



# Social Media Advertising and Omani Consumer Behavior with Reference to Instagram

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**ABSTRACT:** Social media has become one of the most powerful tools shaping the way people interact with brands today and its ads have changed how companies talk to people all over the world. Websites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube are very important for advertising around the world. They help brands connect with consumers directly and interactively. Social media advertising plays a strategic role in modern marketing. It helps brands build trust, increase visibility, engage with consumers and provide both useful and entertaining content at a relatively low cost. In Oman, the move to digital technology is very important and Instagram has become one of the most powerful platforms for influencing what people buy especially young people. The proposed model offers a foundation for future research and practical guidance for marketers seeking to improve their digital advertising strategies. The study focused on finding out social media advertising with reference to Instagram and how the customer exposure to it influence their buying behavior. 102 customers responded to the quantitative survey which was conducted using a structured questionnaire. The data were tabulated and presented using tables and figures and analyzed using the descriptive statistical tools. The survey findings reveal that the social media advertising with reference to Instagram influence Omani buying behavior.

**KEYWORDS:** Social media, advertising, consumer behavior, Instagram

## I. INTRODUCTION

Facebook keeps up the biggest share at 35 percent, taken after by Instagram at 25 percent, illustrating its continued impact as a visual promoting stage. TikTok captures 15 percent of the market, reflecting the quick rise of short-form video advertising, whereas YouTube holds 13 percent, emphasizing its quality in long-form content. LinkedIn represents 7 percent, primarily due to its focus on professional audiences, and other smaller platforms collectively account for 5 percent. These figures highlight that Instagram remains a dominant force in digital marketing, offering high engagement rates and visual appeal that significantly influence consumer decisions globally.

Table 1 Social Media User Growth – Worldwide (2015–2025)

Year	Users (millions)
2015	2300
2016	2600
2017	2900
2018	3300
2019	3700
2020	4100
2021	4400
2022	4700
2023	4900
2024	5100
2025	5300

Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/>

Table 1 shows that social media, in terms of its user growth, has grown globally by almost 150 percent in the last decade from 2300 million to 5300 million.

**Table 2 Social media Users growth in Asia (2015-2025)**

Year	Users (Millions)
2015	1200
2016	1350
2017	1500
2018	1700
2019	1900
2020	2100
2021	2300
2022	2500
2023	2650
2024	2800
2025	2900

Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/282358/number-of-social-network-users-in-asia/>

Table 2 shows that, by 2020, Asia had 2.1 billion users, which was an increase of almost 75 percent in just five years. This increase shows how quickly countries in Asia, like China, India, Indonesia, and others in Southeast Asia, are going digital. Social media has become a key part of how people communicate, have fun, and do business. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WeChat, TikTok, and Twitter have become key for how people connect, share, and enjoy content. From 2021 to 2025, growth kept happening, but it was a bit slower because the market was getting full in some busy areas. Asia is growing quickly in internet users, going from 1.2 billion in 2015 to 2.9 billion by 2025. This shows how important Asia is in shaping the future of global online connections.

Company profile: Table 3 highlights the user growth of Instagram worldwide that ranges from 2015 to 2025. With 400 million clients in 2015, the stage experienced huge energy driven by influencer culture, brand selection, and quick integration of video substance. By 2020, the client base outperformed 1.3 billion, impacted by shifts toward advanced ways of life and expanded request for social media engagement. Development remains solid a while later, although it continuously levels out between 2023 and 2025 as Instagram approaches critical infiltration of the worldwide web populace.

**Table 3 Instagram User Growth Worldwide (2015–2025)**

Year	Users (Millions)
2015	400
2016	550
2017	700
2018	900
2019	1100
2020	1300
2021	1500
2022	1600
2023	1680
2024	1720
2025	1740

Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/253577/number-of-monthly-active-instagram-users/>

This stabilization recommends that Instagram has entered a develop development stage, where maintenance, personalization, and stage advancement ended up the essential drivers. By 2025, worldwide clients are anticipated to reach 1.74 billion, affirming Instagram part as a central stage for commerce, amusement, social communication, and social impact around the world.

**Table 4 Instagram User Growth in Asia (2015–2025)**

Year	Users (Millions)
2015	150
2016	250
2017	400
2018	550
2019	700
2020	820
2021	900
2022	950
2023	1000
2024	1050
2025	1080

Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1078163/instagram-users-asia/>

Table 4 illustrates the exceptional development of Instagram utilization over Asia over the past decade. Starting with 150 million clients in 2015, the stage experienced ceaseless and fast development, fueled by broad smartphone appropriation, reasonable versatile information plans, and expanding social dependence on computerized communication. By 2020, Instagram had crossed the 820 million client stamp, reflecting quickened engagement amid worldwide digitalization. From 2022 forward, the development rate remains solid however continuously stabilizing, signaling a developing advertise as the stage comes to immersion in major urban centers. Be that as it may, rising locales, made strides network, and advancing substance patterns proceed driving extension. By 2025, Instagram is anticipated to realize 1.08 billion clients over Asia, cementing the locale as a prevailing drive in worldwide advanced impact, online commerce, and substance creation patterns.

**Volume 15, Issue 2, February 2026****|DOI: 10.15680/IJRSET.2026.1502037|****Table 5 Instagram Users growth in Oman (2015-2025)**

<b>Years</b>	<b>User (millions)</b>
2015	0.5
2016	0.8
2017	1.1
2018	1.4
2019	1.7
2020	2.0
2021	2.2
2022	2.3
2023	2.4
2024	2.5
2025	2.5

Source: <https://stats.napoleoncat.com/instagram-users-in-oman/>

Table 5 shows how the number of Instagram users in Oman has grown quickly over ten years, from 2015 to 2025. They illustrate how social media has changed how people in the Sultanate communicate, especially with Instagram becoming a leading platform for social interaction, promoting businesses, and engaging online. In 2015, the platform had only 0.5 million users, which was a small number because the Omani market was just starting to get familiar with social media focused on pictures. As smartphones became cheaper, mobile internet improved, and younger people changed how they use digital technology, more and more people started using Instagram. By 2018, the number of users grew to 1.4 million, which was three times more. This shows that the platform became popular not just for people wanting to share their thoughts but also for businesses and influencers using it for marketing and promoting their brands. From 2019 to 2021, the number of users increased and went over 2 million. This shows that the platform has become an important digital tool in Oman for social and business activities. Starting in 2022, growth started to level off, meaning the market was getting more stable since many people had already started using the platform. However, the number of users kept going up slowly, reaching 2.5 million by 2025, which is five times more than in 2015.

**Need for the study:** The need of the study is to understand how Instagram ads influence Omani buyer behavior. It looks at how trust, recognition of brands, and the usefulness of ads on social media affect the buying behavior of Instagram users in Oman. An understanding of how these factors work helps marketers create better marketing campaigns that develop loyalty and lasting customer relationships.

**Research Questions:**

1. How does trust in the brands advertised on Instagram influence Omani consumer behavior?
2. How does brand awareness in the brands advertised on Instagram influence Omani consumer behavior?
3. How does perceived usefulness in the brands advertised on Instagram influence Omani consumer behavior?
4. How is the interest level of the Instagram users to buy the products advertised on Instagram?
5. How is the willingness rate of the Instagram users to buy the products advertised on Instagram?
6. How is the perceived ability of the Instagram users to buy the products advertised on Instagram?
7. How does social media advertising affect Omani consumer behavior on Instagram?

**Research Objectives:**

1. To find out the effect of trust in the brands advertised on Instagram on Omani consumer behavior.
2. To find out the effect of brand awareness in the brands advertised on Instagram on Omani consumer behavior.
3. To find out how the perceived usefulness of the brands advertised on Instagram influences Omani consumer behavior.
4. To find out the interest level of the Instagram users to buy the products advertised on Instagram
5. To find out the willingness rate of the Instagram users to buy the products advertised on Instagram
6. To find out the perceived ability of the Instagram users to buy the products advertised on Instagram
7. To find out the impact of social media advertising on Omani consumer behavior on Instagram.

Scope of The Study: This research surveys Omani youth aged between 18 and 35 years who use Instagram frequently. The study is conducted in Muscat, where digital ads are very common. The data were collected from October 2025 to December 2025 using simple questionnaires given to people who use Instagram.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the existing works gives a clear picture about social media communications, especially the paid ones called social media advertising, and its impact on consumer behavior. Social media promoting has ended up an imperative showcasing device that makes a difference companies reach a wide gathering of people in a brief time through outwardly engaging and intuitively substance. Among distinctive social media stages, Instagram plays a noteworthy part in affecting consumers states of mind and obtaining choices through its visual-based highlights and influencer collaborations. It permits businesses to advance their items, construct brand mindfulness, and make enthusiastic associations with customers. Past ponderers have appeared that the validity of influencers, the allure of promotions, and the level of engagement on Instagram specifically influence consumers believe and buying eagerly (Theocharis, 2025). Thus, social media promoting not as it were upgrades brand perceivability but too shapes shopper recognitions and behavior within the advanced commercial center.

Social media advertising and consumer behavior: Kothari et al. (2025) focus on the impact of social media advertising, highlighting the critical roles of credibility, perceived authenticity, and sustainability. Likewise, Kumaradeepan (2020) provides a conceptual framework for understanding social media advertising's effect on consumer buying behavior. Xiao (2025) investigates the impact of social media advertising within the fast-fashion industry, testing specific factors like entertainment, familiarity, social imaging, and advertisement spending. Another study in the same line was from Kothari et al. (2025) that reveals how different measurements of social media promoting impact buyer states of mind, believe, fulfillment, and buy eagerly inside the advanced computerized showcasing environment. The studies of Vijayakumar et al. (2025) affirm that in today's competitive and information-rich social media scene, the victory of promoting campaigns depends not only on perceivability or reach but on the brand capacity to communicate genuineness, realness, and social obligation.

Conceptual and theoretical studies on social media advertising: Social media has transformed marketing from traditional, one-directional methods to more participatory and engaging approaches (Deng, 2025). This transformation has greatly influenced consumer making decision processes. People are now more affected by peer opinions, online communities and interactive advertisements than by conventional advertising alone. Kumaradeepan (2020) emphasizes that social media advertising is crucial for creating strong connections between brands and customers. The theoretical foundation builds on previous research that demonstrates how technological developments have changed marketing strategies (Kumaradeepan, 2020). Qi et al. (2025) explained that technology has reshaped the four Ps of marketing (product, price, place and promotion) by enabling global reach and more personalized communication. It is fast, low-cost, interactive and global in scope. Xu et al. (2026) state that online communities significantly shape how consumers think and act by providing open spaces for discussion and opinion sharing. Quang-Huy et al. (2025) noted that cultural factors affect how consumers engage with these communities, which in turn influences their buying behavior. Ding et al. (2026) classified users into two categories: contributors, who share content, and observers, who simply read information. Lovell (2025) argued that the internet's speed, accessibility and low cost have changed advertising significantly. Truc and Ngoc (2025) proposed a model with three factors (entertainment, informativeness, and irritation) that shape consumer attitudes toward online advertising. Positive emotional responses to ads increase perceived credibility, which strengthens attitudes and purchase intentions Zhang and Wu (2025). Hao et al. (2025) highlights that trust directly impacts customer loyalty and purchasing behavior in online environments. Gazi et al. (2026) emphasizes the importance of understanding who the customers are, what they buy and why they shop online to build effective digital marketing strategies. Mahdavian et al. (2025) suggest that businesses must understand the motivation of both current and potential customers to boost sales and retention. Marketers now use social platforms to provide fast customer support, answer questions and personalize messages Tang (2025). Felix et al. (2026) state that social media use affects customer satisfaction at different stages of the buying process from information search to post-purchase evaluation. Entertaining content, on the other hand, appeals to emotional enjoyment and engagement, which can positively influence attitudes toward advertisements Aniesa et al. (2025). The study proposes a conceptual framework that integrates six key factors influencing consumer buying behavior through social media advertising: networking and online communities, brand awareness, perceived usefulness, trust, customer engagement and technological

advancement. These factors work together to shape consumer perceptions and intentions. By leveraging them effectively, marketers can build strong relationships with consumers, enhance trust and encourage purchasing behavior (Kumaradeepan, 2020).

Tabar et al. (2025) define trust as a customer's belief that a brand is honest, dependable, and will do what it says it will do. Kothari et al. (2025) state that trust is very important in how people shop online and helps connect how much people see ads and their desire to buy products. Keller (1993) defines brand awareness as people's ability to recognize and remember a brand when they are choosing what to buy. In social media advertising, when people know a brand well, they feel more confident and are more likely to buy its products because they feel less unsure (Kumaradeepan, 2020). Kumaradeepan (2020) defines perceived usefulness as how people think information from social media ads is helpful, valuable, and makes it easier for them to make decisions. When people see Instagram ads as helpful, informative, and related to what they need, they tend to feel good about the brand and are more likely to buy its products. Zhou (2025) define consumer interest as how much a person pays attention to, is curious about, and gets involved with an ad after seeing it. Madita et al. (2025) define consumer willingness as how ready someone is to buy a product after seeing ads about it. Research shows that social media ads that are trustworthy and provide useful information can greatly increase people's likelihood to buy. Liu (2025) define consumer ability as how well a person thinks they can look at, compare, and decide if a product shown on social media is right for them and so buy it.

**Research Gap:** Despite the introduction's emphasis on the enormous rise in Instagram usage worldwide, in Asia, and particularly in Oman, existing research still lacks local Omani focus, consumer psychological characteristics, youth consumer segment and transition from engagement to purchase action.

**Anticipated Contribution of the Study:** This study is expected to make both theoretical and practical contributions to the understanding of how Instagram advertising influences consumer behavior in Oman. From a theoretical perspective, it will enrich existing literature on social media marketing by providing empirical evidence from a Middle Eastern context, where cultural values and digital behaviors may differ from Western markets that dominate most prior research. The study will also contribute to the growing body of knowledge on consumer psychology by examining how trust, brand awareness, and perceived usefulness interact to shape consumer purchase intentions on Instagram. From a practical standpoint, the findings of this research will help marketers, advertisers, and business owners in Oman design more effective social media advertising strategies that appeal to local audiences. By understanding which advertising elements most strongly influence consumer decisions, companies can optimize their marketing budgets, build stronger brand loyalty, and improve customer engagement. The study will also assist policymakers and digital marketing agencies in developing guidelines that promote ethical, transparent, and culturally relevant advertising practices. Ultimately, this research aims to bridge the gap between global marketing theories and local consumer realities, supporting the sustainable growth of Oman's digital economy.

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

**Research Model:** The study looks at how ads on Instagram influence what people in Oman buy. The model focuses on three important elements from Instagram ads: trust, how familiar people are with the brand, and how useful people think the brand is. These factors show how people feel and think when they see ads on the internet. Trust shows if people think the brand is honest. Brand awareness shows if they know the brand. Perceived usefulness tells us how helpful or valuable they think the advertisement is.



**Figure 1: Research model: social media advertising and consumer behavior**

**Data Collection:** Data collection includes two sources of data that is i.e. primary and secondary sources. Primary data are collected using the primary source of the youth of Oman. The secondary data were collected from the secondary sources i.e. books, journals and electronic sources. Research ethics were adhered to by informing the participants regarding the confidentiality of the data given.

**Sample Design:** Omani youth were the population and that too confined to the institutional campus.

**Sampling Techniques:** Convenient sampling was used to collect the sample.

**Questionnaire Design:** Primary data were gathered from the target population of Omani youth using a structured questionnaire to study on how ads on social media, especially on Instagram, affect shopping habits of people in Oman.

**Study Area:** Muscat Region: The study was conducted in Muscat, which is the capital city of Oman. Muscat was picked as the study area because it is a business center.

**Period of Study:** The data were collected from October 2025 to December 2025.

**Tools for Data Analysis:** The data collected were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Percentage, average and frequency were used to analyze the data.

#### IV. RESULTS

The study gives an understanding of the people who took part in the study and looks at their views on Instagram ads. The survey in this study had two parts: information about people's backgrounds and their views as consumers. The demographic section gathered basic information about the respondents, like gender, age, education, and the time they spend on Instagram each day. These factors help us see what kind of people use Instagram the most and help us understand the population. The second part of the survey looked at how people feel about ads on Instagram. It talked about how much people trust the brands being advertised, how well they know these brands, how useful they think the ads are for meeting their needs, and how much Instagram ads affect their interest and willingness to buy. People also responded if the products advertised on Instagram were right for them. Together, these items help us understand how people see Instagram ads and how these ads influence their feelings and buying decisions.

**Customer Profile:** Majority of the respondents were females (70.6%) (see Table 6) and youth (aged between 18 and 34, see Table 7). People who answered the survey had different education levels, from high school to advanced degrees (see Table 8). This shows that Instagram attracts users with various educational backgrounds. Education of the respondents was concerned, majority had bachelor's degree (76.5%) and 13.7 percent of the respondents were diploma holders.

**Table 6 Gender profile**

Gender	(%) of Respondents
Female	70.6%
Male	29.4%
Total	100%

**Table 7 Age profile**

Age	No. of respondents	(%) of Respondents
18-24	60	57.8%
25-34	37	36.3%
35-44	4	4.9%
45 and above	1	1%
Total	102	100%

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**Table 8 Highest Level of Education**

<b>Response</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>
High school or less	1	1%
Diploma	14	13.7%
Bachelor’s degree	78	76.5%
Postgraduate degree	7	7%
Others	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 9 Time Spent on Instagram daily**

<b>Response</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>
Less than 30 minutes	12	11.8%
30 minutes – 1 hour	14	13.7%
1 – 2 hours	32	31.4%
More than 2 hours	44	43.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 9 shows the time spent on Instagram by the respondents on daily basis. Majority of the respondents (74.5%) spent their time from one hour to more than two hours daily on Instagram. Table 10 presents the respondents’ perceptions about Instagram advertising and their corresponding behavior. The respondents’ level of trust in brands advertised on Instagram was concerned, most of the respondents remains neutral with 56.9 percent. About 35.3 percent of the total respondents agree that they trust Instagram advertisements. A very low percentage of the respondents (7.8%) disagree to the general response that they trust the brands advertised on Instagram. This indicates mixed perceptions toward brand credibility on Instagram. Awareness of the brands advertised on Instagram was concerned, a significant portion (44.1%) agree that they are aware of such brands, followed by another substantial portion (40.2%) who remained neutral. However, 9.8 percent of the total respondents strongly agree to the fact that they are aware of the brands advertised on Instagram. This suggests that overall awareness of Instagram-advertised brands is relatively high among respondents. Usefulness of the brands advertised on Instagram was concerned, most of the participants had a favorable opinion with 60.7 percent (43.1% agreeing and 17.6% strongly agreeing) agreeing to the statement that the brands advertised on Instagram were useful. This suggests that most of the respondents perceive that Instagram ads successfully meet consumer expectations. The outcomes show that while most users believe Instagram advertising is useful, some respondents are still unsure or doubtful of its efficacy.

**Table 10** Social media advertising and Omani consumer behavior

Response	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Trust in Instagram ads	9.8	25.5	56.9	7.8	0
Awareness of Instagram advertised brands	9.8	44.1	40.2	1	4.9
Usefulness of Instagram brands	17.6	43.1	28.4	10.8	0.1
Interest the products advertised on Instagram	19.6	36.3	39.2	2.9	2
Willingness to buy the products advertised on Instagram	13.7	44.1	34.3	7.8	0.1
Ability to buy the products advertised on Instagram	19.6	47.1	30.4	2.9	0

The respondents' perception of whether Instagram advertisements generate interest in purchasing products shows that a 55.9 percent agree (36.3% agree and 19.6% strongly agree) that Instagram advertisements generate interest in the respondents to buy the products advertised on Instagram. Overall, the findings show that Instagram ads are generally successful in generating customer interest to buy the products advertised in Instagram. Willingness to buy is concerned, 57.8 percent agree (44.1% agree and 13.7% strongly agree) to the fact that they are willing to buy those products advertised on Instagram. 34.3 percent of the respondents expressed no opinion indicating that even when they were exposed to the Instagram commercials, it had little influence on their purchasing decisions. Ability to buy was concerned, majority of the Instagram users (66.7%) are able to buy the products advertised on Instagram.

### V. CONCLUSION

As compared to neutral and disagree, the percentage of Instagram users, who trust the brands advertised on Instagram was less. Majority of the Instagram users are aware of the brands advertised on Instagram. Majority of the Instagram users understand that the brands advertised on Instagram are useful for their daily life. Instagram ads generate interest in Instagram users to buy the brands advertised on Instagram. Instagram ads generate willingness in Instagram users to buy the brands advertised on Instagram. Instagram ads generate ability to buy the brands advertised on Instagram. Social media advertising had a positive effect on Omani consumer behavior.

Implications of the Study: The results have several significant theoretical and practical ramifications. In theory, by providing empirical data from Oman, a region with little research on Instagram advertising and customer behavior, the study adds to the corpus of literature on social media marketing. From a practical standpoint, the results offer useful information to businesses and marketers in Oman. Better image, consistent branding, and pertinent information that satisfy customer wants should be given priority in commercials due to significant influence of brand awareness and perceived utility.

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