

**“Impact and effectiveness of social media advertisement
on working class buying behaviour”**

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1. ABSTRACT

Social media has fundamentally reshaped modern marketing by offering interactive, personalized, and cost-efficient avenues for consumer engagement. Digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube now enable organizations to communicate with audiences instantly and more precisely than traditional media. Within this digital ecosystem, the working-class population forms an important yet largely understudied consumer group. Their buying patterns are influenced by budget-conscious decision-making, reliance on social networks for trust, and a preference for functional, practical purchases.

Although companies continue to allocate significant resources toward social media advertising, there remains a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding how factors such as advertising exposure, perceived value, and trust collectively shape the buying intentions of working-class consumers. This research aims to address this gap by examining both the direct and indirect impacts of social media advertising effectiveness on the buying behaviour of working-class individuals in Gujarat.

2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION ON THE STATE OF THE ART OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC

Introduction

Social media has significantly altered the dynamics of modern marketing, providing brands with highly tailored communication possibilities and clear, measurable indicators of advertising performance. Through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, organizations can engage directly with consumers in ways that are both cost-efficient and personalized. Among the broad spectrum of users active on these platforms, the working-class segment stands out as an important but insufficiently researched group—one that prioritizes affordability, practicality, and interpersonal trust when making purchasing decisions.

Globally, social media has progressed from being a simple promotional medium to becoming a strategic tool capable of shaping consumer attitudes and directly influencing purchase intentions. This shift underscores the importance of understanding how different consumer groups respond to digital advertising efforts.

Social Media Advertising in India

In India, investment in social media advertising continues to grow rapidly. The total spending on social media advertisements is expected to reach US\$1.76 billion in 2025. This market is projected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.90% between 2025 and 2030, eventually reaching approximately US\$2.95 billion by 2030. When compared at the global level, the United States remains the largest contributor to social media advertising, with an estimated spending of US\$103.07 billion in 2025.

In the Indian market, a large share of advertising expenditure—around 83.4% by 2030—is expected to come from mobile devices, highlighting the growing dependence on smartphones for digital consumption. Alongside this, the number of social media users in India is forecasted to reach 1.13 billion by 2030, making it one of the world's largest online audiences.

The steady rise in internet accessibility and smartphone usage in India has significantly increased the impact and reach of social media advertisements. As connectivity improves across urban and

rural areas, brands can communicate with consumers more efficiently and target them with greater precision.

Definition

Social media advertising refers to a digital marketing approach where organizations use paid promotional content—such as banner ads, short videos, sponsored posts, and targeted campaigns—on social media platforms to reach specific audiences. These advertisements help marketers promote their products, services, or brands and aim to increase awareness, engagement, and purchase intention.

Rationale -Working-Class Consumers

Working-class consumers often exhibit distinctive buying behaviours, including heightened price consciousness, dependence on peer recommendations, and generally lower involvement in extended decision-making processes. These characteristics make them a unique audience when evaluating the effectiveness of social media advertising. Understanding how their behavioural tendencies interact with elements such as advertisement exposure, perceived usefulness, and overall ad value can help marketers design more relevant and impactful communication strategies. Such insights are essential for businesses seeking to optimize their digital advertising efforts and engage this large and influential consumer segment more effectively.

However, there is still limited research on how this segment responds to social media advertisements. Specifically, there is insufficient evidence on how factors such as advertising exposure, perceived advertising value, and trust interact to shape their final buying behaviour.

This study aims to bridge this gap by examining both the direct and indirect effects of social media advertising on the purchasing patterns of working-class consumers in Gujarat.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the rapid growth of social media advertising and the substantial investments made by businesses, its actual impact on the buying behaviour of working-class consumers remains unclear. While this segment forms a large and influential portion of India's consumer base, very few studies have examined how they respond to digital advertisements. The psychological process through which advertisement exposure leads to changes in perception, trust, and purchase intention is still not well understood. It remains uncertain whether working-class individuals perceive social media advertisements as sufficiently credible, informative, or entertaining to influence their purchase decisions. Furthermore, the role of trust in shaping their responses to online advertisements has not been adequately explored. Demographic factors such as income, occupation, and education may also affect how these consumers interpret and react to social media ads, yet existing research provides limited evidence on these relationships. As organizations continue shifting from traditional to digital marketing methods, a clear understanding of whether social media advertising effectively drives purchasing behaviour among working-class consumers is still lacking. This study seeks to address these gaps and provide a clearer explanation of how social media advertising influences this important consumer segment.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on social media advertising and consumer behaviour has evolved significantly over the past three decades. The following section presents a systematic review of key theoretical models and empirical studies relevant to understanding how social media influences consumer perceptions and buying behaviour, with particular reference to working-class consumers.

3.1 Foundational Theories on Advertising Value and Consumer Motivation

Perceived Advertising Value (Ducoffe, 1995)

Ducoffe's (1995) model is one of the earliest frameworks explaining how consumers evaluate online advertisements. He argued that informativeness, entertainment, and credibility collectively shape the perceived value of an advertisement. Informative ads encourage rational evaluation, while entertaining content appeals to emotions and enhances user engagement. Credibility strengthens trust and increases the likelihood that consumers will respond positively. Later research expanded this model to social media, showing that attention, emotional cues, social proof mechanisms (likes, shares, comments), and reduced search effort all contribute to stronger purchase intentions—particularly relevant for working-class consumers seeking convenience and clarity.

Uses and Gratifications Theory (Dunne, Lawlor & Rowley, 2010)

Dunne et al. (2010) used the Uses and Gratifications Theory to examine why individuals engage with social networking platforms. Their study revealed that social media satisfies needs such as self-expression, identity building, and social connection. The interactive and impersonal nature of these platforms allows users to explore their identities and maintain relationships in a controlled environment. Understanding these motivations is critical because they influence how consumers interpret and respond to advertising content.

3.2 Targeted Advertising and Influencer-Based Models

Influencer Roles in Digital Advertising (Wright & Khanfar, 2010)

Wright and Khanfar (2010) highlighted the shift from mass advertising to personalized digital marketing. They emphasized three influential user categories—connectors, mavens, and salespeople—who help spread information effectively within online social networks. The authors concluded that strategic engagement with these influencers enhances message amplification, encourages trust, and leads to more efficient marketing outcomes compared to traditional channels.

3.3 Media Richness, Trust, and Online Consumer Interactions

Media Richness and Content Quality (Pollach, 2008)

Pollach (2008) studied consumer-opinion websites and highlighted the importance of content quality, user participation, and trustworthiness. Her findings suggest that platforms must balance informational depth (reviews, comparisons) with social interaction features to remain credible. The study underscores that balanced, authentic reviews significantly shape consumer impressions—an insight relevant to how social media ads influence working-class consumers who rely heavily on trust signals.

3.4 Shift from Traditional to Digital Advertising

Changing Consumer Media Habits (Lempert, 2006)

Lempert (2006) noted that consumers increasingly avoid traditional media such as TV, radio, and print advertisements. Instead, they prefer digital platforms where they can access information on demand. He observed that consumers are turning to social media to research products and make informed purchasing decisions, indicating a fundamental change in information-seeking behaviour.

3.5 Empirical Studies on Social Media as a Marketing Tool

Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing (Bashar, Ahmad & Wasiq, 2012)

Bashar et al. (2012) examined social media's role as a marketing tool in India. Their findings revealed that social media, although still developing, has significant potential for growth. They emphasized the need for companies to adopt strategic digital marketing practices to capture emerging opportunities.

Consumer Perception of Social Media Advertising (Yadav & Rahman, 2012)

Yadav and Rahman (2012) developed a scale to measure consumer perception of social media marketing in the e-commerce sector. Their study emphasized that social networking platforms serve not only as communication tools but also as effective advertising channels capable of reaching prospective customers in meaningful ways.

3.6 Consumer Behaviour and Social Media Engagement

Social Media Use among Marketers and Consumers (Vij & Sharma, 2013)

Vij and Sharma (2013) studied social media behaviour among consumers and marketers. They concluded that effective social media marketing must be informative, interactive, interesting, and reliable. Their findings highlight the need for marketers to adapt to changing consumer expectations.

Demographic Influences on Social Media Behaviour (Chaturvedi et al., 2014)

Chaturvedi and colleagues (2014) highlighted the widespread adoption of social media, noting over one billion global users. Their study found that consumer behaviour on social networks is shaped by demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and education, all of which contribute to differences in online purchasing patterns.

Consumer Response to Online vs. Traditional Ads (Afzal et al., 2015)

Afzal et al. (2015) compared the impact of online and traditional advertising on branded garment purchases. Their results showed that advertisement quality, brand loyalty, design features, and past experiences strongly influence consumer buying behaviour.

3.7 Influence of Social Media Advertising on Purchase Decisions

Impact on Buying Decisions (Satish Kumar & Hari Krishna, 2017)

Satish Kumar and Hari Krishna (2017) found that social media significantly influences consumer buying decisions. Their research revealed that consumers perceive social media advertising as more **interactive**, **creative**, and **informative** than traditional advertising, making it highly effective for brand promotion.

Effectiveness of Social Media Advertising Content (Lakshmanan & Basariya, 2017)

Lakshmanan and Basariya (2017) reported that the effectiveness of social media advertising depends heavily on message quality, company involvement, and integration with other marketing tools. They also noted that although younger generations are frequent social media users, they may not always be the primary targets of digital campaigns.

Social Media and Decision-Making (Prasath & Yoganathen, 2018)

Prasath and Yoganathen (2018) examined the relationship between social media marketing and the consumer decision-making process. They found a positive, statistically significant link, suggesting that social media strongly influences each stage of consumer decision-making.

Influence of Discounts and Influencers (Varghese & Agrawal, 2021)

Varghese and Agrawal (2021) observed that consumers influenced by social media tend to make more frequent purchases and are driven by promotional offers and influencer recommendations. Their findings indicate that social media enhances brand awareness and increases purchasing likelihood.

Frequency of Ads and Gender Differences (Samrin Sulaiman & Sreeya, 2022)

Sulaiman and Sreeya (2022) found that women encounter more advertisements on social media compared to men and tend to trust influencer-endorsed products more. Their study highlights the importance of targeted advertising, discounts, and promotional strategies in shaping consumer responses.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the influence of social media advertising exposure frequency on the perceived value of advertisements among working-class consumers.

This objective seeks to investigate how the **frequency of exposure** to social media advertisements shapes consumers' evaluation of advertising value. It examines whether repeated encounters with digital advertisements enhance perceptions regarding their informativeness, entertainment, relevance, and overall utility, particularly within the working-class demographic.

2. To examine the relationship between time spent on social media and perceived trustworthiness of ads.

This objective aims to determine whether the **duration of social media usage** influences consumers' perceptions of the credibility and reliability of advertisements. It explores how prolonged engagement with social media environments affects trust judgments toward the promotional content encountered on these platforms.

3. To assess the mediating role of perceived value between ad effectiveness and buying behaviour.

This objective evaluates whether **perceived advertising value** functions as a **mediating mechanism** through which advertisement effectiveness translates into consumer buying behaviour. It seeks to clarify whether consumers' assessments of an advertisement's value explain how and why effective advertisements lead to purchase intentions.

4. To determine whether trustworthiness moderates the relationship between perceived value and buying behaviour.

This objective examines whether **trustworthiness** serves as a **moderating variable** that alters the strength or direction of the relationship between perceived advertising value and consumers' buying behaviour. It explores whether higher levels of trust enhance or diminish the influence of perceived value on purchase intentions.

5. To explore demographic differences (income, occupation, education) in social media-influenced buying behaviour.

This objective aims to identify whether variations in **demographic characteristics**—such as income level, educational attainment, and occupational category—lead to significant differences in how social media advertising influences consumer buying behaviour. Understanding these differences will help determine which demographic groups are more responsive to digital advertising stimuli.

5. SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The scope of this research defines the boundaries within which the study was conducted and clarifies the extent of the subject matter covered. This study focuses specifically on examining the **impact and effectiveness of social media advertising on the buying behaviour of working-class consumers**. The research covers three key dimensions of social media advertising—**exposure, trustworthiness, and advertising effectiveness**—and their individual as well as combined influence on **purchase intention and buying behaviour**.

The study includes consumers belonging to the working-class segment who actively use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and others. The research is limited to measuring how frequently these consumers are exposed to advertisements, how trustworthy they perceive the advertisements to be, and how effective they find them in terms of informativeness, entertainment, credibility, and relevance. Further, the study also investigates how **perceived advertising value** mediates the relationship between exposure and buying behaviour, and how **trustworthiness** moderates this relationship.

Geographically, the scope is confined to the selected region where the data was collected, and the findings reflect the behavioural patterns of working-class individuals in that specific context. The study incorporates demographic parameters such as age, gender, education level, and income group to understand variations in advertising responses within the working-class segment.

The scope does not extend to other consumer classes such as students, business owners, or senior citizens. It also excludes traditional advertising forms and focuses solely on digital and social media advertising. The study is analytical and descriptive in nature, aiming to provide insights

for marketers, brand strategists, and businesses targeting working-class consumers through social media platforms.

6. ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE THESIS

This thesis makes a distinct and meaningful contribution to the field of social media advertising by focusing specifically on the buying behaviour of working-class consumers, a segment that remains largely understudied despite its economic significance. The study advances theoretical understanding by demonstrating that advertising effectiveness—measured through informativeness, credibility, entertainment, and relevance—is a far stronger driver of buying behaviour than exposure or trust alone, challenging existing assumptions in digital marketing research. It further contributes new insights by establishing the mediating role of perceived advertising value between exposure and purchase behaviour and by identifying the moderating role of trust in strengthening or weakening this relationship. The empirical findings also provide fresh evidence on how demographic factors shape advertising responses, highlighting the distinct expectations and decision patterns of working-class users, who tend to value clarity, credibility, and relevance over entertainment. From a practical perspective, the research provides actionable implications for marketers and businesses by showing how to craft more effective, trustworthy, and user-relevant social media advertisements for this consumer segment. Additionally, the study contributes to public policy discussions by underscoring the importance of ethical, transparent, and credible advertising practices to safeguard the interests of working-class consumers in the digital environment. Overall, the thesis enriches existing literature with new theoretical pathways, innovations, and practical insights that collectively deepen the understanding of how social media advertising influences working-class buying behaviour.

7. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Hypotheses

The hypotheses presented in the table summarize the key assumptions guiding this study and outline the specific relationships being examined among social media usage, perceived value, trustworthiness, and buying behaviour. Each hypothesis tests whether particular behavioural, psychological, or demographic factors significantly influence how working-class consumers respond to social media advertising.

Hypothesis No.	Hypothesis Statement (H ₀)	Explanation
H ₀₁	There is no relationship between time spent on social media and the perceived value of advertisements.	Tests whether the amount of time spent on social media influences how consumers evaluate ad value (informativeness, entertainment, usefulness).
H ₀₂	There is no relationship between the number of social media platforms used and the perceived value of advertisements.	Examines whether using multiple platforms affects consumers' perception of advertisement value.
H ₀₃	There is no relationship between time spent on social media and perceived trustworthiness of ads and platforms.	Evaluates whether more time online leads to higher or lower perceived credibility of ads.
H ₀₄	There is no relationship between the number of social media platforms used and perceived trustworthiness of ads and platforms.	Tests whether using many platforms influences trust in advertisements and platforms.
H ₀₅	Perceived value does not mediate the relationship between advertising effectiveness and buying behaviour.	Checks whether perceived value acts as a bridge explaining how effective ads influence purchase decisions.
H ₀₆	Trustworthiness does not moderate the relationship between perceived value and buying behaviour.	Tests whether trust changes the strength of the link between perceived value and buying behaviour.
H ₀₇	There are no differences in social media-influenced buying behaviour across different age groups.	Examines whether age affects how consumers respond to social media advertising.
H ₀₈	There are no differences in social media-influenced buying behaviour across different education levels.	Assesses whether education impacts how consumers interpret or react to ads.
H ₀₉	There are no differences in social media-influenced buying behaviour across different income groups.	Tests whether income levels cause variations in advertising-driven purchase behaviour.
H ₀₁₀	There are no differences in social media-influenced buying behaviour across different occupation groups.	Evaluates whether occupation affects consumers' responsiveness to social media advertising.
H ₀₁₁	There are no differences in social media-influenced buying behaviour across different gender groups.	Examines whether gender affects how consumers respond to social media advertising.

Research Design

The present study adopts a **descriptive and analytical research design** to systematically examine how social media advertising influences the buying behaviour of working-class consumers in Gujarat. The descriptive component enables the researcher to map current patterns, attitudes, and behavioural tendencies related to social media usage, while the analytical component facilitates evaluating the relationships, mediating effects, moderating effects, and group differences among key variables. Together, these approaches support both explanation and empirical validation of the conceptual framework.

✓ **Research Type: Descriptive and Analytical**

The descriptive aspect focuses on capturing demographic profiles, advertising exposure patterns, perceived value, trustworthiness, and buying behaviour. The analytical component examines statistical relationships and causal pathways using advanced techniques such as mediation and moderation analysis, enabling a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying consumer responses to social media advertising.

✓ **Research Design: Cross-sectional Survey**

"A cross-sectional survey design was employed, wherein data were collected from respondents at a single point in time. This design was deemed suitable for understanding consumer behaviour, identifying associations among variables, and estimating population characteristics efficiently. It was widely used in consumer behaviour and advertising research due to its ability to capture perceptions and behavioural responses simultaneously.

✓ **Population: Working-class Social Media Users in Gujarat**

The target population for the study comprises **working-class individuals residing in Gujarat who actively use social media platforms**. This segment is selected due to its economic importance, increasing digital engagement, and limited representation in academic research. Working-class consumers often exhibit unique decision-making patterns influenced by affordability, trust, and peer opinions, making them a relevant group for examining social media advertising effectiveness.

✓ **Sample Size: 754 Respondents**

The final sample size consists of **754 valid responses**, exceeding the minimum required sample size of **384**, as per Cochran's sample size formula for large populations. A larger sample enhances statistical reliability, increases external validity, and improves the generalizability of findings across diverse working-class groups in Gujarat.

✓ **Sampling Technique: Non-probability Convenience Sampling**

The study utilizes **non-probability convenience sampling**, where respondents were selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate. This method is appropriate due to practical constraints and the nature of the population, as working-class social media users are often distributed across varied locations and work schedules. Although non-probability methods limit generalization to the entire population, a large sample size helps reduce sampling bias.

✓ **Instrument: Structured Questionnaire (5-point Likert Scale)**

Data is collected through a **structured questionnaire** designed using validated constructs from existing literature. The tool includes multiple sections assessing demographic variables, social media usage patterns, perceived advertising value, trustworthiness, ad effectiveness, and buying behaviour. A **5-point Likert scale** (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree) is used to measure attitudes and perceptions, allowing for consistent and quantifiable responses suitable for statistical analysis.

✓ **Instrument Validity**

To ensure that the research instrument accurately measured the intended constructs, a comprehensive validity assessment was carried out alongside the pilot study. Content validity was established through expert review, wherein academicians and researchers in the fields of marketing, consumer behaviour, and research methodology examined the questionnaire for relevance, clarity, and completeness. Their feedback ensured that each item appropriately represented the underlying theoretical constructs such as perceived value, trustworthiness, advertising effectiveness, and buying behaviour. Construct validity was supported by aligning the questionnaire items with established scales from prior empirical studies, ensuring theoretical coherence. Additionally, face validity was confirmed during the pilot test, as respondents reported that the items were clear, understandable, and reflective of real social media experiences. Together, these validation steps confirm that the instrument is both conceptually sound and suitable for measuring the variables under investigation.

✓ **Pilot Study**

A **pilot study** was conducted prior to the main data collection to ensure the reliability, clarity, and suitability of the research instrument. The pilot test involved **114 working-class social media users** from Gujarat, selected to closely resemble the characteristics of the target population. The primary objective of this pilot phase was to verify whether the structured questionnaire—consisting of items measuring perceived value, trustworthiness, ad effectiveness, and buying behaviour—exhibited acceptable levels of internal consistency and was easily understood by respondents.

During the pilot study, respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback on item clarity, wording, response options, and overall length. Their responses were then analyzed using reliability measures, particularly Cronbach's Alpha, to assess the internal consistency of each scale. The reliability coefficients for all constructs exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold ($\alpha \geq 0.70$), indicating that the questionnaire items were statistically reliable and could be used for the full-scale study.

The pilot study also helped identify minor issues related to question sequencing, redundant items, and phrasing ambiguities. Based on this feedback, necessary revisions were made to improve the readability and flow of the questionnaire. Thus, the pilot study played a critical role in validating the instrument and ensuring that the final version used for the main survey was both reliable and respondent-friendly.

✓ **Data Sources: Primary and Secondary**

- **Primary Data:** Collected through an online/offline survey administered to working-class social media users.
- **Secondary Data:** Sourced from academic journals, books, conference papers, reports, and digital marketing publications to support theoretical grounding and contextual understanding.
- **Statistical Tools Used**

A range of statistical techniques is applied to test hypotheses and examine relationships:

- **Chi-square Test:** Used to analyze associations between categorical demographic variables and buying behaviour.
- **Spearman Correlation:** Measures the strength and direction of relationships between ordinal variables such as time spent and perceived value.
- **Mediation Analysis:** Tests whether perceived value serves as a mediator between advertisement effectiveness and buying behaviour.
- **Moderation Analysis:** Evaluates whether trustworthiness impacts the relationship between perceived value and buying behaviour.
- **Kruskal-Wallis Test:** Assesses differences in buying behaviour across multiple demographic groups (age, income, education).
- **Mann-Whitney U Test:** Used for comparing differences between two demographic categories when applicable.

8. RESULT OF THE STUDY

Data analysis table with hypothesis testing

This chapter presents the statistical results based on the study objectives and hypotheses related to social media advertising effectiveness, perceived value, trustworthiness, and buying behavior among working-class consumers. The analysis incorporates chi-square tests, Mann–Whitney U tests, Kruskal–Wallis tests, mediation analysis, and moderation analysis.

✓ **Descriptive Statistics (Overview)**

- ✓ Sample consists of *working-class consumers* across diverse age, education, income, and occupation categories.
- ✓ Key variables studied:
 - Exposure: time spent on social media, number of platforms used
 - Perceived Advertising Value
 - Trustworthiness
 - Advertising Effectiveness
 - Buying Behavior / Purchase Intention

Hypothesis Testing Results

A structured summary of hypothesis testing is provided below.

Obj .	Hypothesis Code	Null Hypothesis (H ₀)	Test Used	Statistical Result	Decision	Interpretation
1	H1	No relationship between <i>time spent on social media</i> and <i>Perceived Value</i> .	Chi-Square	2 cells < 5; minimum expected = 1.11	Fail to Reject H ₀	Time spent does not significantly influence Perceived Value.
1	H2	No relationship between <i>number of platforms used</i> and <i>Perceived Value</i> .	Chi-Square	Expected counts issue present	Fail to Reject H ₀	Number of platforms used does not significantly impact Perceived Value.
2	H3	No relationship between <i>time spent</i> and <i>Trustworthiness</i> .	Chi-Square	Not significant	Fail to Reject H ₀	Time spent does not predict Trustworthiness.
2	H4	No relationship between <i>number of platforms</i> and <i>Trustworthiness</i> .	Chi-Square	Not significant	Fail to Reject H ₀	Number of platforms does not influence Trustworthiness levels.
3	H5	Perceived Value does not mediate between Ad Effectiveness → Purchase Intention.	Mediation (Indirect Effect Test)	p = 0.3583 (ns)	Fail to Reject H ₀	Perceived Value is not a mediator; Ad Effectiveness directly affects Purchase Intention.
4	H6	Trustworthiness does not moderate Perceived Value → Purchase Intention.	Moderation Analysis	p = 1.000 (ns)	Fail to Reject H ₀	Trustworthiness has no moderating effect; relationship remains same across trust levels.
5	H7	No difference in Buying Behavior across age groups.	Kruskal–Wallis / Chi-Square	Significant differences	Reject H ₀	Age influences buying behavior.
5	H8	No difference across education levels.	Kruskal–Wallis / Chi-Square	Significant differences	Reject H ₀	Education affects buying behavior.
5	H9	No gender difference in Buying Behavior.	Mann-Whitney U	Not significant	Fail to Reject H ₀	Gender does not affect purchase intention.
5	H10	No difference across income groups.	Kruskal–Wallis	Significant differences	Reject H ₀	Different income groups show different buying behavior.
5	H11	No difference across occupation groups.	Kruskal–Wallis	Significant differences	Reject H ₀	Occupation influences buying behavior.

(Source: Author's Own Compilation Based on SPSS Output)

9. ACHIEVEMENTS WITH RESPECT TO THE OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Influence of Social Media Exposure on Perceived Advertising Value (H1 & H2)

- No significant association was found between time spent on social media or the number of platforms used and perceived advertising value.
- Although expected count issues suggested small subgroup sizes, these did not affect the non-significant results.
Thus, Exposure alone does not enhance perceived advertising value among working-class consumers.

Objective 2: Relationship between Exposure and Trustworthiness (H3 & H4)

- Both hypotheses indicated no significant relationship between exposure (time spent or number of platforms) and perceived trustworthiness.
Here, Trustworthiness is not influenced by the extent of social media usage.

Objective 3: Mediating Role of Perceived Advertising Value (H5 – Mediation Analysis)

- The indirect effect was not significant ($p = .3583$).
- However, individual paths were significant:
 - Ad Effectiveness → Perceived Value
 - Perceived Value → Purchase Intention
- Despite significant individual paths, the overall mediation effect was not supported. That explains Perceived advertising value does not mediate the relationship between ad effectiveness and purchase intention. Ad effectiveness exerts a direct influence on purchase intention.

Objective 4: Moderating Role of Trustworthiness (H6 – Moderation Analysis)

- The interaction effect was not significant ($p = 1.000$), indicating no moderation.
Here, Trustworthiness does not strengthen or weaken the relationship between perceived value and purchase intention. This relationship remains stable regardless of trust levels.

Objective 5: Demographic Variations in Buying Behavior (H7–H11 – Kruskal–Wallis & Mann–Whitney Tests)

Demographic Variable	Result	Interpretation
Age	Significant	Buying behavior differs across age groups.
Education	Significant	Education level influences purchase intention.
Income	Significant	Income groups show varying buying tendencies.
Occupation	Significant	Occupation is an important differentiator.
Gender	Not significant	Gender does not affect buying behavior.

Thus, Demographic characteristics significantly shape buying behavior, except for gender, which shows no influence on social media–driven purchase decisions.

10. KEY FINDINGS -INTEGRATED SUMMARY

1. Exposure does not improve perceptions.

The study found that simply spending more time on social media or using a higher number of social media platforms does not automatically improve how users perceive advertisements.

- Perceived Advertising Value (informativeness, entertainment, credibility) remains largely unchanged regardless of exposure level.
- Trustworthiness of social media ads also does not increase with more usage.

This means that high exposure alone cannot guarantee positive perceptions. Users may see more ads, but this does not mean they value or trust them more.

2. Ad Effectiveness is the most powerful driver.

Among all variables, advertising effectiveness emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase intention.

- This includes how clear, persuasive, relevant, and well-designed the ad appears.
- Importantly, its influence is direct, meaning:
 - Ads that are effective immediately encourage buying intention,
 - even without requiring perceived value to act as a mediator.

In other words, a good ad works on its own. If an ad is creative, targeted, and compelling, people are more willing to buy—regardless of how much value they assign to it beforehand.

3. Trust is important but not decisive.

Trustworthiness of social media platforms and advertisements does play a role—

- It enhances users' perceptions of the ads.
- Users tend to view ads more positively when they trust the platform or brand.

However, trust does not influence the strength of the relationship between perceived advertising value and purchase intention.

- Meaning: Even if trust is high, it does not significantly strengthen the effect of perceived value on the decision to buy.

Thus, trust matters—but it is not the key determining factor in whether someone purchases a product after seeing an ad.

4. Demographic factors shape buying behavior.

The analysis showed significant variation in purchase intention based on:

- Age – younger groups respond differently from older groups.
- Income – higher income groups show higher intention for premium products.
- Education – education effects how deeply ads are evaluated.
- Occupation – working professionals and students respond differently.

These demographic characteristics influence how people process ads and whether they choose to buy.

However, Gender did not significantly influence purchase intention, meaning males and females respond similarly to social media advertisements.

11. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Prioritize Ad Quality, Clarity, and Persuasion Over Pure Entertainment

The results clearly indicate that high-quality, persuasive, and well-structured advertisements have a much stronger impact on purchase intention than ads that simply entertain.

- Marketers should focus on message clarity, ensuring that the product benefits and value propositions are easy to understand.
- Creative elements should support the message—not overshadow it.
- Persuasiveness through strong calls-to-action, credible claims, testimonials, or problem-solution formats is more influential than visual appeal alone.

In short: Make ads that convince, not just ads that look good.

2. Maintain Consistent Presence across Multiple Social Media Platforms

Although exposure alone did not significantly enhance perceived advertising value among working-class consumers, it remained influential in shaping brand recall. Consumers did not necessarily trust or value advertisements merely because they frequently used social media; however, repeated encounters with the same brand across multiple platforms strengthened brand familiarity. Consumers may not trust or value ads more just because they use social media frequently, but they remember brands they see everywhere.

- This suggests that cross-platform advertising helps reinforce brand familiarity, which indirectly supports conversion.
- Marketers should ensure that their brand appears across Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc. with cohesive messaging.

Multi-platform visibility is more important than trying to increase the user's time spent viewing ads.

3. Build Trust through Transparency—but Don't Rely on Trust Alone to Drive Sales

While trust enhances users' perception of an advertisement, it does not significantly boost the final decision to purchase. Therefore:

- Brands should maintain transparent communication, clear pricing, and honest claims to avoid damaging trust.
- Verified accounts, authentic user reviews, and security assurances help maintain credibility.
- However, marketers must remember that trust is a supporting factor, not the primary force leading to purchase.
- The effectiveness of the ad itself is still the strongest driver of buying intention.

Build a trustworthy image, but invest most resources into improving ad effectiveness.

4. Use Meaningful Demographic Segmentation Instead of Gender-Based Targeting

The findings show that gender does not significantly differentiate purchase intention, meaning male and female consumers respond similarly to social media ads. However, other demographic factors matter greatly:

- Age: Younger and older groups respond to different styles, messages, and platforms.
- Income: Higher-income groups prefer premium features, while lower-income segments need affordability messaging.
- Education: Highly educated users may require detailed, informative content.
- Occupation: Working professionals respond better to efficiency, utility, and time-saving features.

Thus, marketers should design campaigns that target needs, lifestyles, and purchasing capacity—not gender stereotypes.

Targeting should be smart, research-driven, and based on real behavioural differences.

12. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although this study provides valuable insights into the impact and effectiveness of social media advertising on working-class buying behaviour, it is subject to certain limitations. First, the research is geographically restricted to a Gujarat region, and therefore the findings may not fully represent working-class consumers in other cultural or economic contexts. The study relies on self-reported data, which may be influenced by respondent bias, memory limitations, or social desirability. Additionally, the study focuses only on selected social media platforms and does not include newer or emerging platforms that may shape consumer behaviour differently. The sample is limited to working-class consumers, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other consumer groups such as students, professionals, or business owners. Moreover, this study follows a cross-sectional design; therefore, it cannot measure changes in consumer behaviour over time or establish long-term causal relationships. Despite these limitations, the study still provides a strong foundation for understanding social media advertising effects within the working-class segment

13. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social media advertising effectiveness—characterized by clarity, relevance, creativity, and persuasive message delivery—is the strongest and most direct predictor of buying behavior among working-class consumers. Unlike commonly assumed, mere exposure to social media platforms or advertisements does *not* improve how users perceive ads, nor does it strengthen their intention to purchase. Similarly, while **trust** enhances general perceptions, it does not independently translate into higher purchase intention. This means that effective ad design and messaging remain the core factors determining whether consumers decide to buy.

Furthermore, the findings show that working-class consumers are not a single, uniform group. Their buying behaviour significantly differs based on age, income, education, and occupation, indicating that demographic characteristics meaningfully shape how advertisements are processed and acted upon. In contrast, gender does not create noticeable differences in how consumers respond to social media ads.

Overall, the results emphasize the importance of precision-driven marketing strategies. To influence purchase intention, brands and advertisers must focus on crafting high-quality, persuasive advertisements and customizing their campaigns according to demographic-driven preferences rather than relying on general exposure, broad trust-building efforts, or gender-based segmentation. This conclusion highlights the need for strategic, data-driven, and consumer-centric approaches in social media advertising to meaningfully engage and convert working-class audiences.

14. COPIES OF PAPERS PUBLISHED

1. **Gevariya, R. J., & Shah, Ajay.** (2023). Social media's influence on purchase intention: The roles of community and trust. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 29(3), 1536–1541. <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v29i3.10145>.
- 2.) Gevariya, Rinku. (2025). *Optimizing social media advertising: A systematic review and future directions*. **International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews (IJRAR)**, 12(2) (E-ISSN 2348-1269, P-ISSN 2349-5138) www.ijrar.org

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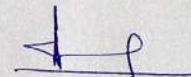
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