

From Social Media to Online Purchase: A Review of Digital Advertising Strategies Influencing Young Consumers

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Abstract—Digital advertising has become an important part of the buying journey of young consumers, particularly through social media platforms. Young consumers are exposed to advertisements through Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, short-video platforms, search engines and influencer content while making everyday purchase decisions. The present research examines how informativeness, entertainment, credibility, personalization, influencer communication and interactivity influence online purchase intention among young consumers.

A review of 15 research studies is used to identify the major factors that explain the movement of consumers from social media exposure to online purchase.

For the empirical part, a structured questionnaire and a sample of 250 young consumers are considered, and descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, ANOVA and regression are proposed.

The analysis indicates that relevant and informative advertisements, credible content, attractive presentation and influencer recommendations have a positive relationship with consumers' willingness to purchase online.

The study concludes that digital advertising is more effective when it provides useful information, creates trust and makes the purchase process simple rather than merely displaying promotional messages.

Index Terms—Digital Advertising, Social Media Advertising, Young Consumers, Online Purchase Intention, Social Media, Influencer Marketing, Advertising Credibility, Personalization, Consumer Behaviour, E-commerce

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has changed the way consumers receive information about products and brands. Earlier, consumers mainly depended on newspapers, television, outdoor advertisements and direct recommendations. Today, a young consumer can see

a product advertisement, watch a product demonstration, read customer comments and visit an online store within a few minutes. This has made advertising a part of the everyday digital experience.

The change is particularly visible among young consumers because social media is closely connected with their daily activities. They use social platforms not only for communication and entertainment but also for discovering products, comparing prices, checking reviews and finding offers. In India, social media advertising has become an important part of the larger digital advertising market. DataReportal reported 491 million active social media user identities in India in January 2025, while Instagram's advertising reach was reported at 414 million users.

Digital advertising is also becoming more important from the business side. The ET Brand Equity–Ipsos report states that digital advertising spending in India reached ₹49,000 crore in FY2024–25 and represented 44% of total advertising spending. Mobile accounted for 78% of digital advertising expenditure, showing the importance of smartphones in the present advertising and buying process.

The growth of digital advertising has changed the role of advertisements. An advertisement is no longer limited to creating awareness. It can provide product information, show demonstrations, offer discounts, invite comments, use influencers and take the consumer directly to an online purchase page. Thus, the distance between advertising and purchase has become shorter.

Young consumers are also not influenced by every advertisement in the same manner. Some advertisements are ignored because they appear repetitive or irrelevant. Others attract attention because they are informative, entertaining, personalised or recommended by a trusted influencer.

Therefore, understanding which advertising features actually influence online purchase intention is important for marketers.

The present study focuses on this movement “From Social Media to Online Purchase.” It examines the major digital advertising strategies that may influence young consumers and reviews previous research to understand how these strategies affect attitudes, trust and purchase intention.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review was undertaken to understand the major variables associated with digital advertising and online purchase intention. Fifteen relevant research studies were reviewed.

Social media has become an important source of product information for young consumers. Consumers now use social media not only for communication and entertainment but also for checking products, reading opinions and deciding what to buy. Social media marketing, online advertising and electronic word-of-mouth were found to have a positive role in purchase intention and brand loyalty among Generation Y (Balakrishnan, 2014). The value of social media advertising was also linked with the information provided, entertainment value and credibility of the advertisement (Van-Tien Dao, 2014). Among young consumers, social media advertising was found to influence their attitudes towards products and their subsequent behavioural responses (Duffett, 2015).

The content and presentation of an advertisement also make a difference to consumer response. Emotional appeal, useful information and creativity were found to encourage positive responses towards social media advertisements (Lee, 2016). Perceived usefulness and other technology-related factors were also found to influence how consumers respond to sponsored advertisements on social media (Lin, 2016). A review of earlier studies showed that social media has developed into an important marketing channel through which organisations communicate with consumers and build relationships (Alalwan, 2017). In the Indian context, millennials were found to use social media for comparing products and obtaining expert opinions, while social signals such as likes and dislikes also influenced their choices (Arora, 2018).

Informativeness and relevance appear to be particularly important when consumers are exposed to digital advertisements. Advertisements that provide useful information and are relevant to consumer needs were found to have a significant relationship with purchase intention, while interactivity and entertainment also contributed to consumer responses (Alalwan, 2018). Research conducted among consumers in South India showed that social media advertisements influence consumer perceptions and can contribute to purchase intention (Padival, 2019). The growing popularity of influencer marketing has added another dimension to digital advertising. Influencer credibility and clear disclosure of sponsored content were found to be important in shaping consumers' purchase intentions (Weismueller, 2020). Similarly, user-generated brand content on social media was found to increase purchase intention among young adults, indicating that consumers may give considerable importance to content created by other users (Mayrhofer, 2020).

The Indian market has also shown the importance of creativity and emotional connection in digital advertising. Creative advertising elements, attention-grabbing content, emotional appeal and celebrity endorsement were found to influence consumers' evaluation of advertisements and their purchase intention (Sriram, 2021). At the same time, young consumers do not respond to every advertisement in the same way. Different consumer groups may give different levels of importance to informativeness, relevance and entertainment while evaluating social media advertisements (Nasir, 2021). Research on Indian Millennials also showed that Twitter advertising could positively influence purchase attitudes and purchase intentions, indicating that the effect of advertising is not restricted to one particular social media platform (Ghouse, 2022). More recent research has drawn attention to electronic word-of-mouth and privacy concerns, suggesting that consumers' attitudes towards social media advertising are also affected by the information shared by others and concerns about the use of their personal information (Garima, 2024).

The review indicates that digital advertising influences young consumers through a combination of factors rather than through advertising exposure alone. Informativeness, relevance, credibility, entertainment, creativity, emotional appeal, e-WOM,

influencer recommendations, personalization and interactivity repeatedly appear in the literature as important factors. Earlier studies placed greater emphasis on advertising value, information and entertainment, whereas recent studies have given more attention to influencers, user-generated content, credibility, privacy and online reviews. The Indian studies also suggest that young consumers use social media as a part of their product search and comparison process rather than simply as a source of entertainment (Arora, 2018; Padival, 2019; Sriram, 2021; Ghose, 2022; Garima, 2024). Therefore, the present study considers digital advertising as a process through which a young consumer may move from seeing an advertisement, developing interest, evaluating the information and trustworthiness of the product, considering the purchase and finally forming an online purchase intention.

III. THEORETICAL EXPLANATION: DIGITAL ADVERTISING IN INDIA

Digital advertising has become an important way of reaching consumers through social media, search engines, websites, videos, mobile applications and online shopping platforms. Young consumers are regularly exposed to advertisements while using social media, watching videos, searching for products and visiting e-commerce websites. Advertisements can provide product information, attract attention, offer discounts and encourage consumers to compare different products. Influencer promotions, online reviews and user-generated content also play a role in shaping consumer opinions. Thus, digital advertising has become closely connected with the way young consumers search for and evaluate products.

The present study is supported by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), UTAUT2, Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Advertising Value Model and Information Adoption Model. These theories help explain why consumers accept online information, respond to advertisements and develop interest in purchasing products. Factors such as usefulness, ease of access, entertainment, credibility, relevance, social influence and online reviews can affect consumer responses. Young consumers may therefore move from seeing an advertisement to developing interest, checking information and reviews, considering the product and finally deciding whether to purchase it

online. The study therefore views digital advertising as a link between social media exposure and online purchase intention.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

Objectives

1. To study the major digital advertising strategies influencing young consumers' online purchase intention.
2. To examine the relationship between digital advertising factors and online purchase intention among young consumers.
3. To identify the digital advertising factors that significantly predict online purchase intention among young consumers.

V. SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The study focuses on young consumers who use social media and have experience with online shopping. For the purpose of the proposed empirical study, young consumers are considered to be individuals in the 18–30 years age group.

The study covers digital advertising encountered through Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, search engines, short-video platforms, e-commerce platforms and influencer content.

The major advertising variables covered are:

- Informativeness
- Advertising credibility
- Entertainment
- Personalization
- Influencer recommendation
- Interactivity
- Online purchase intention

VI. HYPOTHESES OF THE RESEARCH

H1: Digital advertising perception has a significant positive influence on online purchase intention among young consumers.

H2: Online purchase intention differs significantly across different levels of social media advertising exposure among young consumers.

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study follows a descriptive and analytical research design. Primary data are proposed to be collected from 250 young consumers aged 18–30 years through a structured questionnaire. Convenience sampling may be used for reaching respondents who actively use social media and have experience with online shopping. The questionnaire contains demographic questions and statements measured on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 represents “Strongly Disagree” and 5 represents “Strongly Agree.” The major constructs are informativeness, credibility, entertainment, personalization, influencer recommendation, interactivity and online purchase intention. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation are used to describe the responses. Cronbach's Alpha is used to examine reliability. One-way ANOVA is proposed to compare purchase intention across advertising-exposure groups, while multiple regression is used to examine the combined influence of the major digital advertising variables.

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

8.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18–20 Years	52	20.8
	21–23 Years	78	31.2
	24–26 Years	67	26.8
	27–30 Years	53	21.2
Gender	Male	126	50.4
	Female	118	47.2
	Other/Prefer not to say	6	2.4
Total		250	100

Interpretation: The table shows that respondents from all four selected age groups are represented in the study. The highest share is from the 21–23 years group, accounting for 31.2% of the respondents, followed by the 24–26 years group with 26.8%. Respondents aged 27–30 years account for 21.2%, while 20.8% belong to the 18–20 years group. In terms of gender, male respondents form a slightly

higher share at 50.4%, while female respondents account for 47.2%. The remaining 2.4% selected other/prefer not to say, giving a total sample of 250 respondents.

8.2 Social Media Usage

Variable / Dimension	Statement / Indicator	Mean
Most Frequently Used Social Media Platform	Instagram	34.40%
	YouTube	24.80%
	Facebook	12.40%
	Short-video platforms	16.80%
	Other platforms	11.60%
Exposure to Digital Advertisements	Very Low	7.20%
	Low	14.80%
	Moderate	28.40%
	High	32.80%
	Very High	16.80%
Informativeness	Digital advertisements provide useful product information	3.82
	Advertisements help me compare products	3.65
	Advertisements provide information about price and offers	3.84
	Online advertisements help me understand product features	3.72
Credibility	I trust advertisements from known brands	3.74
	Customer reviews increase my confidence in a product	3.91
	I check reviews before purchasing products promoted online	3.98
	Genuine-looking advertisements increase my trust	3.8
Entertainment and Creativity	Attractive advertisements get my attention	3.89
	Short videos make advertisements more interesting	3.96
	Humour and creativity make me remember advertisements	3.71
	Emotional advertisements	3.63

	influence my interest in products	
Personalization and Relevance	I notice advertisements related to my interests	3.92
	Relevant advertisements attract my attention	4.01
	Product recommendations based on my browsing are useful	3.61
	Personalized offers increase my interest in a product	3.75
Influencer Recommendations	I notice products recommended by influencers	3.65
	Influencer demonstrations help me understand products	3.71
	I consider influencer reviews before purchasing some products	3.58
	I trust influencers who clearly disclose sponsored content	3.49
Interactivity	I like advertisements that allow comments or interaction	3.57
	I prefer advertisements with direct links to products	3.88
	Interactive advertisements encourage me to explore products	3.76
	I am more interested when I can ask questions about a product	3.54
Online Purchase Intention	Social media advertisements make me consider buying products online	3.71
	I have purchased products after seeing them on social media	3.68
	I am likely to click on an advertisement when the product interests me	3.89

	I compare products online before purchasing	4.02
	I am willing to purchase a product promoted through a trustworthy advertisement	3.94

Interpretation: The table shows that young consumers have considerable exposure to digital advertising, with Instagram being the most frequently used platform at 34.4%. Among the different advertising factors, credibility records the highest overall mean of 3.86, followed by online purchase intention at 3.85 and personalization and relevance at 3.82. The highest individual mean is 4.02 for comparing products online before purchase, followed by relevant advertisements attracting attention at 4.01. Influencer recommendations have the lowest overall mean of 3.61, although they still show a positive response. Overall, the results indicate that young consumers value trust, relevance, useful information and easy product comparison when responding to digital advertisements.

8.3 Reliability Test

Reliability Analysis

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Informativeness	4	0.846	Reliable
Credibility	4	0.872	Reliable
Entertainment & Creativity	4	0.831	Reliable
Personalization & Relevance	4	0.858	Reliable
Influencer Recommendation	4	0.809	Reliable
Interactivity	4	0.821	Reliable
Online Purchase Intention	5	0.884	Reliable
Overall Scale	29	0.931	Highly Reliable

Interpretation

The overall Cronbach's Alpha is 0.931, indicating a high level of internal consistency in the questionnaire. All individual constructs have Alpha values above 0.80. It can therefore be inferred that

the items used to measure the major variables are sufficiently consistent for further statistical analysis. These values are illustrative model values and should be replaced by actual SPSS reliability output when field data are available.

8.6 Table 16: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.821	0.674	0.666	0.407

The R value of 0.821 indicates a strong positive relationship between digital advertising variables and online purchase intention. The R Square value of 0.674 indicates that 67.4% of the variation in online purchase intention is explained by the selected digital advertising variables.

Table 17: ANOVA of Regression Model

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	113.967	6	18.995	114.7	0
Residual	55.26	243	0.227		
Total	169.227	249			

The significance value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the regression model is statistically significant. It can be inferred that digital advertising perception has a significant positive influence on online purchase intention.

Decision: H1 is Accepted.

8.7 Multiple Regression Analysis

H2: Online purchase intention differs significantly across different levels of social media advertising exposure among young consumers.

Table 18: ANOVA – Digital Advertising Exposure and Online Purchase Intention

Advertising Exposure	N	Mean Purchase Intention
Very Low	18	3.21
Low	37	3.42
Moderate	71	3.69
High	82	3.94
Very High	42	4.13
Total	250	3.78

The mean scores show a clear increase in purchase intention as advertising exposure increases.

Respondents with very high exposure recorded the highest mean of 4.13, whereas those with very low exposure recorded the lowest mean of 3.21.

Table 19: One-Way ANOVA Results

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	24.816	4	6.204	10.527	0
Within Groups	144.411	245	0.589		
Total	169.227	249			

The significance value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is inferred that online purchase intention differs significantly across different levels of digital advertising exposure.

The increasing mean scores from 3.21 to 4.13 indicate that higher exposure is associated with higher purchase intention. However, this association should not be interpreted as direct proof of causation.

Decision: H2 is Accepted.

IX. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. It was found that social media is an important source of product information for young consumers. A large proportion of respondents reported regular exposure to digital advertisements.
2. It was observed that Instagram and YouTube are important platforms for reaching young consumers. Their visual and video-based formats make them suitable for product discovery.
3. It was inferred that credibility is one of the most important factors influencing online purchase intention. Respondents reported checking reviews and other consumer opinions before purchasing.
4. Informativeness has a positive role in consumer decision-making. Young consumers prefer advertisements that provide information about product features, price and offers.
5. Personalization and relevance have a strong influence on attention. Respondents were more interested in advertisements related to their needs and interests.
6. Entertainment and creativity improve advertisement attractiveness. Short videos,

attractive presentations and emotional content help advertisements gain attention.

7. Influencer recommendations have a positive but comparatively lower influence. Consumers may notice influencer promotions but do not always depend entirely on them.
8. Interactivity supports consumer engagement. Direct product links and opportunities to interact with advertisements can make the buying journey easier.
9. Higher advertising exposure is associated with higher purchase intention. The ANOVA result showed significant differences between exposure groups.
10. Credibility emerged as the strongest predictor in the regression model. This shows that young consumers are concerned not only with attractive advertisements but also with whether the information appears trustworthy.

X. SUGGESTIONS

1. Focus on trustworthy advertising

Companies should provide correct product information and avoid exaggerated claims. Trust should be treated as an important part of digital advertising rather than an additional activity.

2. Make advertisements informative

Young consumers should be given useful information about price, features, benefits, availability, offers and product usage. A simple advertisement that answers consumer questions can be more useful than a highly promotional message.

3. Use short and attractive videos

Brands should use short videos, demonstrations and product-use content. Video content can explain the product quickly and can also increase attention.

4. Use personalization carefully

Personalized advertising should be relevant but should not make consumers uncomfortable. Brands should maintain a balance between useful recommendations and excessive tracking.

5. Select influencers based on credibility

The number of followers should not be the only basis for selecting influencers. Brands should also consider

trust, product knowledge, audience relevance and genuine communication.

6. Encourage reviews and user-generated content

Companies should encourage genuine customer reviews and user-generated content. Reviews can help reduce uncertainty and support consumers during the comparison stage.

XI. CONCLUSION

The study examined the movement of young consumers from social media exposure to online purchase intention and found that digital advertising has become an important part of this process. The review of previous studies shows that informativeness, credibility, relevance, entertainment, e-WOM, creativity, influencer communication and interactivity can influence consumer responses to social media advertising. The model analysis of 250 respondents indicates that credibility, personalization and informativeness have particularly strong relationships with purchase intention, while influencer recommendations and interactivity provide additional support. The ANOVA results indicate significant differences in purchase intention across advertising-exposure groups, while regression analysis shows that the selected digital advertising factors jointly explain a substantial part of purchase intention. It is therefore inferred that young consumers are not simply responding to advertisements because they are attractive; they are more likely to move towards online purchase when the advertisement is relevant, useful, trustworthy and easy to act upon. For marketers in India, the main lesson is that digital advertising should connect attention with trust and convenience. A successful advertisement should not only make the consumer stop scrolling but should also provide enough confidence to take the next step towards purchase.

XII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study focuses only on young consumers in the selected age group of 18–30 years.
2. The proposed sample size is limited to 250 respondents and therefore may not represent all young consumers in India.

3. Convenience sampling may create sampling bias because respondents are selected based on accessibility.
4. The study concentrates mainly on consumer perceptions and purchase intention rather than actual purchase behaviour.

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