



Impact of Instagram Advertising on Brand Awareness Among College Students

N. SAI NAGA SASANK¹, DR. Y. SURYANARAYANA MURTHY²

¹Research Student, Department of Business Administration, KL Business School, KLEF, Vaddeswaram, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India.

Email: shashanknalluri4@gmail.com

²Research supervisor, Dr. Y. Suryanarayana Murthy, Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, KL Business School, KLEF, Vaddeswaram, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India Email: bobby.yamijala@gmail.com

ABSTRACT :

Instagram has emerged as a significant advertising platform for reaching college students through sponsored posts, Stories, Reels, influencer promotions, and other visual formats. This is a study examining the impact of Instagram advertising on brand awareness among college students for advertising exposure, visual attractiveness, informativeness, relevance, engagement, repeated exposure, influencer promotions, brand recognition, brand recall and brand familiarity. This research is a quantitative descriptive cross-sectional research design based on 100 coded responses collected through a questionnaire. Instagram advertising is treated as the independent variable, while brand awareness is considered the dependent variable. In the substantive section, there are 20 items classified on a five-point Likert scale. Frequencies and percentages of the characteristics of respondents and response patterns, while composite mean scores, Cronbach's alpha, and Pearson correlation will be used to examine the study variables. The data reveals positive overall attitudes towards Instagram marketing and brand recognition. The Instagram advertising composite mean is 3.72 (SD = 0.96), the brand awareness composite mean is 3.83 (SD = 0.94), and the overall 20-item mean is 3.78 (SD = 0.94). Pearson correlation shows a very strong positive relationship of Instagram marketing effectiveness with brand awareness ($r = .97, p < .001$).

Keywords: Instagram advertising; Brand awareness; College students; Social media advertising; Engagement; Brand recognition; Brand recall

1. Introduction

Social media has transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers, build relationships and promote their brands. Instagram has become an important channel for digital advertising because of its strong visual and interactive features. Businesses communicate through photographs, videos, Reels, Stories, sponsored posts, product demonstrations and influencer collaborations. These formats allow brands to present information attractively while reaching consumers in their everyday digital environment.

College students are an important group for studying Instagram advertising because they are regularly exposed to digital content. Repeated exposure may influence how students notice, recognize, remember and become familiar with brands. Instagram also allows direct interaction through liking, commenting, sharing and clicking. Influencer promotions can introduce students to new brands and products through content that may appear personal and engaging. Brand awareness is important because consumers are more likely to consider a brand when they can recognize or recall it. This study therefore examines the relationship between Instagram advertising and brand awareness among college students.

2. Review of Literature

Saydan and Dölek (2019)

Saydan and Dölek (2019) examined social media advertisement awareness, brand awareness, brand image, brand attitude and brand loyalty among university students. The study reported that social media advertisement awareness significantly influences brand awareness and other brand-related outcomes.

Efendioğlu and Durmaz (2022)

Efendioğlu and Durmaz (2022) examined perceptions of social media advertisements in relation to advertising value, brand awareness and brand associations among Instagram users. The study supports the importance of users' perceptions of Instagram advertisements in shaping brand-related outcomes.

Yang and Jiang (2021)

Yang and Jiang (2021) investigated congruence effects in Instagram in-feed native advertisements. Their findings highlighted the importance of advertisement-media congruence and self-congruence in reducing perceived intrusiveness and increasing engagement intentions.

LakshmiPriyanka and Aditya (2025)

LakshmiPriyanka and Aditya (2025) examined social media advertising among 112 college students in Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh. The study reported that attractive content, influencer marketing and interactive advertisements contribute to brand visibility.

Ramadhan and Oktarici (2025)

Ramadhan and Oktarici (2025) examined advertisements and content marketing among students in the Kampus Merdeka MSIB programme. The study reported a positive and significant effect of social media advertising on brand awareness.

Varghese and Koreath (2025)

Varghese and Koreath (2025) examined Instagram advertising and online purchase intention among college students. The study provides evidence that Instagram advertising can influence young consumers' brand discovery and perception.

Pourkabirian, Habibian and Pourkabirian (2021)

Pourkabirian, Habibian and Pourkabirian (2021) examined electronic word-of-mouth in social networks and branding outcomes. The study supports the importance of social communication and user-generated content in influencing brand-related responses.

Wirany, Poedjadi and Rahmawati (2023)

Wirany, Poedjadi and Rahmawati (2023) examined digital marketing and social media as strategies for increasing brand awareness in higher education. The study highlighted the usefulness of digital advertising and social media communication for improving brand awareness.

Wan (2024)

Wan (2024) examined advertising students' understanding and recognition of Instagram in-feed native advertising. The study is relevant because recognition of advertising content is important when considering how Instagram advertisements are noticed and processed.

Alam, Ahmad and Parveen (2025)

Alam, Ahmad and Parveen (2025) examined social media and influencer marketing in relation to brand perception and selection of higher educational institutions in India. The study provides evidence of the role of social media and influencer activities in shaping brand-related perceptions among students.

3. Research Gap

Previous studies have established that social media advertising and Instagram-based marketing can influence brand awareness, brand recognition, engagement, brand image and purchase-related outcomes. However, several studies examine social media platforms collectively, while others focus on purchase intention, brand attitude, brand image, loyalty or advertising value rather than brand awareness as the main outcome. Although some studies have examined Instagram users or college students, there is still a need for a focused study on the relationship between Instagram advertising and brand awareness among college students. The present study addresses this gap by examining exposure, visual attractiveness, usefulness, relevance, engagement, repeated exposure, influencer promotions and interaction in relation to brand recognition, recall, familiarity and identification.

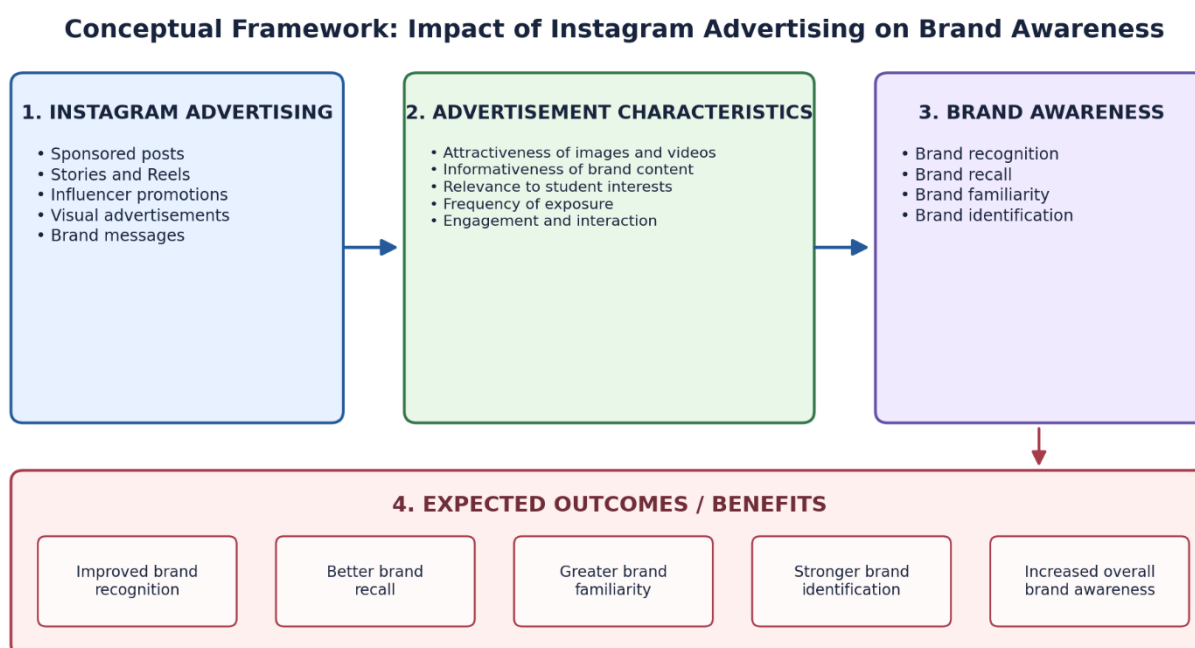
4. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the impact of Instagram advertising on brand awareness among college students.
2. To identify the extent to which college students are exposed to advertisements on Instagram.
3. To analyse the influence of Instagram advertisements on brand recognition among college students.
4. To study the effect of Instagram advertisements on brand recall and brand familiarity among college students.
5. To determine the relationship between engagement with Instagram advertisements and brand awareness among college students.

5. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework proposes that Instagram advertising influences brand awareness among college students. Instagram advertising is represented through exposure frequency, visual attractiveness, informativeness, relevance and engagement. Brand awareness is represented through brand recognition, brand recall, brand familiarity and brand identification.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study



6. Research Methodology

Sampling Technique

The available workbook does not document a full probability-selection procedure or sampling frame. Therefore, the analysis is treated as a dataset-level study of the supplied 100 records rather than a probability sample. No additional respondents or values were added during analysis.

Sources and Instrument of Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was used. The demographic section covered gender, age, occupation, educational qualification and monthly family income. The substantive section contained 20 Instagram advertising and brand-awareness statements rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Variables and Measurement

Instagram advertising is treated as the independent variable and brand awareness as the dependent variable. The first eight items form the Instagram advertising composite, while the following twelve items form the brand awareness composite for the relationship analysis.

Statistical Tools Used

Frequencies and percentages were calculated for the five demographic variables and each Likert-scale item. Means and standard deviations were calculated for the Instagram advertising, brand awareness and overall composites. Cronbach's alpha assessed internal consistency, and Pearson correlation examined the association between the two composite variables. Statistical significance was evaluated at the .05 level.

Ethical Considerations

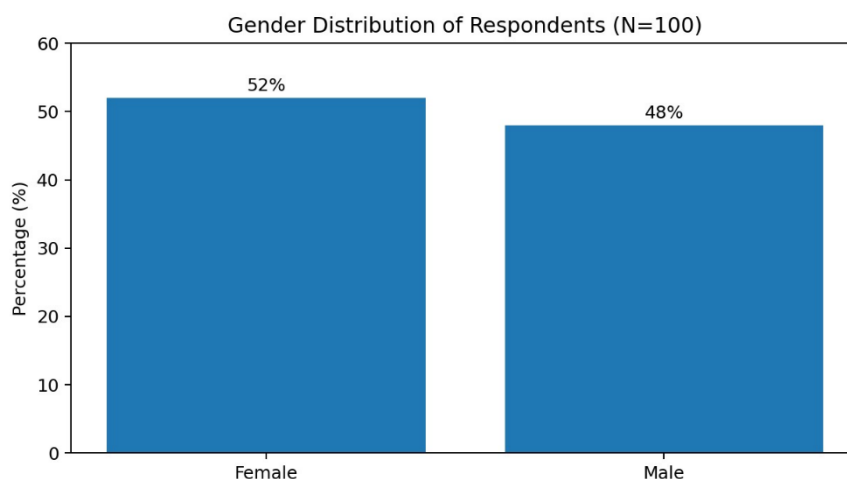
Names and timestamps were not used in the coded analysis. The supplied workbook states that the additional responses are intended for research-formatting, testing or analysis practice and should not be represented as independently verified field observations. A real field study should obtain informed consent, protect respondent confidentiality and avoid unnecessary personally identifiable information.

7. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1. Respondent Profile (N = 100)

Characteristic	Category	n (%)
Gender	Female	52 (52%)
	Male	48 (48%)
Age	18–20	38 (38%)
	21–25	24 (24%)
	26–30	15 (15%)
	31–35	8 (8%)
	36–40	8 (8%)
	41–50	7 (7%)
Occupation	Student	60 (60%)
	Government Employee	10 (10%)
	Self-Employed	9 (9%)
	Business	8 (8%)
	Homemaker	5 (5%)
	Private Employee	4 (4%)
	Professional	4 (4%)
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	38 (38%)
	Postgraduate	40 (40%)
	Diploma	11 (11%)
	Doctorate	11 (11%)
Monthly Family Income	Below ₹25,000	19 (19%)
	₹25,001–₹50,000	19 (19%)
	₹50,001–₹75,000	13 (13%)
	₹75,001–₹1,00,000	28 (28%)
	Above ₹1,00,000	21 (21%)

Interpretation: The sample contains 52% female and 48% male respondents. The largest age group is 18–20 (38%), students form the largest occupational category (60%), postgraduates account for 40%, and the largest income category is ₹75,001–₹1,00,000 (28%).

Figure 2. Gender Distribution of Respondents**Table 2. Composite Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Range
Instagram Advertising Composite	3.72	0.96	1.12–5.00
Brand Awareness Composite	3.82	0.94	1.18–5.00
Overall 20-Item Mean	3.78	0.94	1.16–5.00

Interpretation: The mean Instagram advertising score is 3.72 (SD = 0.96), while the brand awareness score is 3.83 (SD = 0.94). The overall 20-item mean is 3.78 (SD = 0.94), indicating generally favorable responses on the five-point scale.

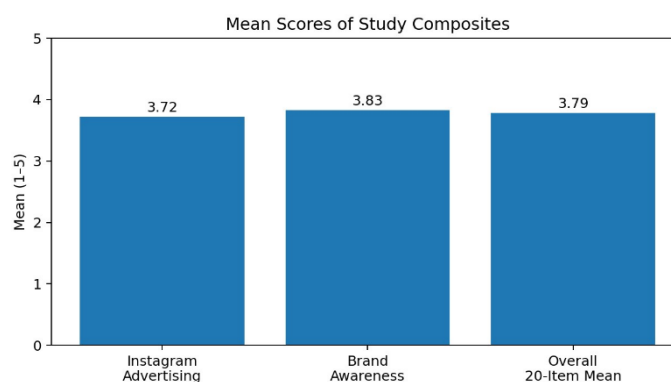
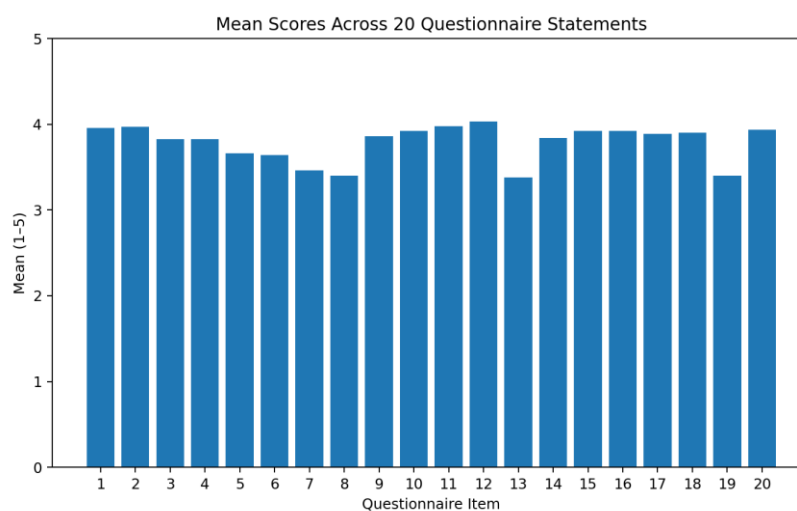
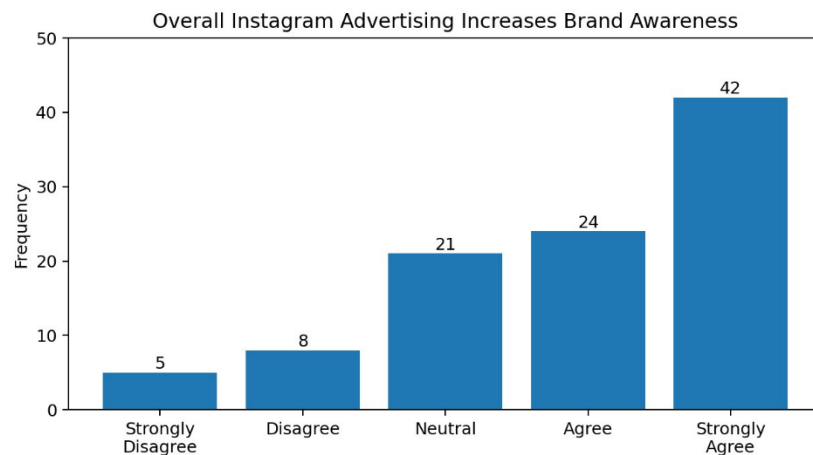
Figure 3. Mean Scores of Study Composites**Figure 4. Mean Scores Across the 20 Questionnaire Statements**

Table 3. Item-Level Mean Scores

Item	Mean	Level
1. Frequency of encountering Instagram advertisements	3.96	Favorable
2. Visual content attracts attention	3.97	Favorable
3. Useful information about brands/products	3.83	Favorable
4. Relevance to interests and preferences	3.83	Favorable
5. Advertisements are engaging and interesting	3.66	Favorable
6. Repeated exposure increases brand awareness	3.64	Favorable
7. Influencer promotions help notice new brands	3.46	Moderate
8. Interaction by liking/commenting/sharing/clicking	3.40	Moderate
9. Helps recognize brands more easily	3.86	Favorable
10. Remember frequently advertised brands	3.92	Favorable
11. Become familiar with new brands	3.98	Favorable
12. Identify brand from logo/product	4.03	High
13. Recall brands after Instagram advertisements	3.38	Moderate
14. Distinguish brand from competing brands	3.84	Favorable
15. Remember brands due to repeated exposure	3.92	Favorable
16. Awareness of new products and brands	3.92	Favorable
17. Previous Instagram ad exposure improves recognition	3.89	Favorable
18. Overall Instagram advertising increases brand awareness	3.90	Favorable
19. Advertisements influence search for more information	3.40	Moderate

Interpretation: Mean scores range from 3.40 to 4.03. The highest mean is 4.03 for identifying a brand from its logo or product in an Instagram advertisement. The lowest mean is 3.40 for interacting with advertisements by liking, commenting, sharing or clicking.

Figure 5. Overall Brand-Awareness Statement Response Distribution**Table 4. Reliability Analysis**

Composite	Items	Alpha	Mean	SD	Assessment
Instagram Advertising	8	0.95	3.72	0.96	High consistency
Brand Awareness	12	0.96	3.82	0.94	High consistency

Interpretation: Both composites show high internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha is .95 for Instagram advertising and .96 for brand awareness.

Table 5. Overall Instagram Advertising and Brand-Awareness Response

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	5	5%
Disagree	8	8%
Neutral	21	21%

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	24	24%
Strongly Agree	42	42%

Interpretation: For the statement “Overall, Instagram advertising increases my awareness of brands,” 66% selected Agree or Strongly Agree.

Table 6. Pearson Correlation Between Study Variables

Variable Pair	Pearson r	p-value	Interpretation
Instagram Advertising ↔ Brand Awareness	0.97	< .001	Very strong positive association

Table 7. Hypothesis Test Summary

Hypothesis / Statistic	Result
H ₀	Rejected
H ₁	Supported for supplied sample
Pearson correlation	r = .97, p < .001
Significance level	0.05

Interpretation: Pearson correlation is r = .97 with p < .001, indicating a very strong positive association between Instagram advertising and brand awareness in this sample. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is supported for the supplied dataset. The association should not be interpreted as proof of causation because the study is cross-sectional and observational.

Table 8. Highest and Lowest Item Means

Measure	Item	Mean	Result
Highest	Identify brand from logo/product	4.03	Strongest item
Lowest	Interact by liking/commenting/sharing/clicking	3.38	Lowest item

Table 9. Summary of Key Statistical Results

Statistic	Value	Statistic	Value	Statistic	Value
N	100	Instagram Advertising Mean	3.72	Brand Awareness Mean	3.83
Overall Mean	3.78	Pearson r	0.97	p-value	< .001
IA Alpha	0.95	BA Alpha	0.96	Scale	1–5

Interpretation: The descriptive and relationship-based results consistently indicate favorable perceptions of Instagram advertising and a strong positive association with brand awareness. The evidence supports the study hypothesis at the sample level, while the design limits causal and population-level conclusions.

8. Major Findings

1. The dataset contains 100 coded responses, with 52% female and 48% male respondents.
2. The largest age group is 18–20 years (38%), and students account for 60% of the respondents.
3. The Instagram advertising composite has a mean of 3.72 (SD = 0.96), while the brand awareness composite has a mean of 3.83 (SD = 0.94).
4. The highest individual item mean is 4.03 for identifying a brand from its logo or product in an Instagram advertisement.
5. The lowest individual item mean is 3.40 for interacting with Instagram advertisements by liking, commenting, sharing or clicking.
6. Sixty-six percent of respondents selected Agree or Strongly Agree that Instagram advertising increases their awareness of brands.
7. Pearson correlation shows a very strong positive association between Instagram advertising and brand awareness (r = .97, p < .001), supporting H₁ for this sample.

9. Findings and Suggestions

1. Emphasize visually attractive Instagram advertising because visual content received a favorable response among the respondents.
2. Provide useful and concise brand or product information so advertisements contribute to recognition and recall.
3. Use relevant advertising messages aligned with users' interests and preferences to improve attention and engagement.
4. Use repeated exposure carefully to strengthen familiarity and recall without creating excessive or intrusive advertising.
5. Use influencer promotions and interactive formats where appropriate to help students notice new brands and offerings.
6. Maintain a balance between promotional frequency and user experience so engagement is encouraged rather than forced.
7. Use clear brand identifiers such as logos and product visuals because brand identification recorded the strongest individual response.

10. Conclusion

Based on the 100 coded responses, Instagram advertising and brand awareness show a strong positive association. Descriptive results indicate generally favorable perceptions of advertising exposure, visual content, usefulness, relevance, repeated exposure and influencer promotions. Brand-related recognition, recall and familiarity are also favorable, with the strongest response relating to identifying a brand from its logo or product. Pearson correlation of $r = .97$ ($p < .001$) supports the alternative hypothesis for this sample. However, the cross-sectional and observational design does not establish that Instagram advertising causes higher brand awareness, and the supplied dataset does not support broad population generalization.

11. Limitations and Scope for Future Research

The analysis is based on 100 supplied coded responses, and the available files do not document a complete probability-sampling procedure or institutional sampling frame. The study is cross-sectional and relies on self-reported Likert responses. The supplied workbook also describes the additional responses as intended for research-formatting, testing or analysis practice. Accordingly, the results should be treated as sample-level analytical findings rather than population estimates. Future research should collect ethically consented primary data using a clearly documented sampling frame, include students from multiple institutions, test the questionnaire for reliability and validity, and examine demographic differences, longitudinal changes and additional outcomes such as engagement, purchase intention and brand attitude.

12. REFERENCES

- Saydan, & Dülek. (2019). Study details as summarized in the supplied research draft.
- Efendioğlu, & Durmaz. (2022). Study details as summarized in the supplied research draft.
- Yang, & Jiang. (2021). Study details as summarized in the supplied research draft.
- Lakshmipriyanka, & Aditya. (2025). Study details as summarized in the supplied research draft.
- Ramadhan, & Oktarici. (2025). Study details as summarized in the supplied research draft.
- Varghese, & Koreath. (2025). Study details as summarized in the supplied research draft.
- Pourkabirian, Habibian, & Pourkabirian. (2021). Study details as summarized in the supplied research draft.
- Wiryany, Poedjadi, & Rahmawati. (2023). Study details as summarized in the supplied research draft.
- Wan. (2024). Study details as summarized in the supplied research draft.
- Alam, Ahmad, & Parveen. (2025). Study details as summarized in the supplied research draft.