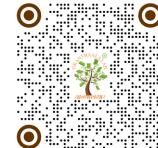


Original Article

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING ON CONSUMER BUYING DECISIONS

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ABSTRACT

The advent of social media advertising has created significant opportunities for enterprises to engage with consumers by disseminating promotional content directly via digital platforms. In India, there is a growing trend among consumers to depend on social media platforms for information pertaining to products and services, which plays a crucial role in shaping their purchasing decisions. Individuals frequently pursue advertisements that provide valuable information, demonstrate credibility, and capture their interests before finalising their purchasing decisions. Social media advertising has become a crucial tool for marketers looking to shape consumers' behaviours. The interaction between marketers and consumers on social media platforms is ongoing, resulting in a more dynamic and consumer-focused advertising landscape. In the current landscape, it is crucial to analyse consumers' perceptions of social media advertising and its influence on their purchase decisions. This study aims to investigate the correlation between social media advertising and consumers' purchasing behaviours. The research involved a sample of 180 participants who regularly engage with social media platforms and are subject to online advertising exposure in Palakkad. The study used convenience sampling techniques for participant selection, and a structured questionnaire was implemented as the primary instrument for data collection. The methodologies used to achieve the research objectives include descriptive analysis, multiple regression and one-way ANOVA. The findings indicate a reliability coefficient of 86.2%. The data analysis was performed using SPSS version 26. The results demonstrate a positive correlation between elements of social media advertising and consumers' purchasing decisions. The findings indicate that factors such as age, education, annual income, and occupation have a notable impact on consumers' purchasing behaviours.

Keywords: Social Media Advertising, Consumer Buying Decisions, Consumer Perception, Digital Marketing

INTRODUCTION

Technological progress has marked a steady and ongoing transformation in the evolution of advertising. In the initial phases of its development, advertising predominantly utilised conventional media platforms, including newspapers, magazines, radio, and television, to convey promotional messages to the consumer's audience. The traditional methods of advertising predominantly adhered to a unidirectional communication framework, wherein consumers acted as passive recipients of information. Nonetheless, the swift advancement of internet technology and digital communication has significantly transformed the advertising landscape, leading to the emergence of more interactive and consumer-focused methods of promotion. Within the realm of digital advertising, social media advertising has emerged as a prominent channel, profoundly influencing the methods of reaching and engaging consumers.

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Social media platforms have significantly altered organisational interactions with consumers, facilitating immediate communication, content dissemination, and relationship development. The main aim of social media advertising extends beyond the mere promotion of products and services; it also seeks to foster meaningful interactions with consumers that can shape their attitudes and influence their purchasing behaviours. Throughout the years, social media platforms have undergone significant evolution, providing sophisticated targeting mechanisms, tailored advertising content, and marketing strategies informed by data analysis. The identified features enable advertisers to convey pertinent messages to targeted consumer segments, consequently enhancing the efficacy of advertising initiatives [Kaplan and Haenlein \(2010\)](#).

In the current market landscape, there is a notable trend where consumers rely more on social media platforms to gather information, assess products, and compare brands prior to finalising their purchasing choices. In contrast to conventional advertising methods, social media advertising incorporates elements such as user-generated content, peer reviews, influencer endorsements, and interactions between brands and consumers, each of which significantly influences consumer perceptions. Individuals often exhibit a preference for information acquired via social media, attributing this inclination to the perceived authenticity and transparency inherent in online engagements. As a result, advertising on social media has become an important factor in shaping consumer awareness, preferences, and buying choices [Mangold and Faulds \(2009\)](#).

The rise of social media advertising has profoundly transformed the processes by which consumers make decisions. Contemporary consumers exhibit a shift in behaviour, moving beyond the passive reception of company-generated advertising messages. They now actively participate in the advertising landscape by engaging through actions such as liking, commenting, sharing, and soliciting opinions from their social networks. The interactive characteristics of social media advertising significantly augment consumer engagement and impact purchase intentions throughout different phases of the buying process. Prior research has demonstrated that elements, including informativeness, credibility, entertainment value, and interactivity within social media advertisements, significantly impact consumer purchasing behaviour [Duffett \(2017\)](#).

In a contemporary landscape characterised by globalisation and heightened market competition, organisations are increasingly assessing the efficacy of advertising by analysing consumer responses and purchasing behaviours rather than relying solely on exposure metrics. Companies designate significant portions of their marketing expenditures to social media advertising, acknowledging its capacity to impact consumer choices more efficiently than conventional media. Nonetheless, consumer reactions to social media ads vary based on demographic factors, individual preferences, and their interpretations of the advertising material. Consequently, it is crucial to investigate the impact of social media advertising on consumer purchase behaviour and discern the elements that contribute to its efficacy. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the effects of social media advertising on consumer purchase decisions, with an emphasis on consumers' perceptions, behavioural responses, and demographic factors.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

[Singh and Dhir \(2025\)](#) investigated the influence of social media advertising on consumer purchasing behaviour, concentrating on factors including advertisement information, credibility, entertainment, perceived relevancy, and purchase intention. The main aim of this research was to examine the impact of various attributes of social media advertisements on consumers' purchasing behaviour within a digital context. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data from 520 active social media users, resulting in 487 valid responses for subsequent analyses. The selection of respondents was conducted using a convenience sampling technique, specifically targeting individuals from major metropolitan areas. The researcher utilised descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis to investigate relationships among the variables. The results indicated that informativeness and credibility exert a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions, whereas entertainment demonstrated a moderate influence. The researchers' findings indicate that social media advertisements, characterised by high levels of informativeness and trustworthiness, significantly enhance their effectiveness in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions.

[Kaur and Arora \(2025\)](#) undertook an empirical investigation aimed at understanding consumer attitudes regarding social media advertising and its impact on purchasing decisions. This research sought to elucidate the influence of personalisation, interactivity, and trust on the formation of consumers' purchase intentions. Data were gathered from a sample of 460 participants through the use of a structured questionnaire, employing a judgemental sampling method to ensure the representation of active social media users. The data analysis employed several statistical techniques, including factor analysis, correlation, and structural equation modelling. The findings suggest that the elements of personalisation and interactivity play a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes and subsequently having favourable impacts on purchasing decisions. The findings indicate that trust serves as a mediating factor in the relationship between social media advertising and consumers' buying behaviour.

[Verma and Sinha \(2024\)](#) conducted an analysis of the effectiveness of social media advertising in relation to consumer buying behaviour, focusing specifically on brand awareness and purchase intentions. The research focused on investigating the impact of social media advertisements on consumers' perceptions of brands and their subsequent purchasing decisions. The study involved the collection of data from a sample of 400 respondents, utilising a questionnaire method and employing convenience sampling for participant selection. The research employed descriptive analysis, ANOVA, and regression analysis to scrutinise the data. The results indicate that advertising on social media plays a crucial role in increasing brand awareness and has a positive impact on consumers'

intentions to purchase. The study demonstrated that younger consumers are more receptive to social media advertisements than older consumers.

In their study, [Chen and Lin \(2024\)](#) investigated how various attributes of social media advertising impact the decision-making processes of consumers. The aim of this research was to evaluate how information, credibility, and entertainment influence consumers' attitudes and purchasing behaviours. The research gathered primary data from a sample of 378 respondents through the use of a structured questionnaire, employing a non-probability sampling method. The methodology employed for hypothesis testing involved applying structural equation modelling. The results demonstrated that both credibility and informativeness have a significant and positive impact on consumer attitudes, which in turn affect purchasing decisions. The findings indicate that entertainment exerts a positive influence, albeit one that is comparatively weaker in nature.

[Rao and Mehta \(2023\)](#) conducted a study investigating the relationship between social media advertising and consumer purchasing behaviours, highlighting factors such as interactivity, perceived usefulness, and trust. The research focused on identifying the factors that influence consumer responsiveness to social media advertisements. The study collected data from 350 respondents using a questionnaire method and convenience sampling as the sampling technique. The study incorporated descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis methodologies. The results show that interactivity and perceived usefulness are important factors in how consumers decide what to buy. On the other hand, trust makes the connection between social media ads and buying behaviour stronger.

In their study, [Alalwan and Rana \(2023\)](#) investigated how social media advertising influences consumer purchase intention, focusing on the interplay between attitudes toward advertising, perceived value, and credibility. The research gathered data from 390 participants via a structured questionnaire employing convenience sampling methodology. The data analysis was conducted using structural equation modelling. The results indicate that the perception of social media advertising significantly enhances purchase intention, with credibility being a vital factor in influencing positive consumer reactions. The researchers highlighted the importance of value-oriented advertising content in shaping consumer choices.

[Duffett and Wakeham \(2022\)](#) conducted an investigation into the impact of social media marketing communications on consumer attitudes and purchasing behaviours, with a specific focus on the demographics of young consumers. The aim of this research was to examine the impact of social media advertising on brand engagement and the intention to purchase. The study involved the collection of data from 310 respondents through the use of a structured questionnaire, employing a non-probability sampling technique for participant selection. The data were analysed using factoring and regression analysis methodologies. The results indicate that advertising on social media has a considerable impact on consumers' attitudes and subsequently influences their purchasing behaviour. It was noted that advertisements characterised by interactivity and informative content demonstrated greater effectiveness than conventional advertising formats.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To study the perceptions of consumers toward social media advertising.
- 2) To examine the effect of social media advertising attributes on consumer buying decisions.
- 3) To assess the influence of demographic variables on consumer buying decisions.

HYPOTHESES

H₀1: There is no significant effect of social media advertising attributes on consumer buying decisions.

H₀2: There is no significant influence of demographic variables on consumer buying decisions.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to investigate the influence of social media advertising on the purchasing choices of consumers. The researcher employs a descriptive and analytical design to examine consumers' perceptions and behavioural responses to social media advertising. The study's population comprises individuals who engage with social media platforms and encounter online advertisements in Palakkad. The study involved a selection of 180 respondents. The sample selection was conducted using the convenience sampling technique, which falls under the category of non-probability sampling methods. Data collection was conducted through the use of a structured questionnaire, which was the primary research instrument. The survey instrument was structured into three distinct sections. The initial segment comprised statements that assessed various attributes of social media advertising, including informativeness, credibility, entertainment value, and interactivity. The second section examined the factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions. The third section documented demographic variables, including age, gender, education, income, and occupation.

The responses were quantified using a five-point Likert scale, with values ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The scale's reliability was assessed through Cronbach's Alpha, with results surpassing the acceptable threshold, thereby demonstrating the internal consistency of the instrument.

The data that were collected underwent analysis utilising SPSS version 26. The analytical methods utilised encompass percentage analysis, mean and standard deviation calculations, multiple regression analysis, and one-way ANOVA, all of which aim to test the hypotheses established for the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.862 suggests a reliability level of 86.2% for the study. The data indicates that 55.6% of the participants identified as male, while 42.1% were within the age bracket of 21 to 30 years. Additionally, 32.4% of the population consists of graduates, whereas 58.3% are documented as being in a married status. Furthermore, it was observed that 38.6% of the participants are employed in the private sector, while 31.7% report an annual income ranging from ₹10 to ₹20 lakhs. This section explores the correlation between social media advertising and consumers' purchasing habits. The examination of bivariate correlation is employed to investigate the relationship, with the results detailed in [Table 1](#).

Table 1

Table 1 Perception about Social Media Advertising				
S.No	Items	Mean	SD	
1	Social media advertisements provide useful product information	4.08	0.912	
2	Advertisements on social media are credible and trustworthy	3.92	1.034	
3	Social media ads are entertaining and engaging	3.76	1.108	
4	Advertisements encourage interaction and engagement	3.88	0.987	
5	Social media ads influence my awareness of brands	4.12	0.876	

Source: Primary Data

[Table 1](#) presents an analysis of consumer perceptions concerning social media advertising. The average values indicate that consumers regard social media advertisements as significantly informative and effective in increasing brand awareness, which has become an essential element of social media advertising. Additionally, the participants recognised that advertisements on social media serve as a valuable source of product information, are perceived as credible and trustworthy, promote interaction and engagement, and have entertaining qualities. The results suggest that consumers exhibit a favourable attitude towards social media advertising, and the overall efficacy of these advertisements in shaping consumer awareness and facilitating information processing is high.

Table 2

Table 2 Perception about Consumer Buying Decisions				
S.No	Items	Mean	SD	
1	Social media ads influence my buying decisions	3.94	0.998	
2	Ads encourage me to try new brands	3.86	1.021	
3	Ads affect my brand preference	3.79	1.108	
4	Ads lead to impulse buying	3.62	1.213	
5	Ads influence repeat purchase behaviour	3.91	0.945	

Source: Primary Data

[Table 2](#) illustrates consumers' insights concerning the impact of social media advertising on their purchasing decisions. The average values suggest a consensus among consumers regarding the impact of social media advertisements on their purchasing decisions, highlighting this phenomenon as a significant element of their buying behaviour. Additionally, the participants recognised that advertisements on social media motivated them to explore new brands, shape their brand preferences, and improve their likelihood of making repeat purchases. The results indicate that social media advertisements play a role in impulse buying; however, this phenomenon demonstrates a relatively moderate consensus among consumers. The findings suggest that social media advertising significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions throughout different phases of the buying process.

Table 3

Table 3 Perception about Social Media Advertising Credibility and Engagement			
S.No	Items	Mean	SD
1	I find social media advertisements trustworthy	3.72	1.084
2	Reviews increase my confidence in advertisements	4.05	0.962
3	Influencer endorsements enhance credibility	3.91	1.013
4	Ads encourage interaction and engagement	3.86	1.004
5	Ads appear honest and reliable	3.68	1.117

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 illustrates consumer perceptions concerning the credibility and engagement associated with social media advertising. The average values suggest that consumers exhibit a moderate level of agreement regarding the trustworthiness and credibility of social media advertisements, highlighting their significance in the effectiveness of social media advertising. Moreover, the participants indicated that reviews play a crucial role in bolstering their confidence in advertisements, while influencer endorsements contribute to the perceived credibility of the brands being advertised. The results indicate that social media advertisements facilitate interaction and engagement among consumers. Nonetheless, a small subset of participants indicated a comparatively diminished level of agreement concerning the general honesty and reliability of advertisements. The findings suggest that credibility and engagement are critical factors influencing consumers' perceptions of social media advertising.

This research investigates the impact of social media advertising on consumer purchasing behaviour, focusing on its essential attributes, including informativeness, credibility, entertainment, and interactivity, in relation to the dependent variables of consumer buying decisions. This study conducts an empirical analysis of the strength and direction of relationships among various variables to investigate how the distinct characteristics of social media advertisements affect consumer behaviour. The findings provide helpful details about the influence of digital advertising on shaping purchase decisions.

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING ATTRIBUTES ON CONSUMER BUYING DECISIONS

This section analyses the influence of informativeness, credibility, entertainment, and interactivity in social media advertising on consumer purchasing behaviour. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of the specified advertising attributes, with the findings detailed in **Table 4**.

H₀1: There is no significant effect of social media advertising attributes on consumer buying decisions.

Table 4

Table 4 Impact of Social Media Advertising Attributes on Consumer Buying Decisions				
Social Media Attributes	R²	Beta	F	t
(Constant)	0.592	0.239	35.728**	2.898**
Informativeness		0.412	(p =.000)	6.384**
Credibility	Adjusted R²	0.295		5.147**
Entertainment	0.604	0.168		3.012**
Interactivity		0.241		4.226**

** Significant at 1% level

The findings presented in **Table 3** indicate that the regression model demonstrates statistical significance, evidenced by an F-value of 35.728, which supports the rejection of the null hypothesis H₀. The coefficient of determination (R² = 0.604) suggests that the combined factors of informativeness, credibility, entertainment, and interactivity in social media advertising account for 60.4% of the variability observed in consumer purchasing decisions.

The findings indicate that informativeness (Beta = 0.412, p = .000) has the most significant impact on consumer purchasing decisions, followed by credibility (Beta = 0.295, p = .000) and interactivity (Beta = 0.241, p = .000). The variable of entertainment demonstrates a statistically significant relationship with consumer buying decisions (Beta = 0.168, p = .003); however, its influence is relatively weaker in comparison to other factors.

An elevation of a single unit in the dimensions of informativeness, credibility, entertainment, and interactivity within social media advertisements correlates with a proportional enhancement in consumer purchasing decisions. The results indicate that social media advertising content that is informative, trustworthy, and interactive significantly influences consumers' purchasing behaviours. The findings demonstrate the value of effective social media advertising strategies in significantly enhancing consumer engagement and positively impacting purchasing decisions.

Nonetheless, the delivery of precise and pertinent information via social media advertising plays a vital role in bolstering consumer trust and improving purchasing choices. This section seeks to clarify the impact of social media's advertising characteristics on consumers' purchasing behaviour. The application of one-way ANOVA facilitates the assessment of the influence of demographic variables on consumer purchasing decisions, with the results presented in [Table 5](#).

H₀2: There is no significant influence of demographic variables on Consumer Buying Decisions

Table 5

Table 5 Influence of Demographic Variables on Consumer Buying Decisions				
	Classification	Mean	S D	F-value
Age (in years)	21-30	3.91	0.742	7.894** (p=.000)
	31-40	3.74	0.903	
	41-50	3.55	1.124	
Gender	50 and above	2.69	0.948	1.132 (p=.214)
	Male	3.34	0.658	
	Female	3.29	0.758	
Education	Higher secondary	2.51	1.795	8.106** (p=.000)
	Bachelor degree	3.32	1.025	
	Master's Degree	3.61	1.031	
Marital status	Professional Degree	4.08	0.543	0.836 (p=.218)
	Single	3.87	0.742	
	Married	3.57	1.044	
Annual income (in Lakhs)	< 2	2.83	1.695	8.712** (p=.000)
	2 to 5	3.44	1.019	
	5 to 10	3.72	0.754	
	10 to 20	3.86	0.901	
	> 20	4.18	1.063	
Employment	Government employee	3.99	0.554	6.341** (p=.000)
	Private sector employee	3.82	0.746	
	Business	3.81	0.648	
	Professional	4.05	1.171	
	Others	2.63	1.185	

**Significant at 1% level

The analysis reveals a substantial impact of age ($F = 7.894, p = .000$), education ($F = 8.106, p = .000$), annual income ($F = 8.712, p = .000$), and employment ($F = 6.341, p = .000$) on consumer purchasing decisions. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected at the 1% significance threshold. In this analysis, gender ($F = 1.132, p = .214$) does not exhibit a statistically significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions. Consequently, the null hypothesis is upheld at the 5% significance threshold.

The age group of 21–30 years has achieved the highest mean score of 3.91, whereas respondents aged 50 years and older have reported the lowest mean score of 2.69. This suggests that younger consumers display more pronounced purchasing behaviours shaped by social media marketing, whereas older consumers show relatively diminished reactions to such advertisements.

In terms of educational qualifications, individuals with a professional degree exhibit the highest mean score of 4.08, whereas those with higher secondary education demonstrate the lowest mean score of 2.51. This suggests that higher levels of education improve consumers' capacity to assess and react favourably to social media advertising, leading to more robust purchasing decisions.

The analysis of annual income reveals that respondents with earnings exceeding ₹20 lakhs per annum have attained a mean value of 4.18, in contrast to those with earnings below ₹2 lakhs per annum, who have reported a mean value of 2.83. It can be deduced that consumers with higher incomes exhibit more informed purchasing decisions as a result of social media advertising, attributable to their enhanced financial capacity and increased engagement with digital platforms.

In terms of employment status, individuals engaged in professional occupations exhibited the highest mean score of 4.05. Conversely, those who were categorised under other employment classifications recorded the lowest mean score of 2.63. This suggests that individuals in professional roles demonstrate a heightened propensity for making purchasing decisions that are influenced by social media advertising, in contrast to consumers in other sectors who display comparatively lower levels of responsiveness.

The findings indicate that demographic factors, including age, education, income, and employment, have a major influence on consumer purchasing decisions within the realm of social media advertising. In contrast, gender appears to have no substantial impact on these decisions.

CONCLUSION

This study conducted an empirical examination of the relationship between attributes of social media advertising and consumer purchasing decisions, focusing particularly on aspects such as informativeness, credibility, entertainment, and interactivity. The results of the research indicate a clear and significant correlation between various elements of social media advertising and consumers' purchasing behaviours. The findings suggest that consumers have a positive view of social media advertising, which significantly contributes to their awareness, assessment, and decision-making processes related to purchases. The availability of pertinent product information, reliable advertising material, and engaging promotional communications facilitates consumers in making more informed and rational purchasing choices.

The findings indicate that the attributes of social media advertising play a crucial role in influencing consumers' purchasing behaviour. Research indicates that consumers exhibit a marked inclination towards advertisements characterised by their informative nature, trustworthiness, and engaging content. This preference significantly bolsters consumer confidence and plays a crucial role in shaping brand preference and purchase intentions. Nonetheless, the results indicate that although social media advertising significantly impacts awareness and the development of preferences, its influence on stimulating impulse purchases is relatively limited. The observed behavioural patterns suggest that consumers exhibit selective processing of social media advertisement content, highlighting the critical role of relevance and credibility in shaping actual purchase decisions.

The examination of demographic variables indicates that factors such as age, education, annual income, and employment status play a substantial role in shaping consumer purchasing decisions within the realm of social media advertising, while gender appears to have no significant impact. Younger consumers, individuals with professional qualifications, those earning higher incomes, and professionals demonstrate more robust purchasing decisions that are shaped by social media advertising. This trend suggests a greater exposure to digital platforms, an increased familiarity with online content, and enhanced confidence in their decision-making processes. In contrast, individuals with limited educational attainment and lower income levels exhibit a diminished responsiveness to social media advertisements, thereby underscoring the existing disparities in digital literacy and purchasing power among various demographic segments.

In the contemporary digital marketing landscape, marked by swift technological progress and heightened competition among brands, social media advertising emerges as a pivotal factor influencing consumers' purchasing behaviour. The research findings clearly indicate that successful social media advertising, which prioritises information, credibility, and engagement, has the potential to improve consumer trust, diminish decision-making uncertainty, and positively affect purchases. Consequently, it is imperative that marketers prioritise creating transparent, informative, and consumer-focused social media advertising strategies. Enhancing the quality and relevance of social media advertising presents an opportunity for organisations to elevate consumers' engagements and purchasing outcomes. Concurrently, policymakers and industry stakeholders have the potential to promote responsible digital marketing practices and cultivate sustainable consumer-brand relationships.

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