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IMPACT OF YOUTUBE SHORTS ON RESTAURANT SELECTION A STUDY IN COIMBATORE TAMILNADU

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ABSTRACT
The rapid rise of short-form video platforms like YouTube Shorts has significantly influenced consumer behaviours, especially in the food and hospitality industry. This study investigates the impact of YouTube Shorts on restaurant selection among consumers in Coimbatore. A structured questionnaire was administered to a diverse demographic, with a focus on frequency of viewership, content preferences, and actual dining behaviours. The findings reveal that a majority of respondents, particularly in the 18–24 age group, are frequent consumers of food-related content on YouTube Shorts and are influenced by visual appeal, food presentation, and ambiance as showcased in these videos. While 59.4% reported visiting restaurants after watching Shorts, many also experienced a mismatch between the video content and the real experience, leading to occasional dissatisfaction. Trust in influencers emerged as conditional, with users favouring authenticity over paid promotions. The study concludes that while YouTube Shorts is a powerful tool for driving curiosity and influencing choices, traditional decision-making factors such as food quality, pricing, location, and peer reviews remain crucial. The research provides valuable insights for restaurant marketers aiming to optimize their digital strategies and align online impressions with on-ground experiences.

KEYWORDS: *YouTube Shorts, Restaurant Selection, Consumer behaviours, Short-form Video Content, Digital Marketing, Influencer Marketing, Food Presentation, Visual Appeal, Coimbatore, Social Media Influence, Customer Expectations, Online-to-Offline behaviours.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, consumer behaviours are increasingly shaped by social media platforms and visual content. Among the most influential trends is the rise of short-form video content, with platforms like YouTube Shorts becoming a popular medium for quick, engaging information. Introduced as a response to the growing demand for bite-sized video content, YouTube Shorts has rapidly gained traction, especially among younger audiences. Its algorithm-driven feed, immersive user interface, and viral potential have made it a powerful marketing tool across industries — particularly in the food and hospitality sector. Restaurants and food-related businesses are leveraging this platform to showcase their cuisine, ambiance, customer experiences, and collaborations with influencers. These videos often influence viewers' perceptions and, subsequently, their decisions about where to dine. Visual appeal, food presentation, and influencer credibility are key elements that can attract potential customers within seconds. However, the authenticity of such content and its alignment with the real-life experience remains a matter of concern for many viewers. This study explores the impact of YouTube Shorts on restaurant selection among consumers in Coimbatore, a fast-growing metropolitan city in Tamil Nadu with a diverse and digitally active population. The research aims to understand how frequently people engage with food-related Shorts, what factors influence their restaurant choices, and how much trust they place in short-form video content. The study also investigates the role of influencer marketing, proximity, pricing, and food quality in shaping dining decisions. By examining both the appeal and limitations of YouTube Shorts as a marketing tool, this research provides insights into the evolving dynamics between social media consumption and offline consumer behaviours in the restaurant industry.

II. REVIEW LITERATURE

- **Kapoor, Neha (2020)** conducted a study on the impact of short-form videos on consumer decision-making in the food industry. The research found that engaging and visually appealing content influences consumers to explore new dining options. The study also suggested that short videos create higher recall value compared to static advertisements.
- **Singh, Raj & Patel, Arjun (2023)** examined the role of YouTube Shorts in influencing restaurant selection among young consumers. The study revealed that 72% of respondents tried a restaurant after watching a short food review video. The authors concluded that digital content, especially influencer-driven videos, plays a crucial role in shaping dining choices.
- **Sarker, Ananya & Rahman, Aftab (2021)** analysed the impact of user-generated content on restaurant credibility. The findings indicated that short, visually stimulating food videos enhance trust and create an emotional connection with viewers. The study emphasized that restaurant visits were significantly influenced by reviews shared through YouTube Shorts and similar platforms.
- **Sharma, Pooja & Verma, Rakesh (2022)** focused on the effectiveness of short-form video marketing for food businesses. The study found that 68% of customers were more likely to visit a restaurant after watching a short

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promotional video. It also highlighted that bite-sized, engaging content has a higher impact compared to long-format marketing strategies.

- **Hsu, Wei & Lin, Chen (2020)** investigated the role of visual appeal in consumer engagement with food videos. The study concluded that high-quality food visuals in short videos create sensory stimulation, leading to impulsive dining decisions. The researchers also found that restaurants with engaging YouTube Shorts received more customer interactions and footfall.
- **Kumar, Ravi & Rao, Manisha (2021)** explored the influence of digital marketing on food choices in Indian metropolitan cities. The study found that urban millennials rely heavily on YouTube and Instagram for restaurant recommendations, with 65% of respondents making dining decisions based on food-related video content.
- **Rajan, Meera & Menon, Satish (2022)** conducted a study in Tamil Nadu on how social media influences restaurant selection. The research revealed that 68% of respondents preferred restaurants they discovered through social media videos, particularly YouTube Shorts and Instagram Reels. The study suggested that digital visibility plays a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences.
- **Gupta & Sharma (2021)** studied the impact of food vloggers on consumer choices and found that 72% of respondents preferred restaurants recommended by influencers. Their research highlighted that engaging storytelling, high-quality visuals, and personal endorsements significantly enhance trust in food vloggers, making their recommendations more persuasive than traditional advertisements.
- **Raj & Iyer (2022**) analysed how short-form video content improves restaurant brand recall and concluded that aesthetic food visuals increase customer visits by 60%. They noted that platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels are particularly effective in showcasing visually appealing dishes, leading to higher engagement and a stronger brand impression among potential customers.
- **Krishnan (2023)** explored how digital platforms influence food trends, emphasizing the role of social validation in consumer behaviour. The study revealed that viral food challenges, user-generated content, and online reviews contribute to shaping dining preferences, as people are more likely to try trending dishes shared by their peers and influencers.
- **Suresh (2024)** investigated social media's role in shaping food preferences, concluding that 80% of young consumers rely on YouTube and Instagram for restaurant discovery. The study further found that interactive content, such as polls, Q&A sessions, and behind-the-scenes footage, enhances consumer engagement, making social media a primary source for culinary exploration.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To understand how YouTube Shorts influence customer decision-making when choosing restaurants
- To study the influence of Food Vlogger on Consumers choice of restaurant.
- To determine whether YouTube Shorts are more effective than traditional word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and family.

VI. SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

1) Analysed the frequency and nature of engagement with YouTube Shorts related to food and restaurants.
2) Assess the extent to which short-form video content influences restaurant choices.
3) Understand the role of influencer marketing and content authenticity in consumer trust.
4) Identify the key visual and informational factors that trigger dining decisions.

V. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

To explore the influence of YouTube Shorts on restaurant decision-making, the study is guided by the following hypotheses:

- **H1**: There is a significant influence of YouTube Shorts on consumer restaurant selection.
- **H2**: Food vloggers featured on YouTube Shorts play a major role in shaping consumer choices.
- **H3**: YouTube Shorts have a greater influence on consumers compared to traditional word-of-mouth recommendations.

These hypotheses aim to test the strength and nature of the relationship between social media content and consumer behaviours.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

1. Primary Data

Primary data was gathered through a structured questionnaire administered to individuals who actively consume food-related content on YouTube Shorts. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and scaled questions to capture quantitative responses related to content consumption frequency, influence on decision-making, and trust in vloggers. In addition to the survey, personal interviews were conducted with selected respondents to gain deeper insights into their motivations and preferences. This mixed approach enhanced the richness of the data.

2. Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected from a variety of credible sources including online journals**,** research articles, reputable websites, YouTube analytics tools, and existing literature on digital marketing and consumer psychology. These sources helped frame the theoretical foundation of the study and provided benchmarks for comparison with the primary data findings.

Statistical Techniques

Two key statistical tests were used:

- **Chi-Square**

  This non-parametric test was applied to determine

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whether there is a significant association between categorical variables, such as gender and influence of YouTube Shorts. It helped assess the independence or dependency of consumer choices based on their demographic attributes and viewing behaviours.

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Association between gender and YouTube Shorts influence my decision to try new restaurants

Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.056	4
Likelihood Ratio	6.402	4
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.929	1
N of Valid Cases	170	

H_0: There exists no association between gender of the respondents and YouTube Shorts influence my decision to try new restaurants.
Calculated χ^2 Value: 6.056
Degree of Freedom: 4
Significance Level: .195

INTERPRETATION
as the calculated χ^2 value (6.056) is not significant (.195) at the five percent level, there does not exist a significant association between gender of the respondents and new restaurants.
Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

2. Association between gender and I trust YouTube Shorts reviews when selecting a restaurant to visit

Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.318	4
Likelihood Ratio	3.339	4
Linear-by-Linear Association	.403	1
N of Valid Cases	170	

H_0: There exists no association between gender of the respondents and I trust YouTube Shorts reviews when selecting a restaurant to visit.
Calculated χ^2 Value: 3.318
Degree of Freedom: 4
Significance Level: .506

INTERPRETATION
As the calculated χ^2 value (3.318) is not significant (.506) at the five percent level, there does not exist a significant association between gender of the respondents and I trust YouTube Shorts reviews when selecting a restaurant to visit. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

IX. FINDINGS

1. As the calculated χ^2 value (6.056) is not significant (.195) at the five percent level, there does not exist a significant association between gender of the respondents and new restaurants. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.
2. As the calculated χ^2 value (3.318) is not significant (.506) at the five percent level, there does not exist a significant association between gender of the respondents and I trust YouTube Shorts reviews when selecting a restaurant to visit. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

X. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Local Targeting and Accessibility. As 34.1% prefer restaurants within a 5 km radius, businesses should use geo-targeting in ads and tags to focus on local customers. Highlighting proximity and convenience in the content can encourage footfall.
2. Encourage Customer Participation and Sharing. With 34.1% of respondents never sharing their restaurant experiences, businesses can offer incentives such as discounts, loyalty points, or contests to motivate users to create and share their own YouTube Shorts or reviews.
3. Reduce Overreliance on Influencer Marketing Alone. Since many respondents remain neutral or sceptical about influencer endorsements, restaurants should not rely solely on paid promotions. A mixed marketing approach including customer testimonials, peer reviews, and organic content can be more effective.

XI. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that YouTube Shorts has emerged as a powerful influence on restaurant selection, particularly among young, educated audiences. The visual appeal, food presentation, and influencer endorsements featured in short-form videos significantly shape viewer perceptions and decisions. However, the findings also show a noticeable gap between expectations set by videos and the actual dining experience, with many respondents reporting occasional mismatch or disappointment. Furthermore, trust in influencer content is conditional, with a growing preference for authenticity and transparency.

While YouTube Shorts creates excitement and drives curiosity, the decision-making process remains complex and influenced by a mix of traditional factors such as food quality, price,

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location, and personal recommendations. In conclusion, for restaurants to effectively leverage YouTube Shorts as a marketing tool, they must focus on genuine content, strategic influencer partnerships, and consistent service quality. This alignment between digital influence and real-world experience is key to enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty in an increasingly social-media-driven market.

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