

# Influence of Social Media Advertising on Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Study of Instagram and Facebook Users in Kerala

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## Abstract

Social media advertising has become a central tool in influencing consumer purchase behaviour, particularly on visually driven platforms. Focusing on Instagram and Facebook, the research analyses consumer exposure, engagement, and perceptions of social media advertisements using a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative results indicate a statistically significant relationship between advertisement engagement and purchase decisions, supported by a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.90$ ), showing that higher interaction levels substantially increase purchase likelihood. Instagram emerges as the more visually engaging and influential platform, driven by video-based content, emotional appeal, and influencer marketing, while Facebook is perceived as more informative and supportive of rational decision-making. Qualitative insights emphasize the role of creativity, authenticity, emotional storytelling, and social proof in building trust and enhancing brand recall, while also highlighting concerns related to advertisement overload and ad fatigue. Overall, the findings confirm the effectiveness of well-designed social media advertisements in shaping consumer perceptions and driving purchase decisions.

**Keywords:** Social Media Advertising, Consumer Purchase Behaviour, Instagram and Facebook

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, technological advancements have transformed the way businesses interact with consumers, making social media a central platform for marketing and communication. Among various social media channels, Instagram and Facebook have emerged as dominant platforms that have reshaped advertising strategies. These platforms enable businesses to reach a wide audience directly, efficiently, and at lower costs compared to traditional media. Social media advertising now plays a critical role in influencing consumer decisions, as users spend significant portions of their daily routines engaging with posts, videos, and brand messages.

Instagram leverages visual content through features like stories, reels, and images, attracting younger audiences and creating strong visual appeal. Facebook, on the other hand, offers tools such as sponsored posts, carousel ads, and targeted campaigns that allow businesses to reach consumers based on demographics, interests, and location. The combination of these interactive features enables brands to

deliver personalized and engaging advertisements, making social media not just a platform for entertainment but also a marketplace where consumer opinions and purchase decisions are shaped.

Both large and small businesses now actively use Instagram and Facebook to promote their products, employing strategies such as influencer marketing, visual storytelling, and short video content. Consumers are often influenced by peer reviews, likes, shares, and endorsements from celebrities or micro-influencers, which increases the credibility and personal relevance of advertisements. At the same time, changing consumer behaviour emphasizes the importance of quick, visually appealing, and relatable content, although the effectiveness of ads may vary depending on product type, messaging, and audience characteristics.

This study focuses on examining the impact of Instagram and Facebook advertisements on consumer purchase decisions. It investigates how consumers perceive these ads, identifies the elements that attract attention, and measures the extent to which social media marketing drives actual purchases. Additionally, the study compares the relative effectiveness of visual-focused Instagram ads versus information-oriented Facebook ads, highlighting their unique roles in influencing consumer interest.

Overall, the research aims to provide insights into how social media advertising shapes consumer behaviour in the digital age, offering valuable guidance for marketers, business owners, and researchers seeking to optimize engagement and enhance the effectiveness of online advertising strategies.

## 2. Review of Literature

Chandrashekhar Kashyap et al. (2024), in their study “The Impact of Social Media Advertising on Consumer Purchase Decisions” examined how social media advertisements influence consumers’ buying behaviour by shaping awareness, attitudes, and purchase intentions. The paper highlights that factors such as engaging content, emotional appeal, interactivity, and social validation (likes, comments, and shares) play a significant role in influencing consumer decisions, making social media advertising more persuasive than traditional media. Using survey-based analysis, the authors find a positive and significant relationship between exposure to social media advertisements and consumers’ willingness to purchase, emphasizing the importance of trust, relevance, and personalization in advertising messages. The study contributes to existing literature by reinforcing the view that social media platforms not only act as promotional tools but also as interactive spaces where consumer perceptions and preferences are actively formed.

Vijaya et.al (2024) in their study “The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Purchasing Decisions” (2024) examined the growing influence of social media platforms on consumers’ purchasing behaviour in the digital era. The paper highlights that social media affects purchase decisions through increased product awareness, information accessibility, peer influence, and electronic word-of-mouth, with particular emphasis on trust, credibility of content, and user engagement. The findings suggest that interactive features such as reviews, comments, influencer endorsements, and targeted advertisements significantly shape consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. The study reinforces existing literature by confirming that social media serves not only as a communication channel but also as a decisive factor in the consumer decision-making process. However, the paper also indicates limitations related to sample scope and contextual factors, implying the need for future research across diverse demographic groups and platforms to better understand long-term behavioural impacts.

Yingxuan Yang (2024) in his study on “The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Purchasing Decisions,” presents a comprehensive conceptual examination of the ways in which social media influences consumer

behaviour throughout the entire purchase decision-making process, from problem recognition to post-purchase evaluation. The paper systematically discusses the definitions, classifications, and primary functions of social media, emphasizing key mechanisms such as information dissemination, social authentication, and user interaction in shaping consumer attitudes, brand perceptions, and purchase intentions. A notable strength of the study is its holistic framework, which connects social media activities with each stage of consumer decision-making while also addressing emerging themes such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, cross-platform integration, and social responsibility. The findings underscore that social media enhances brand visibility, consumer engagement, loyalty, and word-of-mouth communication by enabling real-time feedback, community building, and interactive brand–consumer relationships. At the same time, the study acknowledges critical challenges including information overload, content credibility, trust issues, and data privacy concerns, highlighting the need for continuous innovation in social media marketing strategies. Although the research is largely theoretical and would benefit from empirical validation, it makes a meaningful contribution to the literature by positioning social media as a strategic driver of consumer engagement and competitive brand positioning in the contemporary digital marketplace.

Van Dawt Lian & Shalini Srivastav (2025) in their study on “Influence of Social Media Marketing On Consumer Purchase Decisions” examined the role of social media marketing in shaping consumer attitudes and purchasing behaviour, emphasizing how contemporary digital strategies have transformed traditional buying decision processes. By adopting a mixed-methods design that combines survey data, interviews, and analytical techniques, the research evaluates the influence of influencer endorsements, user-generated content, and interactive brand communication across popular platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. The results demonstrate that social media plays a decisive role in guiding consumer choices, particularly through high-quality content, credible recommendations, and influencer impact, whereas conventional promotional tools like email marketing show comparatively limited effectiveness. Statistical analysis further reveals significant differences in the influence of various marketing approaches, confirming that consumer responses vary according to the strategy employed. While social media is shown to enhance customer–brand interaction and assist consumers during the decision-making process, its direct effect on final purchase decisions is not uniform. Overall, the study offers valuable insights for businesses aiming to strengthen consumer engagement, build trust, and improve sales outcomes by prioritizing interactive and content-driven social media strategies in a highly competitive digital marketplace.

### **Research Gap**

Although studies by Chandrashekhhar Kashyap et al. (2024), Vijaya et al. (2024), Yingxuan Yang (2024), and Van Dawt Lian & Shalini Srivastav (2025) have established that social media advertising significantly influences consumer attitudes, engagement, and purchase intentions through factors like content quality, emotional appeal, interactivity, and influencer endorsements, several gaps remain. Most existing research is either conceptual or limited to generalized survey analyses, with insufficient empirical evidence from specific regional contexts. In particular, comparative studies on the effectiveness of Instagram versus Facebook in driving actual purchase decisions are limited, and the differential impact of visual storytelling versus information-oriented content has not been fully explored. Additionally, prior studies have largely overlooked how local cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic factors influence consumer responses, especially in regions like Kerala. There is also limited understanding of how advertisement features such as emotional appeal, peer recommendations, trust, and influencer credibility interact to affect purchase behaviour, while challenges like ad fatigue and information overload remain underexamined. This study

addresses these gaps by empirically investigating how Instagram and Facebook advertisements shape consumer purchase decisions in Kerala, identifying the key content and psychological factors that drive engagement and actual buying behaviour, and comparing the relative effectiveness of the two platforms to provide context-specific insights for marketers and researchers.

### 3. Statement of the Problem

In today's digital era, social media advertising has become a crucial component of marketing strategies for businesses of all sizes. Instagram and Facebook, being among the most widely used platforms, attract millions of daily users, offering companies opportunities to promote their products, services, and brands. However, despite the high volume of advertisements displayed, not all ads successfully influence consumer purchase decisions. The central challenge lies in understanding which elements make social media advertisements effective in capturing attention and driving purchases, and why some are ignored. Consumers are constantly exposed to numerous ads from various brands, often leading to ad fatigue, where users scroll past content without engagement. Yet, certain ads manage to grab immediate attention and generate interest in buying. The effectiveness of advertisements is influenced by factors such as visual design, messaging, emotional connection, and personal relevance, but there is limited research exploring how these elements work together to impact actual purchase behaviour, particularly among consumers in Kerala.

Additionally, the influence of advertisements varies between Instagram and Facebook. Instagram relies heavily on visual storytelling and emotional appeal, whereas Facebook emphasizes detailed information, group engagement, and broader reach. Understanding which platform exerts a stronger effect on consumer decision-making can help businesses optimize marketing efforts and allocate resources more efficiently. This study seeks to address these gaps by examining how advertisements on Instagram and Facebook affect consumer purchase decisions. It aims to identify the key factors—such as content quality, visual appeal, trust, and user interaction—that drive buying behaviour, providing insights for businesses and marketers to create more impactful and consumer-focused social media advertising strategies.

### 4. Objectives of the Study

- a) To examine how advertisements on Instagram and Facebook influence consumer purchasing behaviour.
- b) To identify the key factors that determine the effectiveness of social media advertisements.
- c) To assess consumer perceptions and responses to advertisements on Instagram and Facebook.
- d) To compare the relative impact of Instagram and Facebook advertisements in motivating purchase decisions.

### 5. Importance of the Study

This study holds significance because of the growing influence of social media on consumer purchasing behaviour. Today, businesses across all scales—from small local shops to large brands—rely heavily on Instagram and Facebook to reach and engage with their customers. These platforms have become more effective than traditional advertising by enabling direct interaction through visuals, short videos, and storytelling that resonates personally with users. Exploring how these advertisements affect consumer perceptions and decisions is crucial for developing more effective marketing strategies and driving business growth.

Instagram and Facebook have transformed into digital marketplaces where users not only discover brands but also compare products and make purchases within the platform. Targeted advertising allows brands to reach audiences based on demographics, interests, and online behaviour, yet the actual impact of such ads on consumer decisions, particularly in Kerala, requires deeper investigation. This research aims to understand how social media advertisements influence buying intentions and to identify the factors that make certain ads more engaging and persuasive.

Additionally, changing consumer behaviour—where decisions are increasingly influenced by visuals, peer reviews, and influencer endorsements—underscores the importance of understanding emotional appeal, brand credibility, and ad presentation. The study also examines the relative effectiveness of Instagram versus Facebook in influencing purchase behaviour, providing insights into which platform drives greater engagement and conversion. Overall, the research is valuable for both academic purposes and practical applications, offering guidance for businesses to design more impactful social media marketing campaigns in today's digital environment.

## 6. Brief Details of the Area Under Study

The present study focuses on examining the impact of social media advertising, particularly on Instagram and Facebook, on consumer buying behaviour in Kerala. Known for its high internet penetration and widespread smartphone usage, Kerala is among the most digitally connected states in India. People across various age groups actively use social media not only for entertainment but also to explore products, brands, and online shopping opportunities, making the state an ideal setting to study the influence of social media advertisements on purchase decisions.

In recent years, many small and medium enterprises in Kerala have adopted Instagram and Facebook as primary marketing channels. Local clothing brands, restaurants, travel services, and home-based businesses increasingly rely on these platforms to engage with potential customers, as majority of people frequently check their social media feeds throughout the day. Visually appealing posts and advertisements encourage users to interact, like, comment, or visit product pages, highlighting the direct impact of social media on consumer engagement.

Kerala's highly educated and tech-savvy population, particularly the youth, demonstrates strong engagement with digital promotions and online trends. Many brands tailor their campaigns to local cultural and social contexts, using Malayalam content, local influencers, and region-specific promotions, which enhances trust, emotional connection, and purchase likelihood.

Furthermore, the state reflects a shift from traditional advertising towards digital marketing, with audiences preferring short videos, product reels, and user-generated content over print media or television ads. Instagram and Facebook have emerged as platforms for visually communicating brand stories in real time, capturing attention more effectively than conventional advertising.

The study includes respondents from various regions of Kerala who are regular users of Instagram and Facebook, representing diverse age groups, occupations, and income levels. This diverse sample provides a comprehensive understanding of how social media advertisements influence consumer perceptions and purchase decisions in a digitally active and socially connected environment.

## 7. Scope of the Study

The scope of the present study is limited to examining the influence of social media advertising on consumer purchase decisions, with specific reference to Instagram and Facebook. These platforms are

selected due to their widespread usage and dominance as digital advertising channels among businesses. The study focuses on understanding how consumers in Kerala respond to advertisements on these platforms, including their exposure, engagement, perceptions, and purchase intentions. It examines both content-related and psychological aspects of advertising, such as visual design, colours, captions, emotional appeal, influencer endorsements, trust, and brand reputation, to assess how these factors shape consumer interest and buying behaviour.

The research population consists of regular Instagram and Facebook users from Kerala who have interacted with advertisements through views, likes, comments, shares, clicks, or actual purchases. Respondents belong to diverse age groups, occupations, and income levels, enabling a broad understanding of consumer responses across demographic segments. A comparative analysis is conducted to evaluate the relative effectiveness of Instagram and Facebook in terms of engagement levels and purchase conversion.

The study is geographically confined to Kerala, allowing insights into regional consumption patterns, cultural influences, language preferences, and digital literacy. Other social media platforms are excluded, and the research does not address post-purchase satisfaction or long-term brand loyalty. With a sample size of 100 respondents, the study provides focused and practical insights for marketers, entrepreneurs, and researchers.

### 8. Research Methodology

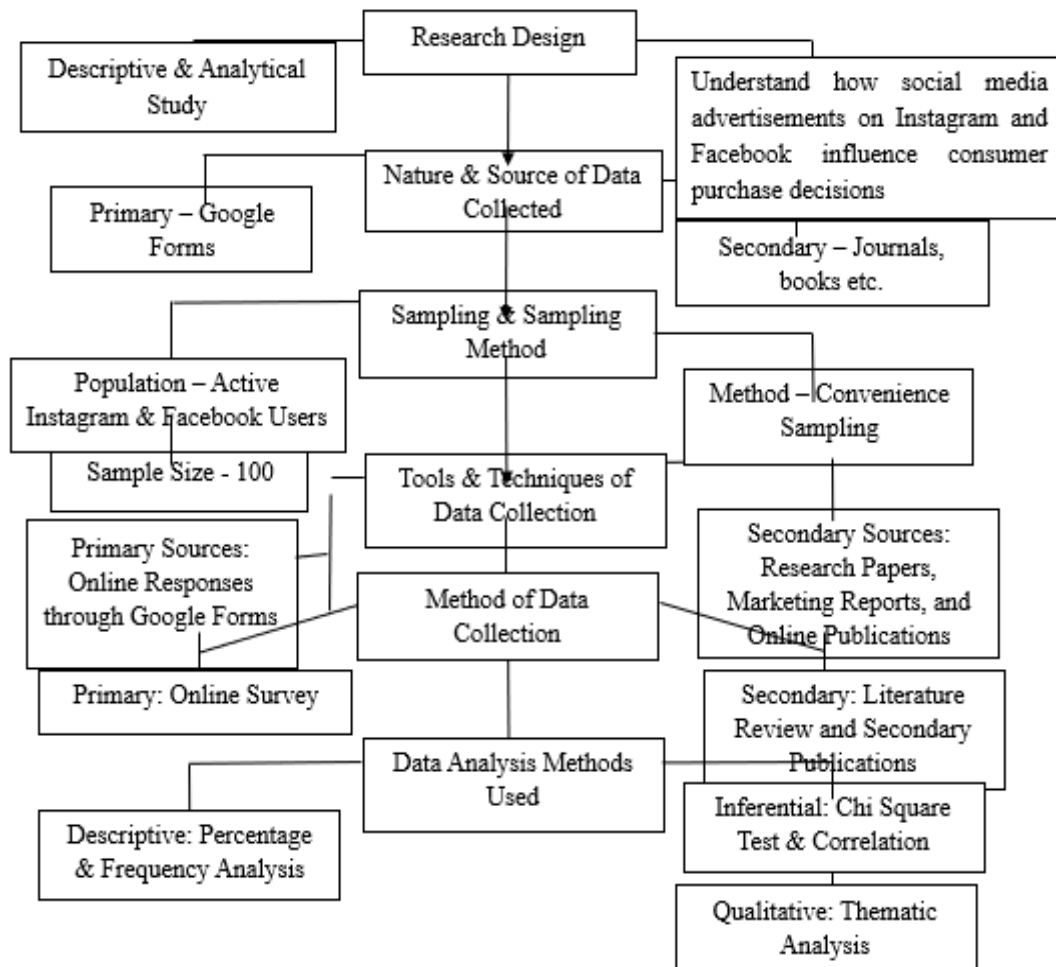


Figure 1: Research Methodology Flow Chart

Source: Compiled by Researchers

**9. FINDINGS - QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**Table No.1 - Demographic distribution based on the provided data**

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Per cent
Gender	Male	48	48.0%
	Female	52	52.0%
	Total	100	100.0%
Age	≥19 years	10	10.0%
	20-29 years	50	50.0%
	30-39 years	30	30.0%
	Above 40 years	10	10.0%
	Total	100	100.0%
Monthly Income	>₹10,000	20	20.0%
	₹10,001 - ₹25,000	35	35.0%
	₹25,001 - ₹50,000	30	30.0%
	Above ₹50,000	15	15.0%
	Total	100	100.0%
Occupation	Student	40	40.0%
	Private employee	30	30.0%
	Government employee	10	10.0%
	Self employed	15	15.0%
	Others	5	5.0%
	Total	100	100.0%
Frequency of Social Media Usage per day	Less than 1 hour	8	8.0%
	1-3 hours	30	30.0%
	3-5 hours	40	40.0%
	More than 5 hours	22	22.0%
	Total	100	100.0%

Source: Based on primary data

Table No.1 shows the demographic profile of respondents of the study on the impact of social media advertising on consumer purchase decisions with reference to Instagram and Facebook revealed a diverse and digitally active sample. The gender distribution is almost balanced, with 52 per cent female and 48 per cent male respondents. Majority of the participants belong to the younger age group, with half of the respondents (50 per cent) aged between 20 and 29 years, followed by 30 per cent in the 30–39 age group, while those below 19 years and above 40 years each constitute 10 per cent. In terms of monthly income, most respondents fall within the middle-income category, with 35 per cent earning between ₹10,001 and ₹25,000 and 30 per cent between ₹25,001 and ₹50,000, whereas 20 per cent earn below ₹10,000 and 15

per cent report incomes above ₹50,000. Occupationally, students form the largest segment (40 per cent), followed by private sector employees (30 per cent), with smaller representations from government employees, self-employed individuals, and others. Regarding social media usage, a substantial proportion of respondents demonstrate high engagement, as 40 per cent spend 3–5 hours daily on social media and 22 per cent exceed five hours, indicating frequent exposure to advertising content on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook.

## 10. Major Findings of the Study

- Instagram emerges as the most preferred platform for viewing advertisements, reflecting its strong visual appeal and higher engagement among younger users, while Facebook remains relevant but comparatively less dominant.
- A high level of advertising exposure is evident, with nearly four out of ten respondents encountering advertisements very frequently, indicating that social media feeds are largely advertisement driven.
- Most respondents acknowledge that social media advertisements influence their purchase decisions, confirming the persuasive power of digital advertising in shaping consumer perceptions.
- Most respondents report a moderate to high likelihood of purchasing products after viewing social media advertisements, demonstrating their effectiveness in stimulating curiosity and purchase intention.
- Nearly two-thirds of the respondents have made at least one purchase after seeing a social media advertisement, suggesting successful conversion of consumer attention into actual sales.
- Video-based advertisements, particularly reels, are the most preferred ad format, highlighting the superior engagement potential of dynamic and visually rich content over static formats.
- Visual elements such as design, colour, and overall creativity are identified as the primary factors attracting consumer attention to advertisements on social media platforms.
- Influencer marketing is highly valued by a significant majority of respondents, indicating that endorsements from trusted or familiar personalities enhance product credibility and brand reach.
- Advertisements supported by reviews and recommendations generate the highest level of trust, emphasizing the importance of peer opinions and influencer feedback in purchase decisions.
- Emotional and entertaining advertising messages are equally appealing to consumers, underscoring the effectiveness of storytelling and humour in capturing attention.
- More than half of the respondents perceive an overload of advertisements on social media, pointing to the presence of ad fatigue and the risk of reduced engagement with repetitive content.
- Advertisements are considered relevant only at times by most respondents, suggesting that current targeting mechanisms are moderately effective but require better personalization.
- Nearly half of the respondents perceive social media advertisements as only moderately credible, highlighting the need for greater transparency and authenticity in advertising practices.
- A majority agree that advertisements on Instagram and Facebook help them discover new products, reaffirming the role of social media as an effective platform for brand awareness.
- Social media advertisements are regarded as more persuasive than traditional media by most respondents, likely due to their personalized, interactive, and visually appealing nature.
- Instagram is clearly perceived as more visually attractive than Facebook, reinforcing its strength as a platform for creative and image-driven marketing.

- Instagram is also considered more trustworthy, reflecting the influence of visual storytelling and influencer-driven content in building consumer confidence.
- Facebook is perceived to be slightly better at providing detailed product information, owing to its longer content formats and comprehensive brand pages.
- Instagram has influenced a higher number of recent purchases compared to Facebook, indicating faster conversion from exposure to purchase.
- Overall, Instagram stands out as the most effective platform for transforming consumer interest into actual buying behaviour, confirming its growing dominance in modern digital marketing strategies.

### Quantitative Analysis

- The Chi-square analysis reveals a statistically significant relationship between consumer engagement with social media advertisements on Instagram and Facebook and their purchase decisions, as the calculated  $\chi^2$  value of 8.11 exceeds the critical value. This indicates that higher levels of interaction with advertisements, particularly on Instagram, are associated with an increased likelihood of purchasing products. The findings suggest that Instagram advertisements exert a stronger influence on buying behaviour due to their superior visual appeal and engaging content when compared to Facebook. Furthermore, the correlation analysis supports this result, with a high positive correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.90$ ) demonstrating that as consumer engagement with social media advertisements increases, the probability of making a purchase also rises substantially. Overall, the results confirm that consumer interaction and advertisement engagement play a crucial role in shaping purchase behaviour on social media platforms, with Instagram emerging as the more influential medium.
- The correlation analysis demonstrates a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between consumer engagement with Instagram and Facebook advertisements and purchase conversion, as evidenced by a high Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.90$ ). This finding indicates that increased levels of interaction—such as viewing, liking, sharing, or clicking advertisements—substantially enhance consumers' purchase intent and likelihood of conversion. The results clearly confirm that advertisement exposure and active engagement on social media platforms play a decisive role in influencing consumer buying behaviour, reinforcing the effectiveness of interactive and engaging advertising strategies in driving purchase decisions.

### Qualitative Analysis

- Advertisements on Instagram and Facebook strongly influence consumer awareness and purchase behaviour, with repeated exposure encouraging users to explore product details and make buying decisions.
- Visually appealing, relatable, and frequently appearing advertisements enhance brand recall and stimulate purchase intention, especially when combined with offers and customer reviews.
- Emotional appeal plays a significant role in ad effectiveness, as storytelling, humour, short video reels, and creative visuals create stronger emotional connections and lasting impressions.
- Short, engaging, and realistic visual content is perceived as more effective than lengthy or text-heavy advertisements in capturing consumer attention.
- Trust and credibility are largely built through social proof, including likes, comments, reviews, and influencer endorsements, which increase consumer confidence in advertised products.

- Influencer marketing, particularly endorsements from familiar or micro-influencers, is viewed as more authentic and reliable than purely promotional content.
- Instagram is perceived as more engaging and visually attractive, making it effective in generating quick interest and impulse-driven purchase intentions.
- Facebook is considered more informative, offering detailed product and brand information that supports rational evaluation and decision-making.
- Excessive repetition and high frequency of advertisements lead to irritation and reduced interest, indicating the presence of ad fatigue among users.
- Authentic, transparent, and real-life-based advertisements are seen as more trustworthy compared to overly promotional or sponsored content.
- Social media advertisements help consumers discover new brands, small businesses, and online stores, enhancing overall brand awareness.
- Unique designs, emotional elements, music, humour, and influencer collaborations contribute to stronger brand recall.
- Overall, qualitative findings confirm that visual creativity, emotional engagement, influencer credibility, and appropriate ad frequency collectively shape consumer perception, trust, and final purchase decisions on social media platforms.

## 11. Conclusion

The study concludes that social media advertisements on Instagram and Facebook have a significant impact on consumer purchase behaviour, effectively guiding users from awareness to purchase. Instagram is identified as the more engaging and visually appealing platform, particularly among younger audiences, due to its strong visual storytelling, influencer reach, and emotional content, while Facebook remains important for providing detailed product information and supporting rational decision-making. Frequent exposure to advertisements on these platforms increases consumer curiosity and interest, with emotionally appealing visuals, influencer endorsements, and customer reviews enhancing trust, authenticity, and brand connection. Quantitative analysis, supported by a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.90$ ), confirms that higher consumer engagement directly influences purchase conversion, while qualitative insights highlight the importance of creativity, humour, and relatable storytelling in making advertisements memorable and effective. The study also emphasizes the need to avoid excessive or irrelevant advertising, as it can lead to ad fatigue and reduced effectiveness. Overall, the findings affirm that well-designed social media advertisements are powerful marketing tools capable of shaping consumer perceptions, building trust and loyalty, and driving real purchase decisions, establishing them as a critical component of contemporary marketing strategies.

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