

A Study of the Effectiveness of Social Media Advertising among College Students

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Abstract: *The rapid growth of social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube has significantly transformed advertising strategies, especially among young consumers. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of social media advertising among college students. It focuses on understanding students' usage patterns, exposure to advertisements, attitudes toward online ads, and the impact of these advertisements on their purchasing behavior. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from college students, and the findings were analyzed using simple statistical tools. The study reveals that a majority of students spend considerable time on social media and are frequently exposed to advertisements in the form of videos, reels, and sponsored posts. It was found that visually appealing and influencer-based advertisements have a stronger impact on students' attention and engagement. Moreover, social media advertising significantly influences the buying decisions of students, although trust levels vary depending on the credibility of the source. The study concludes that social media advertising is an effective marketing tool for targeting college students, provided that the content is creative, relevant, and trustworthy..*

Keywords: Social Media Advertising, College Students, Consumer Behavior, Online Marketing, Influencer Marketing, Purchase Decision, Digital Advertising.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube have become powerful tools for marketing and advertising. These platforms are widely used by college students, making them an important target audience for advertisers. Social media advertising includes various forms such as sponsored posts, influencer marketing, video ads, and display advertisements, all designed to attract and engage users. College students are among the most active users of social media, spending a significant amount of time browsing, interacting, and consuming content online. This high level of engagement increases their exposure to advertisements, which can influence their preferences, opinions, and purchasing decisions. Unlike traditional advertising methods, social media advertising allows for personalized and interactive communication, making it more effective in capturing the attention of young consumers. This study focuses on analyzing the effectiveness of social media advertising among college students. It aims to understand how frequently students encounter ads, their attitudes toward these advertisements, and the extent to which such ads impact their buying behavior. Additionally, the study explores which types of advertisements are most appealing and the factors that contribute to their effectiveness. Understanding these aspects is important for marketers to design better advertising strategies that resonate with the youth. Overall, the study highlights the growing importance of social media as a key platform for modern advertising and its influence on consumer behavior in the digital age.

Objective of study:

- To identify the most commonly used social media platforms among college students.
- To examine how frequently students are exposed to advertisements on social media.



- To study students' attitudes toward social media advertisements.
- To evaluate the impact of social media ads on students' purchasing decisions.
- To analyze which type of advertisements (video, image, influencer-based, etc.) attract students the most.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. International Journal of economics and management research: Social media has become a strategic instrument in the promotion of higher education institutions to attract the interest of prospective students in the contemporary digital era. This study explores the effectiveness of the implementation of social media advertising on the increase in the number of new students, by considering the role of brand image as an intervening variable, using the theoretical framework of the Hierarchy of Effects Model which describes the stages of the marketing communication process. Through a quantitative methodology with a survey technique on 150 respondents of grade XII high school students in the Tangerang area who were active on social media platforms, multiple linear regression analysis revealed the positive and significant influence of social media advertising, both directly and through strengthening brand awareness and brand image, with t-values of social media advertising ($5,527 > t$ table 1,989) and brand awareness ($7,967 > t$ table 1.989). The simultaneous analysis confirmed the collective influence with F count $54,956 > F$ table 3,195 at a significance of 0.000, where the research model explained 68% of the variability in the increase in the number of students (R-square = 0.688), while 31.2% was influenced by external factors, emphasizing the importance of a social media advertising strategy that is integrated with the development of a positive brand image in increasing the attractiveness of higher education institutions

2. Research Gate, International Journal Of Economic and Management: Social media has become a strategic instrument in the promotion of higher education institutions to attract the interest of prospective students in the contemporary digital era. This study explores the effectiveness of the implementation of social media advertising on the increase in the number of new students, by considering the role of brand image as an intervening variable, using the theoretical framework of the Hierarchy of Effects Model which describes the stages of the marketing communication process. Through a quantitative methodology with a survey technique on 150 respondents of grade XII high school students in the Tangerang area who were active on social media platforms, multiple linear regression analysis revealed the positive and significant influence of social media advertising, both directly and through strengthening brand awareness and brand image, with t-values of social media advertising ($5,527 > t$ table 1,989) and brand awareness ($7,967 > t$ table 1.989). The simultaneous analysis confirmed the collective influence with F count $54,956 > F$ table 3,195 at a significance of 0.000, where the research model explained 68% of the variability in the increase in the number of students (R-square = 0.688), while 31.2% was influenced by external factors, emphasizing the importance of a social media advertising strategy that is integrated with the development of a positive brand image in increasing the attractiveness of higher education institutions

3. International Journal of Research in IT and Management (IJRIM): Social Media marketing is the 'best opportunities available' to a brand for linking with approaching consumers. Social media marketing is the intermediate to meet people. These new media win the trust of consumers by involving with them at a deeper level. Social media marketing is the new mantra for several brands since early last year. Marketers are taking note of many different social media opportunities and starting to execute new social initiatives at a higher rate than ever before. Social media marketing and the businesses that utilize it have become more complicated. One cannot afford to have no being there on the social channels if the competitor is making influence with its products and services. The explosion of social media phenomenon is as mind boggling as that and the pace at which it is growing is infuriating. This paper discusses about the concepts of social media marketing and other aspects like the types and benefits, social media marketing strategies. And also discusses the challenge. Keywords: social media, social media marketing, challenges, strategy

4. International Journal Of Business Competition and Growth: This research delves into the social media habits and perceptions of prospective management students, offering a qualitative lens through in-depth interviews with 35 prospective students using purposive sampling. Data from two Indian states were meticulously gathered, transcribed via



Microsoft Otter.ai, and analysed with NVIVO 10 through a thematic approach. The study uncovers that these students leverage social media for various purposes: promotion, advertisements, reviews and rankings, college brand awareness, job and internship searches, college selection, and alumni networking. The insights gained illuminate how higher education institutes (HEIs) can amplify their online presence and forge meaningful connections with prospective students, alumni, and other stakeholders, effectively showcasing their resources and enhancing engagement.

Keywords [higher education](#), [social media marketing](#), [student enrolment](#), [management education](#), [exploratory study](#)

5. Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research: Internet and its allied services are finding new ways to transform human life. Social media is considered as the most commonly used internet service among youngsters. Youngsters and teenagers around the world use social media to connect with friends and families. Unlike other communication mediums, social media has a universal reach and a large audience. Marketing on social media is considered cost effective than conventional marketing strategies. Various recent studies show that average time spent by youngsters on social media is increasing. Social media is not restricted to geographical boundaries or time. There are over 2.2 billion people all over the globe using internet and its allied service. India is far progressing in the communication technologies. Recent studies reveal that introduction of 4G LTE has changed the way Indians do social networking. The average time spent on internet and social media by Indians, especially youth are much similar to that of developed countries. More advanced Smart phones, and coming 5th generation mobile phone network all will make more people especially youth use to internet and social media. Growing trends of social media proves that the scope of social media is also increasing. Therefor social media marketing is considered as an effective marketing strategy to reach young potential customers. Youngsters being the majority of social media users, this particular study cover the youth. The study will examine the social media as an emerging marketing tool among them. Index Terms SocialMedia, Social Networking, Social Media Marketing, Information and Communication Technologice

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design to understand the effectiveness of social media advertising among college students.

Data Collection Method

Both primary and secondary data are used.

A. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire.

B. Secondary data is gathered from articles, journals, and online sources.

Sampling Method

Convenience sampling technique is used to select respondents from college students.

Sample Size

The study includes a sample of 50–100 college students (you can adjust as per your project).

Data Collection Tool

A questionnaire (Google Form) is used to collect responses from students.

Data Analysis Method

Data is analyzed using simple statistical tools such as percentages, charts, and graphs.

Study Area

The research is conducted in colleges within a specific region.

Time Period

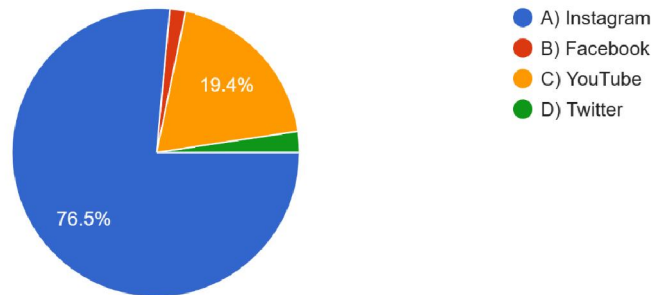
The study is conducted within a limited time frame.



IV. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

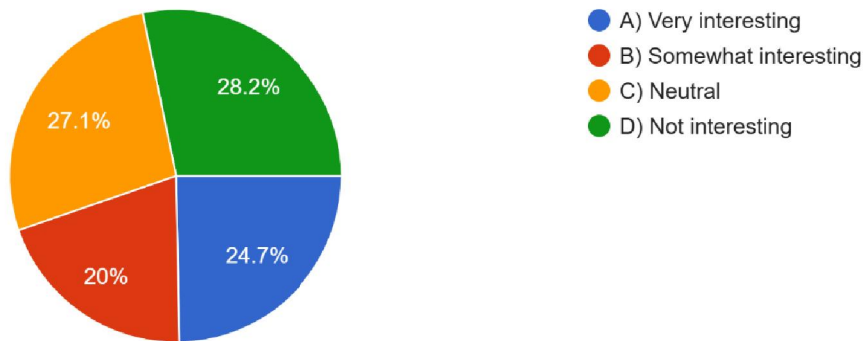
1. Which social media platform do you use the most?

170 responses



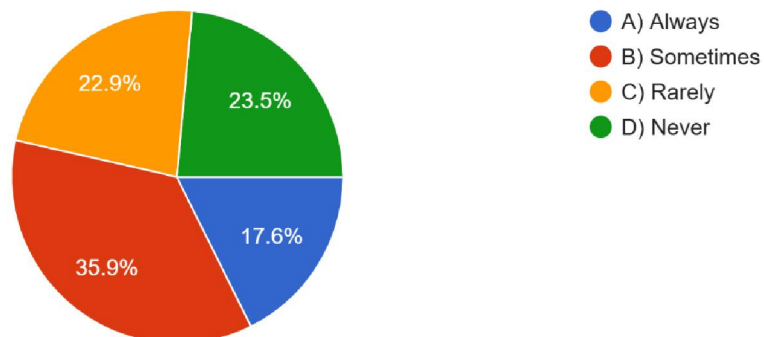
5. What is your general opinion about social media advertisements?

170 responses



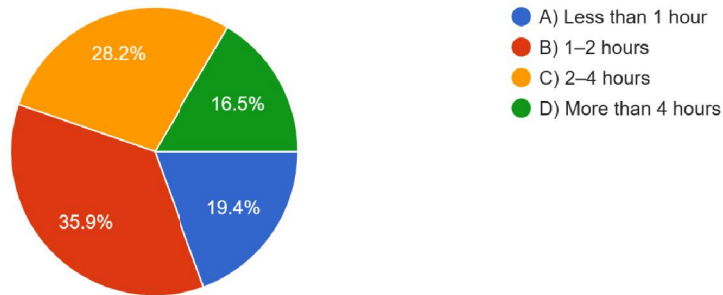
6. Do social media ads influence your purchase decisions?

170 responses



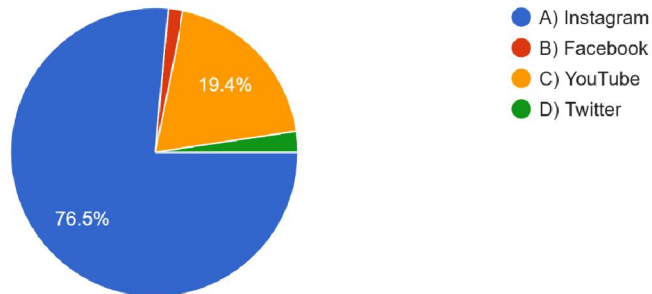
2. How much time do you spend daily on social media?

170 responses



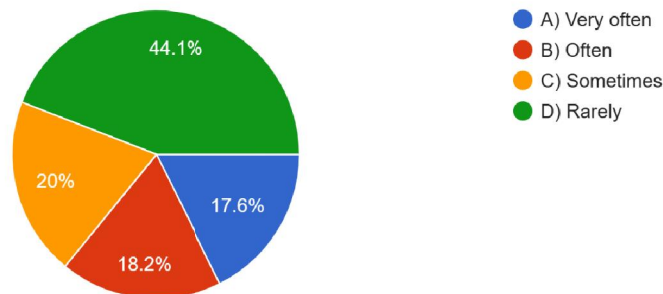
1. Which social media platform do you use the most?

170 responses



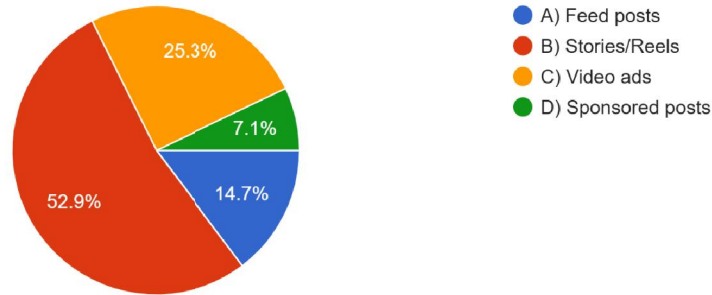
3. How often do you see advertisements on social media?

170 responses



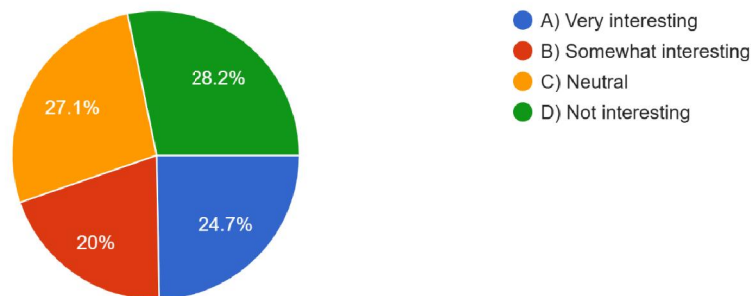
4. Where do you mostly notice advertisements?

170 responses



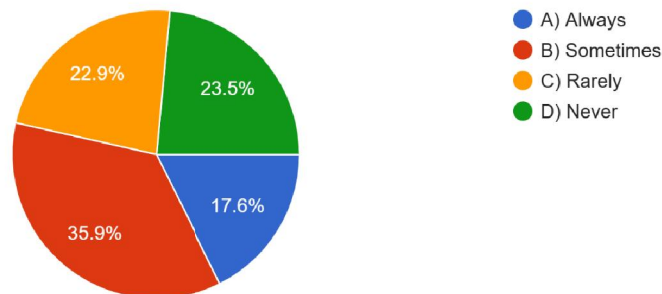
5. What is your general opinion about social media advertisements?

170 responses



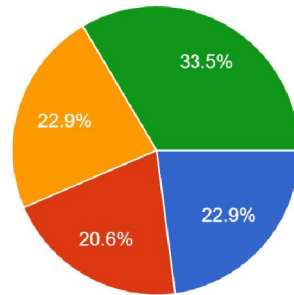
6. Do social media ads influence your purchase decisions?

170 responses



7. Have you ever purchased a product after seeing it on social media?

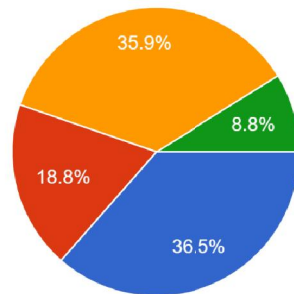
170 responses



- A) Yes, many times
- B) Yes, once or twice
- C) Rarely
- D) Never

8. Which type of advertisement attracts you the most?

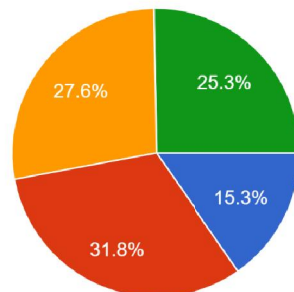
170 responses



- A) Video ads
- B) Image ads
- C) Influencer promotions
- D) Sponsored content

9. What makes you pay attention to a social media ad?

170 responses

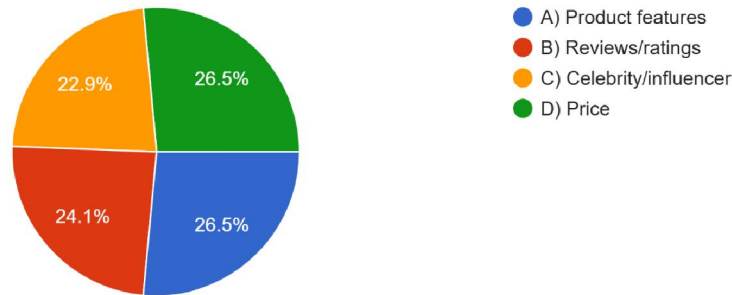


- A) Attractive visuals
- B) Discounts/offers
- C) Brand popularity
- D) Creativity



10. Which factor influences you the most while watching ads?

170 responses



Explanation of All Data:

The above data analysis is based on responses collected from 170 college students regarding social media usage and advertising effectiveness. The majority of students (76.5%) prefer Instagram, making it the most popular platform. Most respondents spend 1–2 hours daily on social media, indicating moderate usage. Advertisements are frequently noticed, with many students encountering them regularly during browsing.

A significant number of students (52.9%) notice ads mainly through stories and reels, showing the effectiveness of short-form content. Opinions about social media ads are mixed, with some finding them interesting while others remain neutral or uninterested. Social media ads influence purchase decisions for many students, though not always consistently.

Video ads and influencer promotions are the most attractive formats, highlighting the importance of engaging and relatable content. Discounts and offers play a major role in grabbing attention, followed by brand popularity and creativity. Additionally, factors like product features and price strongly influence students while watching ads. Overall, the findings indicate that social media advertising has a noticeable impact on student behavior and buying decisions.

V. FINDINGS

Findings of the Study

A majority of college students prefer Instagram as their primary social media platform.

Most students spend around 1–2 hours daily on social media, indicating regular engagement.

Students are frequently exposed to advertisements while using social media platforms.

Advertisements are mostly noticed through stories and reels, making them the most effective ad placement.

Students have mixed opinions about social media ads, with many showing neutral or moderate interest.

Social media advertisements influence the purchase decisions of students to some extent.

A considerable number of students have purchased products after seeing them on social media.

Video advertisements and influencer promotions are the most attractive formats for students.

Discounts, offers, and creativity are the key factors that grab students' attention.

Product features, price, and reviews significantly influence students while making purchase decisions

VI. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social media advertising plays a significant role in influencing the behavior and purchasing decisions of college students. Platforms like Instagram have emerged as the most preferred medium, making them



highly effective for advertisers targeting youth. Students spend a considerable amount of time on social media, which increases their exposure to various forms of advertisements.

The findings reveal that advertisements in the form of stories, reels, videos, and influencer promotions are more engaging and impactful. While students have mixed opinions about advertisements, many are influenced by attractive visuals, discounts, and creative content. Additionally, factors such as product features, price, and reviews play an important role in shaping their purchase decisions.

Overall, social media advertising is an effective marketing tool for reaching college students. However, for better results, advertisers should focus on creating relevant, trustworthy, and engaging content that aligns with students' preferences and interests.

SUGGESTIONS

Advertisers should focus more on platforms like Instagram to effectively reach college students.

Use short-form content such as reels, stories, and video ads to increase engagement.

Create visually attractive and creative advertisements to capture students' attention.

Provide discounts, offers, and promotional deals to influence purchasing decisions.

Collaborate with influencers to build trust and connect with the youth audience.

Ensure advertisements are relevant and personalized based on students' interests.

Maintain transparency and authenticity to improve trust in advertisements.

Focus on clear product information such as features, price, and reviews.

Avoid excessive or repetitive ads to prevent irritation among users.

Continuously update strategies according to changing social media trends.

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