondents primarily like (44.8%) or share (44.8%) videos, while fewer save (6.9%) or comment (3.4%). This suggests that liking and sharing are the main engagement behaviours on short-video platforms

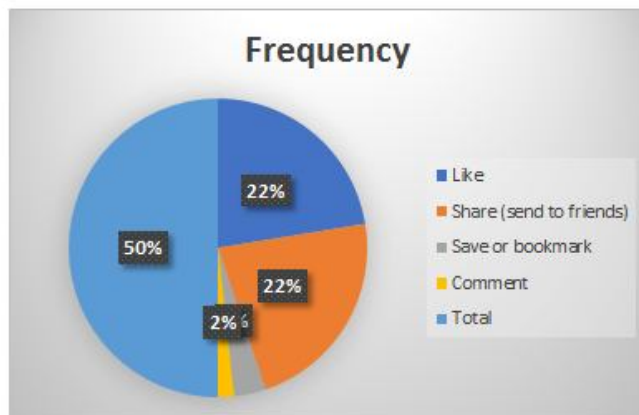


Table 8: Frequency of Sharing Brand Videos

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sometimes	36	62.1
Never	8	13.8
Rarely	8	13.8
Often	6	10.3
Total	58	100

Interpretation: The table indicates that 62.1% of respondents sometimes share videos featuring brands, while only 10.3% share often. This shows moderate sharing behaviours, meaning that short-video content can enhance brand visibility without guaranteed active promotion.

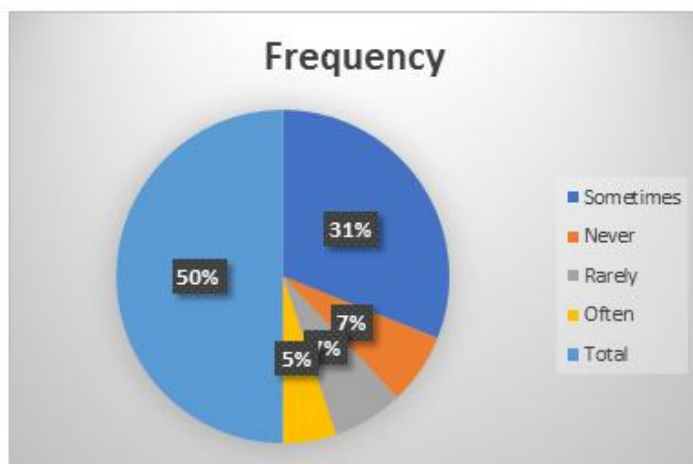
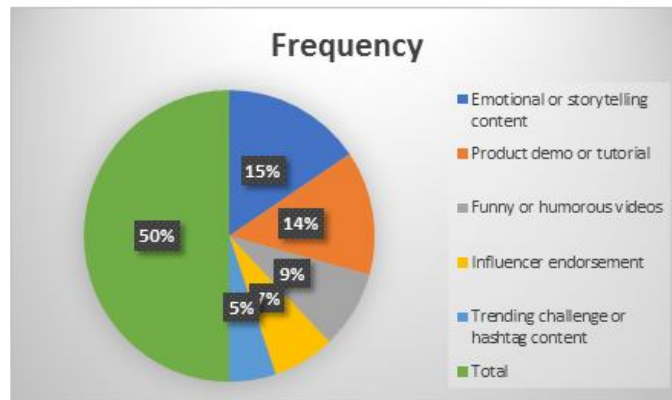


Table 9: Content Type That Improves Brand Recall

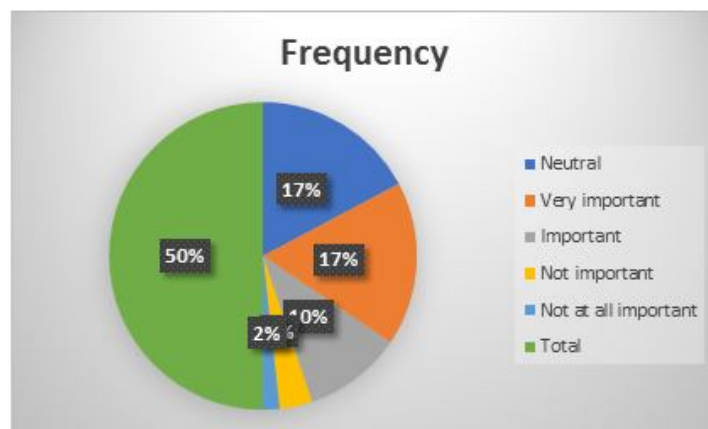
Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Emotional or storytelling content	18	31.0
Product demo or tutorial	16	27.6
Funny or humorous videos	10	17.2
In luencer endorsement	8	13.8
Trending challenge or hashtag content	6	10.3
Total	58	100

Interpretation: The table shows that emotional/storytelling content (31%) and product demos/tutorials (27.6%) are the most effective in creating brand recall. This implies that informative and engaging content resonates strongly with Gen Z.

**Table 10: Importance of Authenticity**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Neutral	20	34.5
Very important	20	34.5
Important	12	20.7
Not important	4	6.9
Not at all important	2	3.4
Total	58	100

Interpretation: The table indicates that 34.5% of respondents consider authenticity very important, while another 34.5% are neutral. This shows that real and unfiltered content significantly influences engagement and trust among Gen Z.

**Table 11: Types of Brands Noticed**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fashion / Clothing	22	37.9
Food & Beverages	12	20.7
Local Small Businesses	12	20.7
Beauty / Personal Care	6	10.3
Electronics / Gadgets	6	10.3
Total	58	100

Interpretation: The table shows that fashion/clothing brands (37.9%) are most noticed, followed by food & beverages and local small businesses (20.7% each). This reflects Gen Z's interest in lifestyle and daily-use brands on short-video platforms.

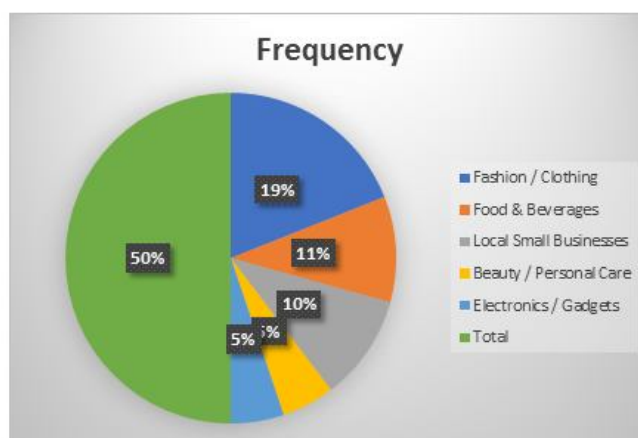
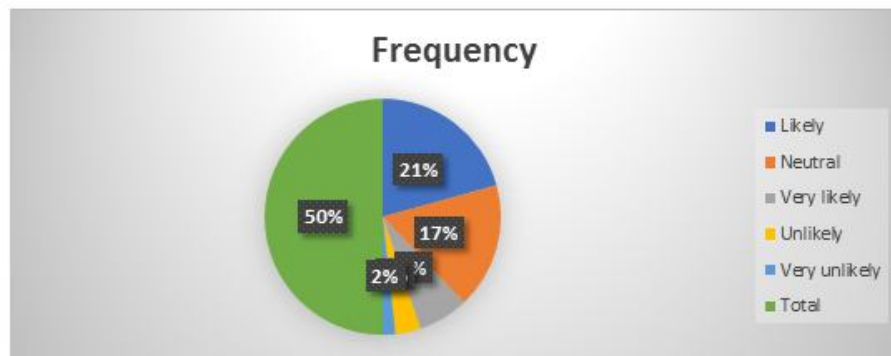


Table 12: Likelihood of Following Up on a Brand

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Likely	24	41.4
Neutral	20	34.5
Very likely	8	13.8
Unlikely	4	6.9
Very unlikely	2	3.4
Total	58	100

Interpretation: The table indicates that 41.4% of respondents are likely to follow up on a brand after watching a video, with 34.5% neutral. This suggests that short videos effectively encourage brand exploration and potential purchase consideration.



➤ FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS & CONCLUSION

Findings

1. Gen Z in Solapur uses Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts very actively, mostly multiple times a day.
2. Instagram Reels is more popular than YouTube Shorts.
3. Liking and sharing are the most common engagement actions.
4. Emotional videos, product demos, and humorous content create strong brand recall.
5. Authentic, real, and unfiltered content increases trust and engagement.
6. Fashion, food, and local business brands are most frequently noticed.
7. Many users search for brands after watching short videos, showing a strong influence on awareness.

SUGGESTIONS

- Brands should focus on authentic, short, and creative storytelling.
- Micro-influencers from Solapur can help brands connect with local youth.
- Consistency in posting Reels/Shorts boosts recall value.
- Interactive content, such as challenges and hashtags, increases participation.

CONCLUSION

Short-video platforms have redefined how brands connect with Gen Z. This study concludes that Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts are highly effective tools for building brand awareness among young consumers in Solapur City. The combination of creativity, humor, authenticity, and influencer engagement makes these platforms essential for future digital marketing strategies.

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