

A Study on Ad Impact on Sustainability: Comparison of Instagram Ads vs. Traditional Advertising for Beauty Brands

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Abstract

This study is based on the effectiveness of Advertisements especially for Beauty Brands. There is a shift from millennials to Gen Z in the consumer, and this shift has made Instagram Ads more popular and highly rated. As we know, in India, as per the 2025 reports, the number of Indian Instagram users comprises 19.6% of the platform's total user base, which has a count of 395 million users. Here in this study, we are going to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the Instagram Ads over the Traditional Ads. A survey method was used to collect data from social media users. The findings indicate that visually appealing Instagram advertisements and influencer endorsements significantly impact the consumer's buying behavior. The study concludes that Instagram is an effective platform for promoting the business. It also suggests Instagram beauty marketing over other traditional beauty marketing.

Keywords

Instagram Ads, Traditional Ads, Purchase Intention, Beauty Care Products, Social Media Marketing, Influencer Marketing.

Introduction

In today's world the fast growing technology has changed the face of marketing. This transformation has been driven by shifting consumer expectations, technological advancements, and increasing awareness of social and environmental issues. Initially the focus was on aesthetics and personal development, but now the industry is flooding with conversations about sustainability, ethical consumption and social responsibility. Nowadays consumers are expecting greater transparency and accountability from brands that are particularly involved in beauty or skin care products that rely heavily on chemical formulations and their packaging. In this context advertising directly has an impact on consumers in shaping perceptions, influencing purchasing decisions, and increasingly, communicating sustainability commitments. Instagram, with its emphasis on visual storytelling, influencer culture, and user-generated content, allows beauty brands to present sustainability narratives in a more resonant way. From showcasing eco-friendly packaging and cruelty-free certifications to promoting refillable products and ethical sourcing practices, brands leverage Instagram's features—such as stories, reels, and sponsored posts—to communicate sustainability in a manner that resonates with digitally savvy audiences. Moreover, the platform's algorithm-driven targeting capabilities enable brands to reach specific consumer segments, thereby enhancing the relevance and impact of sustainability messaging.

On the other hand, traditional advertising continues to play a significant role in framing consumer perceptions, particularly among broader and more diverse audiences. Television commercials, magazine advertisements, and outdoor campaigns offer high visibility and credibility, often perceived as more authoritative due to their association with established media institutions. For beauty brands, traditional advertising provides an opportunity to deliver polished and consistent sustainability messages at scale. However, the one-way nature of these channels limits audience interaction and feedback, potentially reducing the depth of consumer engagement with sustainability narratives.

The comparative analysis of Instagram ads and traditional advertising is therefore very important in understanding how different media channels influence the communication and perception of sustainability in the beauty industry. Each medium reflects distinct characteristics that shape the way sustainability messages are delivered and received. Instagram ads are typically more dynamic, interactive, and integrated into users' daily digital experiences, allowing for storytelling that

evolves over time. Traditional advertisements, while less interactive, benefit from their perceived legitimacy and ability to reach mass audiences. The effectiveness of these approaches depends on various factors, including message clarity, visual appeal, credibility, and alignment with consumer values. Generally looking into the current demographics Instagram ads play a vital role in the market as the targeting is done very specifically with high frequency online.

This research intends to investigate how different advertising mediums affect the communication and perception of sustainability within the beauty sector by contrasting Instagram advertisements with traditional promotional methods. More specifically, it aims to assess how each medium impacts consumer awareness, attitudes, and purchasing decisions concerning sustainable beauty products. Additionally, it seeks to pinpoint the advantages and drawbacks of each method in delivering genuine and impactful sustainability messages. By examining the relationship between media traits, consumer behavior, and sustainability communication, this study enhances the understanding of how advertising can either facilitate or obstruct the shift towards more sustainable consumption habits.

Objectives of The Study

1. To study and compare consumer perception of Brand Sustainability across Instagram Advertisements and Traditional Advertisements.
2. To evaluate the impact of both Instagram and Traditional Advertisements on the purchase intentions of the customers.
3. To compare the efficacy of short form video formats over traditional print imagery in communicating brand claims

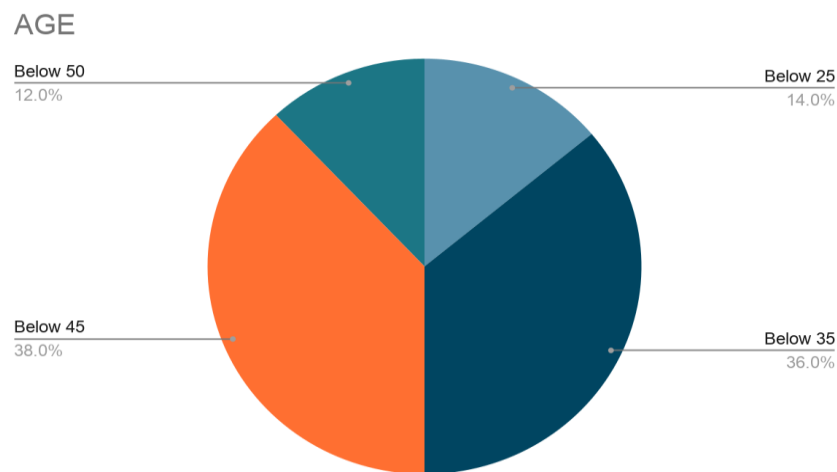
Research Methodology

This study follows a descriptive research design to explore the overall effectiveness of Instagram advertisements over traditional advertisements which supports overall sustainability.

A total of 100 random people who have started earning were selected as respondents for this survey. A Questionnaire method was used for collecting the data. Data collected were analyzed using percentage analysis.

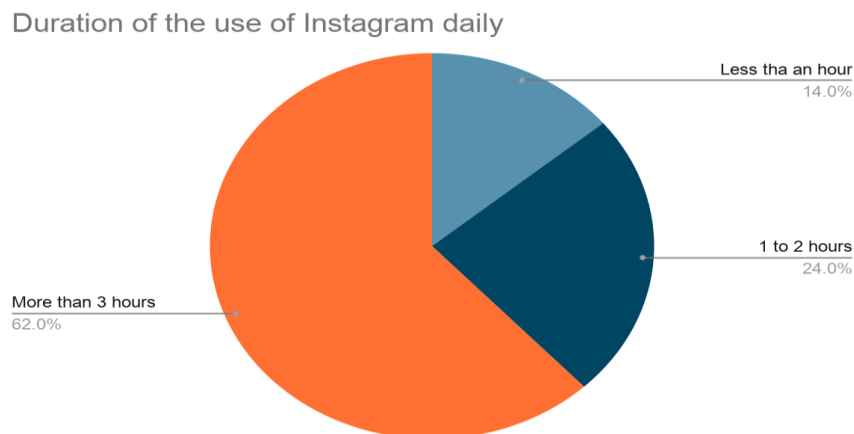
Data Analysis-

1. What is your age?



So in my study I have focused around all the age groups. While majority of the respondents are ranging from the age gap of 25 to 45 years age.

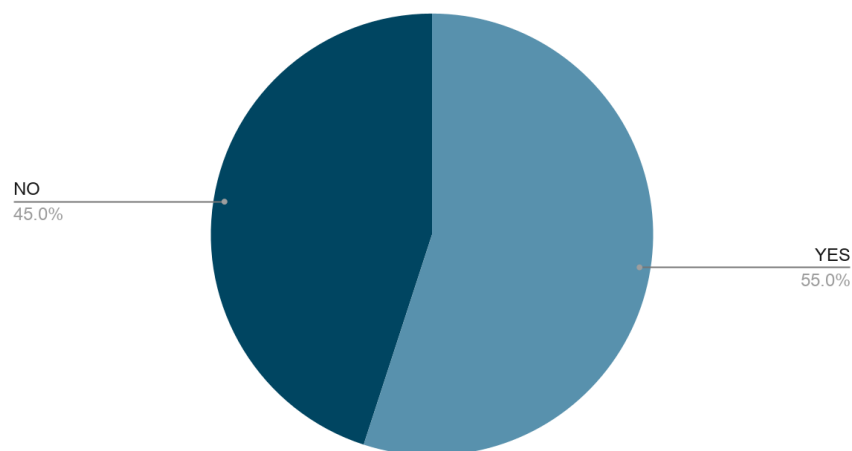
2. How long do you use Instagram?



So, out of 18+ million users of Instagram in Mumbai we can see that the maximum of them are spending more than 3 hours a day on Instagram. This actually is a benefit for the market to post their advertisements to reach their direct target audience, which is more impactful than normal printed pamphlets.

3. Do you remember the last printed advertisement that you have seen?

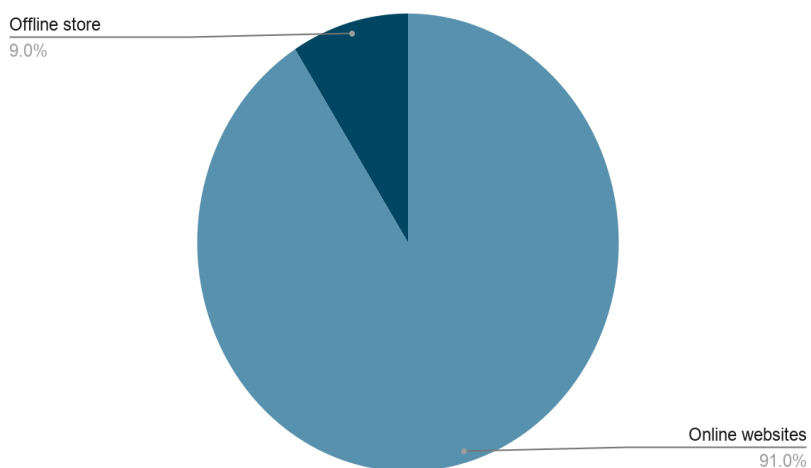
Last seen Printed Advertisements



While we can see that most of the people remember some prominent Offline Advertisements of brands like 7Up, Maaza, Amul or some Real Estate Ads, these were not supported with further actions.

4. When it comes to purchasing beauty products, where do you search?

Purchasing Platform



So from the above responses we can see how confidently people rely on Online Platforms.

Conclusions-

The findings of this study demonstrate a profound structural transition in consumer behavior and advertising efficacy within the Mumbai market, demonstrating the clear dominance of digital platforms over traditional print media. While traditional advertising—such as printed pamphlets and iconic offline billboards (e.g., Amul, Maaza)—maintains a strong psychological foothold in terms of high brand recall, it suffers from a core functional deficiency: a lack of immediate, measurable consumer action. Offline media builds superficial familiarity but fails to provide a direct bridge to sales in action or deeper engagement.

Conversely, Instagram serves as a highly impactful channel for beauty brands, particularly among the economically dominant 25-to-45 age demographic. Driven by intense daily engagement patterns spending more hours per day, Instagram ads successfully convert passive viewing into active consumer behavior. Ultimately, this study concludes that while traditional media remains effective for broad, nostalgic brand retention, digital advertising on Instagram provides marketers with a highly concentrated, time-efficient, and actionable environment to successfully reach and convert their target audience.

Suggestions-

1. Implement high visibility and custom QR codes on Pamphlets for marketing purposes.
2. Use Instagram's Product tagging and Link in bio strategies for engaging the customers.
3. Beauty brands should use Instagram Reels to tell storytelling-driven, memorable brand narratives. This combines the long-term memorability of traditional ads with the instant actionability of digital media.

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