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The Influence of Instagram Marketing on Consumer Behaviour

Aryan Bhandari¹, Dr. Sameer Kulkarni²

¹ Student Amity Business School Amity University

aryan.bhandari1@s.amity.edu

² Associate Professor Amity Business School Amity University

sakulkarni@mum.amity.edu

ABSTRACT :

In a generation where viewing on Instagram is integrated into everyday life, the platform itself has become the most popular and most influential marketing location with hashtags. This study examined the dynamic synergy between Instagram marketing strategies and consumer behaviour, and understood how visual appeal, influence, and interactions influence consumer perspectives and decision-making. The brand continues to invest in content, sponsor tides, history and partnerships. Therefore, it was not so important to know about the reactions with consumers. This study uses a mixing method design. Quantitative data were used in interviews using structured input of numbers on the Internet between active Instagram users and qualitative information with personal experiences and emotional responses to marketing content. This study focuses on aspects, particularly emotional interactions, brand confidence, perceived credibility, and influence of influential individuals. Research shows that consumers are attractive to branded content and to influential people who share their ideals, especially trustworthy and trustworthy. Features such as research, coils, and personal messaging increase participation so that consumers can interact with brands. In general, this article shows how Instagram can transform traditional marketing between individuals, visual and interactive businesses. The purpose of participation is to support new digital marketing managers who create more honest and emotionally persuasive campaigns that interact with modern social consumers on a real level.

Introduction

Instagram has developed far beyond a photo sharing app. It is now also a platform for discovering new products, trends we are now aware of, and bringing people and businesses/brands closer together. There are so many ways that businesses can engage and reach their audience through stories, reels, influencers, etc. However, the actual impact of these vehicles on trust, follow, or purchasing decisions remains unclear. This study is exploring how visuals, trust, and engagement create variability in consumer perceptions and behaviours towards brands on Instagram. By considering these processes, brands can develop marketing offers that are more authentic, relatable, and actionable.

2. Literature Review

Over the past ten years, Instagram has matured into an effective marketing platform, engaging users with visuals, storytelling and and interactivity. Visual appeal, user-generated content, and emotional engagement all work well to seemingly adopt consumers' mindset. In fact research shows that humans are often more attracted by good looking visuals than price or wording (Ridgway et al., 2017). Trust and admiration of influencers, in particular niche influencers can determine a consumers 'brand loyalty' (Lou & Yuan, 2019) and purchasing relative to the brands they are influenced by. For example, authentic responses through comments and messages create an increased bond strength of the influencer and follower. Audrezet et al., (2020) extended the notion of a virtuous cycle of influencer-brand partnerships creates emotional attachments with consumers. In the context of the Fogg Behaviour Model (2009), behaviour is facilitated by motivation, ability and prompt; Instagram content will be a dominant vehicle for these three factors. While consumers are interacting with brands via the process of following and creation of content, consumers also function as creators, and must also develop their own brand identity through separate content and responses. Unfortunately, most of the current research is from audiences located within the western hemisphere and therefore the subsequent step is to study consumer responses to Instagram marketing from other cultures.

3. Objectives of the Study

To ascertain the impact Instagram's visual posts have on consumers' perceptions and emotions regarding a brand.

- To ascertain the degree to which consumers trust influencers and how that trust affects their purchasing decisions.

- to investigate how user engagement and decision-making are impacted by features such as stories, reels, polls, and comments.

To observe how people's feelings are influenced by Instagram content and how those feelings impact their purchasing decisions.

- To find out how user-generated content, such as reviews or images, influences a person's interest in a product.

- To find out if Instagram marketing affects people differently depending on their location or culture.

4. Research Methodology

- In today's digital era, Instagram has evolved from a mere photo-sharing app to a powerful marketing platform. This research explores how Instagram marketing influences consumer behavior, especially among younger demographics who are increasingly engaged with social media content. Through this methodology, we aim to understand the patterns, preferences, and psychological triggers behind consumers' interactions with Instagram marketing.
- Method: Online survey with a structured questionnaire.
- Target Audience: Instagram users between 18 and 35 years old

The survey will collect responses about how frequently users interact with influencer content and ads, their trust in these sources, and whether they've been influenced to make purchases.

7. Research Design

The research adopts a quantitative approach using an online questionnaire. The design was tailored to capture various dimensions of Instagram marketing and how it affects purchasing behavior, trust, brand interaction, and consumer preferences.

8. Data Collection Method

Data was collected using Google Forms, where a structured questionnaire was shared with participants between the ages of 'Under 18' to '35+'. The form included a mix of multiple-choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions to gather both measurable and descriptive insights.

9. Sample Size and Respondent Profile

A total of 50 individuals participated in the study. The respondent pool consisted of a diverse range of demographics in terms of age, gender, and occupation.

- Age Group: The majority of respondents belonged to the 18-24 age group, followed by smaller segments from Under 18 and 25-34 categories. This distribution highlights the relevance of Instagram marketing particularly among younger audiences.
- Gender: The survey included both male and female participants, with a higher representation of female respondents, reflecting the typical demographic engagement on Instagram.
- Occupation: A significant portion of respondents were students, followed by working professionals. This suggests that the sample was primarily composed of digitally active individuals, making them an ideal group to study Instagram marketing impacts.

10. Data collection Instrument

The primary instrument for data collection was an online survey created using Google Forms. The questionnaire was carefully designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative aspects of Instagram marketing's influence on consumer behaviour. It consisted of a combination of closed-ended, multiple-choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions. The questions aimed to assess the frequency of Instagram use, exposure to advertisements, trust in influencers, engagement behaviour, and the impact of promotional content on purchasing decisions.

The questionnaire included the following items:

1. Age Group – To categorize respondents by generation and observe marketing influence across age ranges.
2. Gender – For understanding gender-based patterns in Instagram usage and ad response.
3. Occupation – To analyse how consumer behaviour may vary based on student or professional status.
4. How often do you see advertisements on Instagram? – To understand exposure levels to Instagram marketing.
5. What factors make you more likely to buy a product from an Instagram ad? (e.g., reviews, influencer recommendation, promotions) – To explore triggers of purchase behaviour.
6. What is your main reason for following brands on Instagram? – To determine motivational drivers for brand followership.
7. How do Instagram promotions (discounts, giveaways) influence your purchasing decisions? – To understand how incentives affect buying decisions.
8. Do you trust Instagram influencers' product recommendations? – To gauge consumer perception of influencer credibility.
9. Have you ever made an impulse purchase due to an Instagram advertisement? – To assess the role of spontaneous buying.

11. Data Analysis Tools

The data collected was exported to Microsoft Excel for analysis. Pie charts and bar graphs were used to visually represent responses to key questions such as Instagram usage frequency, types of influential content, purchase behaviour, and engagement with brand posts.

For open-ended questions, responses were reviewed to identify common themes and sentiments, particularly around brand authenticity, content quality, and preferences between Instagram and traditional advertising.

Each survey question was clearly broken down and interpreted to highlight patterns in consumer behaviour related to Instagram marketing.

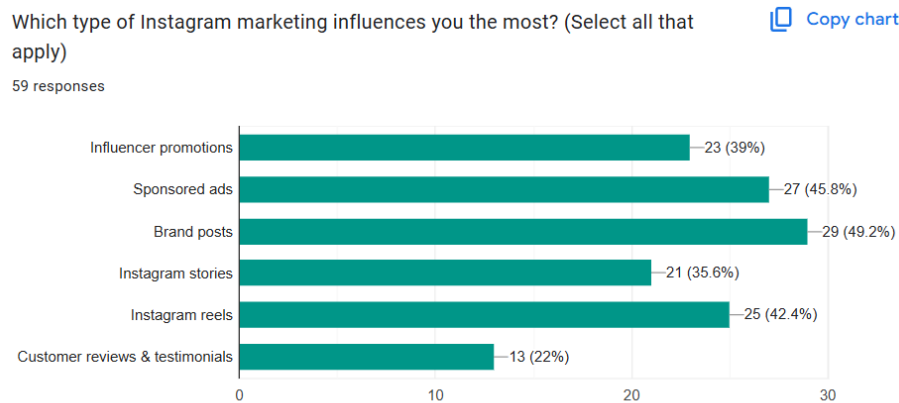
12. Expected Outcomes

- A clearer understanding of the factors that influence consumer trust and engagement on Instagram
- Data on the effectiveness of influencer marketing and targeted advertising
- Practical suggestions for improving Instagram marketing strategies

13. Data Analysis and Interpretation

From all the responses, seven key questions were chosen for deeper analysis because they best reflect how Instagram marketing shapes consumer behaviour. These questions highlight how people respond to emotional triggers, eye-catching visuals, and subtle influences like promotions or influencer posts. The goal was to understand what really drives people to engage with content and make purchases—often without even realizing it.

Q1. Which type of Instagram marketing influences you the most? (Select all that apply)

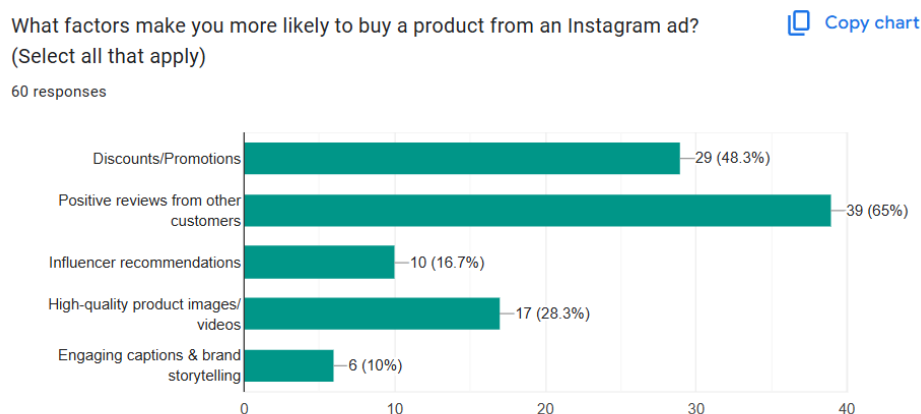


- The top answer was Brand Posts, followed by Sponsored ads, next by Instagram reels, Influencer promotions and later followed by other factors

Interpretation:

- Recognizing brand posts at 49.2% of respondents (29 out of 59), as illustrated by the longest bar in the graph, was awarded the most influence.
- Sponsored ads (45.8%) and Instagram reels (42.4%) also garnered significant influence as they utilize attractive visual content, paid content, and/or shorten the duration of the content pieces.
- Influencer promotions (39%) and Instagram stories (35.6%) are in the medium category for influence suggesting that users still appreciate personal content and content that is time sensitive.
- Customer reviews & testimonials are the least influential (22%), suggesting direct peer reviews seem to have less influence on Instagram compared to branded or curated content.

Q2- What factors make you more likely to buy a product from an Instagram ad?



Interpretation:

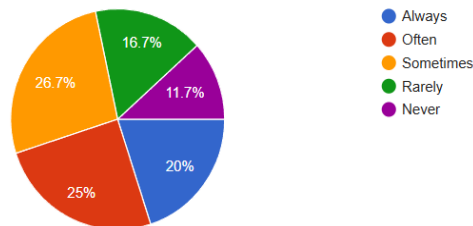
- Customer reviews were the largest impact factor at 65% with responses choosing positive feedback from other customers. This suggests the impact of social proof when building trust and eventually making a purchase.
- Discounts and promotions had an equally strong impact at 48.3% which indicated that price incentives still play a significant role in converting Instagram users to consumers.
- Promotions, storytelling, and influencer recommendations had the least impact scores with 16.7% and 10% of respondents selecting them as influencing factors respectively. This suggests that consumers are placing value on peers' opinions in addition to the use of practical value rather than responding to emotional context from influencers or emotive messaging.

Q3-How do you interact with brand content on Instagram, and what influences your trust and purchase decisions—such as promotions, influencer recommendations, or impulse-triggering ads?

How often do you engage with brand content on Instagram (likes, comments, shares, saves)?

60 responses

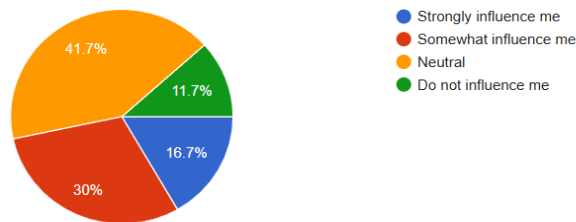
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How do Instagram promotions (discounts, giveaways) influence your purchasing decisions?

60 responses

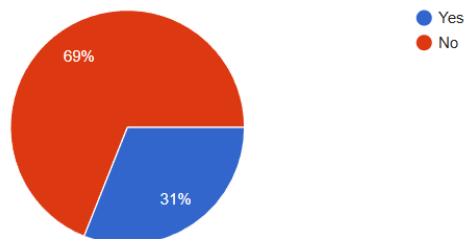
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Have you ever made an impulse purchase due to an Instagram advertisement?

58 responses

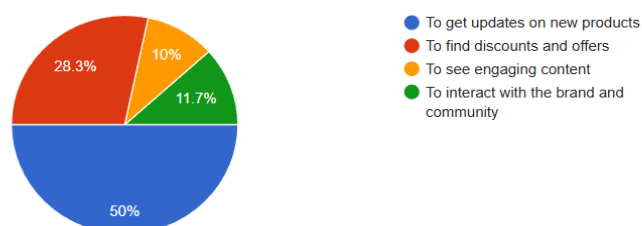
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What is your main reason for following brands on Instagram?

60 responses

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Interpretation:

The results clearly demonstrate that Instagram is a significant aspect of consumer engagement and consumer purchasing behaviour. There are a significant number of users that frequently engage with brands on Instagram, 45% of respondents said they engage either 'often' or 'always'. The primary reason why many users engage with brands is to learn about new products (50%), and the second position was discounts / offers (28.3%). Promotions such as giveaways and discounts do somewhat influence the purchasing decision making process for followers - 46.7 % of respondents reported that promotions have influenced their purchasing decision either 'strongly' or 'somewhat'. However, only 31% of respondents have made an impulse purchase due to an Instagram advertisement. This means that while promotions and content do grab an Instagram user's attention, many users are more likely to consider their purchases than to act impulsively.

14. Conclusion

Instagram marketing continues to evolve, and its impact on consumer behavior cannot be overlooked. This research hopes to shed light on how influencer and ad-driven strategies shape consumer trust, engagement, and decision-making. By focusing on real user experiences, the study aims to help brands connect more meaningfully with their audiences in an increasingly competitive digital environment.

15. Limitation and Recommendations**Limitation**

- Limited Sample Size: With only limited responses you may not capture a true representation of the existing population of Instagram users.
- Self-Reported Data: Users' responses were at the mercy of their honesty and recall, which may not totally remove bias or inaccuracies.
- Only Instagram: The study examined Instagram user perceptions only and does not explore how other social media outlets may motivate certain consumer practices differently.

Recommendations

Brands must develop visually appealing and candid content and make a personal connection to the consumer to utilize Instagram marketing and influence consumer behaviour. When considering partnerships with influencers, user-generated content, and native advertising features that promote trust and instructiveness with the consumer audience, brands should also consider features like polls and stories that resonate with the consumer. The customers engagement and trust will enhance and continue providing brands with successful support on the platform. Furthermore, brands should benefit from targeted ads and tailored product recommendations based on the data within the movement of the consumer on site-to-site, to encourage conversion and loyalty. Brands should structure the ads based on consistent messaging and branding; if combined regularly with active posts or presence from the brand, the brand will create some closeness with the consumer that is internalized and results in action while purchasing.

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