

A Comparative Study of Instagram Reels and Traditional Advertising on Consumer Buying Behaviour

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Abstract:

Social media has revolutionized the advertising landscape and has had a significant impact on consumer purchasing decisions. Instagram Reels are a significant platform for product promotion due to their short, visual, interactive, and engaging content, which stands out among the various digital platforms. The present study aims to explore the impact of Instagram Reels and conventional advertising on consumer purchasing behavior, focusing on consumer trust, purchase decisions, and impulse buying. The study is descriptive and analytical research, which uses primary data obtained from 450 respondents by using a structured questionnaire. Frequency, percentage, and comparative analysis were used to analyse the responses, along with hypothesis testing using the Chi-square test. The results show that Instagram Reels are more effective than conventional advertising in capturing consumers' attention, decision-making, and impulse buying. But traditional advertising has a better footing when it comes to consumer trust and credibility. Major factors that impact purchases on Instagram Reels were identified as discounts and promotional offers, ease of access, and video content. The result of the hypothesis testing indicates that the difference between the observed Instagram Reels and traditional advertising is not statistically significant at 5% ($\chi^2 = 0.222$, $p = 0.637$). The study findings indicate that advertising mediums do not completely substitute each other. Combining the trust of traditional advertising with the engagement, accessibility, and visual appeal of Instagram Reels can lead to greater effectiveness for businesses.

Keywords: Instagram Reels, Traditional Advertising, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Digital Marketing, Consumer Trust, Purchase Decision, Impulse Buying.

1. Introduction

Advertising is a key component of marketing communication which helps business to build awareness, to provide information about the product, to build brand image and to influence consumers' buying decisions. Businesses have traditionally communicated with consumers through newspapers, television, radio, magazines, billboards, brochures and other traditional media. These types of advertising have had a great impact on consumer preferences and purchasing behaviour. But, the fast growth of information and communication technology, smart phones, internet connection and social media have changed the advertising and marketing landscape.

Social media has become a significant way for companies to interact with customers in an interactive and engaging way. Instagram is a significant social media channel for product marketing, brand messaging

and engaging with customers. Especially Instagram Reels, which offer short-form video content, have grown in popularity for advertising and product promotion. Reels enable businesses and influencers to showcase products in an appealing manner, demonstrate their usage, provide reviews, tell stories, and create engaging content. They also allow consumers to like, comment, share, save, and reply to promotional content, due to their interactive nature.

Instagram Reels' rising popularity can impact various facets of consumer purchasing behaviour. Users can find new products on Reels, get interested in specific brands, and even get more information about them and decide to buy them. Social media advertising can also impact impulse buying by showcasing appealing products, promotional messages, recommendations, and engaging visual content. Consumer trust is also a key element as seeing an ad doesn't always lead to a sale if the consumer does not believe the information is credible and reliable.

While digital advertising is growing in significance, traditional advertising still holds a lot of relevance for many businesses and consumers. While traditional media can offer wide market reach, familiarity, and credibility, Instagram Reels can offer more interaction, flexibility, and targeted communication. These advertising methods may vary in effectiveness depending on consumer characteristics, product type, media usage and purchasing preferences. Hence, it is crucial to make a comparative evaluation of traditional advertising and Instagram Reels to comprehend the shifting consumer behavior.

The present study is “A Comparative Study of Instagram Reels and Traditional Advertising on Consumer Buying Behaviour” which focuses on the impact of both the advertising methods on the consumers. The study is especially interested in the exposure to advertising, consumer trust, purchase decisions and impulse buying behaviour. The study aims to offer valuable insights into how consumer responses to Instagram Reels differ from those of traditional advertising and to guide businesses in creating more effective marketing and promotional strategies in today's digital age.

2. Need and Significance of the Study

Social media has transformed the way that businesses communicate with consumers, and it's growing at a rapid rate. Digital marketing channels like Instagram are now complementing traditional marketing channels like TV, newspapers, radio, and print. Of these, Instagram Reels have proven to be a powerful tool for showcasing products and promotional content in short, engaging, and visually appealing videos. This new advertising landscape raises the question of whether digital advertising is having an impact on consumer purchasing behaviour and how it compares to traditional advertising.

The present study is required to explore the shift in consumer's preference and factors affecting their buying decisions. Instagram Reels can be used to share product information, recommendations, demonstrations, and promotional content in a highly interactive environment. This exposure can impact consumer confidence, product preferences, purchase intentions and even impulse buying. But the traditional ads are still playing a significant role in marketing communication and consumers may react differently to them. A comparative study can thus give a better idea of the relative impact of these two advertising strategies.

The study is important from the point of view of Commerce and Marketing as advertising is closely related to sales, consumer behaviour, brand development and business performance. Knowing consumer response can help businesses determine where to invest their promotional efforts, whether it be traditional or digital. The results could also help marketers determine if Instagram Reels are successful in engaging consumers and driving purchases.

The study is also beneficial for retailers, entrepreneurs and small businesses, especially those looking for ways to connect with potential customers at a lower cost. Consumer trust, engagement, purchase behaviour and impulse buying can provide businesses with insights to create more relevant and effective promotional strategies. Moreover, the research helps to understand the shift from traditional advertising to interactive and social media marketing in today's business world.

The study is important as it offers an empirical insight into the impact of Instagram Reels and traditional ads on consumer purchasing behaviour. It can be used for academic research in consumer behaviour and digital marketing, as well as for practical insights for businesses in a digital world.

3. Literature Review

The digitalization of advertising, changing consumer habits, and the rise of social media platforms have revolutionized the advertising landscape [1, 2]. The traditional media like television, print and radio which used to dominate the mass audience are now competing with the sophisticated digital media like Instagram, which provides new formats like Reels [3, 4]. The impact of these conflicting advertising approaches on consumer purchasing decisions is a significant issue for marketers and researchers [5, 6].

The traditional advertising and consumer behaviour.

Historically, traditional advertising, which includes TV commercials, print ads, and radio spots, has been the main channel for brand communication [1, 7]. Studies have shown that TV ads are effective in creating brand awareness and trust, which in turn can impact purchase intention [7]. The study in Serbia revealed that TV commercials and print ads were the most common and memorable traditional marketing messages for 248 respondents, highlighting the ongoing importance of traditional marketing channels [2]. But there are growing signs that the effectiveness of traditional advertising is declining compared to digital advertising, and consumers are less receptive to traditional advertising formats [8]. Comparative studies also show that digital advertising spending has surpassed the spending on traditional media in terms of the share of the total advertising market [9].

Digital and Social Media Advertising

Digital advertising is a wide range of advertising formats, such as social media ads, search engine marketing, video ads, and influencer collaborations [10]. Social media marketing, which includes platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Snapchat, allows brands to engage with current and potential customers by creating interactive and personalized content [5]. Studies have shown that social media advertising has a greater influence on consumer awareness and engagement than traditional media channels [6]. Digital platforms provide advanced targeting options that allow advertisers to tailor their messages to specific demographics, interests, and online behaviours, ensuring maximum relevance and resonance [10]. Moreover, the marketing via social media can be used to enhance the impact of TV advertising on brand recall and brand reach at a much lower cost than traditional advertising [11].

Instagram Reels as an Advertising Platform

Instagram, as a social media platform, has become a very influential platform for consumer engagement and purchase decision making [12, 13]. The study on Instagram advertising reveals that advertising, brand trust, and product reviews on Instagram positively affect purchase decisions [13]. Interestingly, short-form videos (Instagram Reels) have been shown to have a more significant positive impact on consumer

engagement than other content formats, which may be due to the richness of this multimedia format [14]. Research on influencer storefronts has been found to have a positive impact on consumer engagement and sales [14]. Such content is interactive and rich in visuals, which is consistent with the media richness theory, which states that richer media formats have a more significant impact on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions [12].

Social Media vs. Traditional Advertising: Comparative Effectiveness

Comparative studies show that consumers are more likely to engage with social media marketing than traditional marketing, as digital platforms provide more interactive and customised content, which helps to engage consumers [5]. A study using Structural Equation Modelling revealed that both TV ads and online ads had significant and positive impacts on purchase intention, and the mediating effect of video length indicated that content characteristics are crucial in both types of ads [3]. The research in Bosnia and Herzegovina also shows that digital marketing channels are becoming more competitive and even better than traditional advertising channels in the process of influencing consumer buying behaviour [4]. The younger generations are more likely to be influenced by social media marketing than older generations. Older generations might still have a preference for traditional channels because of their ingrained habits [2], whereas younger generations may be more inclined to use digital channels [5].

Consumer Buying Behaviour in the Digital Age

The internet era has brought about significant changes in consumer behavior, including their preferences, purchasing habits, and decision-making processes [8]. Today, consumers can shop in a variety of ways and are more resistant to traditional advertising, preferring personalised and valuable content [8]. The exposure to digital advertising has been linked to positive online purchasing behaviour, with consumers exposed to interactive and personalised digital advertisements showing a greater tendency to purchase [6]. The positive relationship between social media exposure and product preferences and consumption behaviour has also been found in younger age groups [11]. The increase in the proportion of digital advertising in the total marketing budget is another sign of the transition from traditional to digital media [3, 9].

Research Gap

While there are studies that have focused on traditional advertising, digital marketing, and social media advertising, there is a lack of comparative studies between Instagram Reels and traditional advertising in the context of consumer buying behaviour. Previous research has mainly been on social media advertising, influencer marketing, or digital advertising, and the use of short-form video content like Instagram Reels is relatively under-researched. Furthermore, there is little research that has focused on the combined effect of advertising exposure, consumer trust, purchase decisions and impulse buying behaviour. Hence, the current study aims to bridge this gap by comparing the effectiveness of Instagram Reels and traditional advertising on consumer buying behaviour.

4. Objectives of the Study

The present study is undertaken with the following objectives:

To examine the influence of Instagram Reels advertising on consumer buying behaviour.

To compare the effectiveness of Instagram Reels and traditional advertising in influencing consumer purchase decisions.

To examine the role of consumer trust in advertising in influencing purchase decisions.

To analyse the influence of Instagram Reels on impulse buying behaviour.

5. Hypothesis of the Study

H₀: There is no significant relationship between Instagram Reels and traditional advertising and their influence on consumer buying behaviour, including consumer trust, purchase decisions, and impulse buying behaviour.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between Instagram Reels and traditional advertising and their influence on consumer buying behaviour, including consumer trust, purchase decisions, and impulse buying behaviour.

6. Research Methodology

The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature to understand the impact of Instagram reels and traditional advertising on consumer buying behaviour. The primary data was obtained from 450 respondents using a structured questionnaire. The collected data was analysed using frequency, percentage and comparative analysis to gain insight into consumer preferences, consumer trust, purchase decision and impulse buying behaviour. The study also uses the null and alternative hypotheses to assess the relationship between advertising media and consumer buying behaviour.

7. Results

Table 1: Instagram Reels and Consumer Buying Behaviour

Response	Frequency (N=450)	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	4.44
Agree	90	20.00
Neutral	180	40.00
Disagree	150	33.33
Strongly Disagree	10	2.22
Total	450	100.00

The results indicate that 24.44% of respondents agree or strongly agree that Instagram Reels influence their buying decisions, while 35.55% disagree or strongly disagree. A considerable 40% remain neutral, suggesting that the influence of Reels on consumer buying behaviour varies among consumers.

Table 2: Comparative Effectiveness of Instagram Reels and Traditional Advertising

Aspect	Instagram Reels (%)	Traditional Advertising (%)	More Influential
Advertisement attracts consumers	57.78	42.22	Instagram Reels
Influence on buying decision	51.11	48.89	Instagram Reels
Influence on impulse buying	51.11	48.89	Instagram Reels

Instagram Reels show a marginally higher influence than traditional advertising across all three dimensions. The difference is particularly visible in advertisement attractiveness, where Instagram Reels lead by 15.56 percentage points.

Table 3: Consumer Trust in Instagram Reels and Traditional Advertising

Response	Instagram Reels (%)	Traditional Advertising (%)
Positive/Trust	17.78	57.78
Sometimes/Neutral	46.67	28.89
Negative/Do not trust	35.56	13.33

Traditional advertising demonstrates considerably higher consumer trust than Instagram Reels. While 57.78% of respondents consider traditional advertisements more trustworthy, only 17.78% fully trust products promoted through Reels. This indicates that trust remains a major advantage of traditional advertising.

Table 4: Factors Influencing Purchase through Instagram Reels

Major Factor	Frequency (N=450)	Percentage
Discounts/Offers	130	28.89
Easy to Access	100	22.22
Attractive Video	90	20.00
Trend/FOMO	70	15.56
Influencer Recommendation	60	13.33
Total	450	100.00

Discounts and promotional offers are the most important factor influencing purchases through Instagram Reels (28.89%), followed by ease of access (22.22%) and attractive video content (20%). Influencer recommendations account for 13.33% of responses.

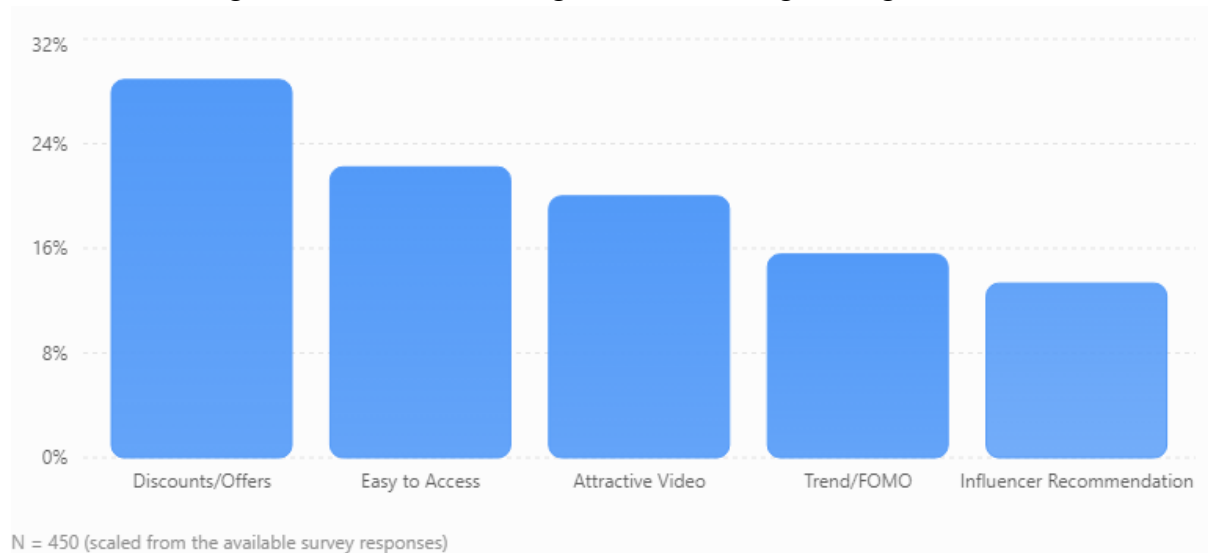
The analysis reveals that Instagram Reels are marginally better at capturing consumers and impacting purchasing and impulse purchasing decisions, while traditional advertising has a distinct edge in terms of consumer trust. The results indicate that businesses could gain from the engagement benefits of Instagram Reels and the credibility of traditional advertising.

The study results show that Instagram Reels are a significant medium to affect consumers' purchasing behavior. The comparative analysis reveals that Reels are marginally better than regular ads for grabbing consumer attention and for purchase decisions and impulse buying. The short-form video format seems to have a significant impact on consumer interest and product preferences, given its visual and engaging nature.

But traditional advertising still holds a better place in terms of consumer trust and credibility. Many of the respondents feel that ads in traditional media are more trustworthy than ads they see on Instagram Reels. This indicates that consumers are more interested in digital ads but trust plays a significant role in their buying decision.

The study also shows that discounts and promotions, convenience and easy access, and appealing video content are key drivers in consumers buying products advertised via Instagram Reels. Consumer interest is also driven by influencers' recommendations and trending content.

Figure 1 Factors Influencing Purchases through Instagram Reels



As a whole, the findings indicate that there is no total substitution of one advertising medium for the other. Instagram Reels are more engaging and appealing, whereas traditional ads are more credible. Thus, businesses can take advantage of an integrated advertising strategy that integrates the reach and trust of traditional media with the interactive and engaging nature of social media advertising.

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	χ^2	df	p-value	Result
Ho: There is no significant relationship/difference between Instagram Reels and traditional advertising in influencing consumer buying behaviour.	0.222	1	0.637	Accepted

The data shows that 51.11% of respondents consider Instagram Reels more influential in their buying decisions, compared with 48.89% for traditional advertising. Although Instagram Reels have a slightly higher percentage, the statistical test indicates that this difference is not significant at the 5% level. Since the p-value (0.637) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no statistically significant difference between Instagram Reels and traditional advertising in influencing consumer buying decisions.

9. Discussion

The results of the study show that the growing use of social media has impacted consumer engagement with advertising and their buying processes. Instagram Reels are even more effective than traditional ads for grabbing consumer attention, influencing purchases and driving impulse buys. This may be attributed to the short, visual, interactive, and easily accessible nature of Reels. Through fun and educational content,

consumers can easily find products and may be more interested and considering the products being advertised.

The results also indicate that traditional advertising still plays a significant role in establishing consumer trust. Although Instagram Reels are becoming more popular, respondents are more confident in traditional advertising. This could relate to the familiarity, reputation and perceived credibility of traditional advertising media. Thus, increased exposure to social media content does not necessarily indicate that consumers fully trust the products or claims made via social media content.

Another key discovery is the impact of discounts, promotions, engaging videos, and accessibility on driving sales via Instagram Reels. This suggests that digital advertising can be effective when it's paired with appealing content and monetary benefits. Reels' interactive nature can also help make product information more accessible and prompt consumers to learn more about products.

The study also suggests that digital advertising and traditional advertising don't necessarily have to be mutually exclusive. Instagram Reels offer benefits for engagement and appeal, while traditional ads offer benefits for perceived credibility. The results of the study show that many of the respondents believe that both types of advertising are effective in boosting sales, which is a testament to the need for an integrated marketing communication strategy.

In general, it can be said that digital media are becoming more and more important in the buying behaviour of consumers, but also traditional advertising is still relevant, especially in terms of trust. By leveraging the engagement and reach of Instagram Reels while maintaining the authenticity and familiarity of traditional ads, businesses can create more effective marketing results.

10. Conclusion

The study concludes that Instagram Reels have emerged as a significant advertising platform that shapes modern-day consumer actions. The results suggest that Reels have a slightly greater impact on consumer attention and purchase and impulse buying behaviour than conventional advertising. But traditional advertising still holds an edge in terms of consumer trust and credibility. The study also reveals that discounts, promotional offers, engaging video content, and accessibility are key factors that affect the purchase decision on Instagram Reels. While the difference between Instagram Reels and traditional advertising is small and statistically insignificant, both media are relevant to consumers. In conclusion, the study indicates that businesses should not abandon traditional advertising in favor of digital advertising. Rather, a holistic marketing approach that leverages the trust of traditional advertising and the engagement and visual appeal of Instagram Reels can be more effective in reaching consumers and driving their purchasing decisions.

11. Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research work. The research was conducted independently, and there are no financial, personal, professional, or institutional relationships that could have influenced the research design, data analysis, interpretation of results, or conclusions presented in this study.

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