

## **CONSUMER PERCEPTION AND RESPONSE TO TARGETED DIGITAL ADVERTISEMENTS AMONG SOCIAL MEDIA USERS**

**Bayis Saman P<sup>1</sup>, Aman Mohammed<sup>2</sup>, Chaithra M<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>3rd Year Student, B.Com Marketing, Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara

<sup>2</sup>3rd Year Student, B.Com Marketing, Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara.  
Email ID: chaithra@bharatamatacollege.in

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**Abstract**—With the rapid expansion of social media platforms, targeted digital advertising has become a key tool for marketers to connect with consumers. These advertisements are created using user data such as browsing behaviour, search history, and stated preferences, making them appear more relevant to individual users. While personalization can enhance advertising effectiveness, it also raises concerns related to privacy, transparency, and ethical use of personal data. This study examines consumer perception and response to targeted digital advertisements among social media users. Primary data were collected from 100 respondents using a structured questionnaire, and all responses were considered suitable for analysis. Percentage analysis and graphical representation were employed to interpret the data. The findings reveal that younger users are more responsive to targeted advertisements and show higher engagement levels, which influence their purchase decisions. However, privacy concerns remain significant across respondents. The study highlights the importance of transparency and ethical data practices in building consumer trust. The results suggest that responsible personalization strategies can improve brand perception and foster long-term customer loyalty.

**Keywords:** Targeted Digital Advertising, Consumer Perception, Social Media Marketing, Personalised Ads, Privacy Concerns, Brand Trust, Purchase Intention.

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### **Introduction:**

Digital technologies and social media platforms have transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter enable marketers to target specific audience segments based on demographic characteristics, interests, online behaviour, and previous interactions. This targeted approach allows advertisements to be more relevant and timely, often resulting in higher engagement and improved conversion rates.

However, despite these advantages, targeted advertising has generated concerns regarding the collection and use of personal data. While some users perceive personalized advertisements as useful and convenient, others view them as intrusive. Consumer reactions to targeted advertisements are influenced by perceptions of fairness, control, and trust. Understanding these perceptions is essential for marketers to design strategies that balance personalization with ethical responsibility.

### **Problem Statement:**

The increasing reliance on targeted digital advertising has resulted in varied consumer reactions. While personalized advertisements may enhance relevance and engagement, they also raise concerns about data privacy and ethical boundaries. There is a need to understand how consumers perceive and respond to targeted digital advertisements on social media platforms and how these perceptions influence trust and purchase behaviour.

### **Scope of the Study:**

The study focuses on analysing consumer perception and response to targeted digital advertisements on social media platforms. It examines awareness levels, attitudes, privacy concerns, trust, and the influence of such advertisements on purchase decisions across different demographic groups. The findings aim to provide insights that can help marketers develop ethical and effective digital advertising strategies.

### **Literature Review:**

1. **Kotler and Keller (2016)** explained that targeted advertising is more effective than mass advertising because it delivers relevant messages to specific consumer segments. According to them, relevance and timing significantly improve consumer engagement and response rates.
2. **Tucker (2014)** studied personalized advertising on social media and found that while targeted advertisements increase click-through rates, a lack of transparency in data collection negatively affects consumer trust. The study emphasized the importance of privacy controls.
3. **Bleier and Eisenbeiss (2015)** highlighted that personalization improves advertising effectiveness only up to a certain level. Excessive personalization can make consumers uncomfortable, leading to irritation and negative attitudes toward advertisements.
4. **Smith and Anderson (2018)** observed that younger consumers are generally more receptive to targeted digital advertisements due to their familiarity with digital platforms. However, they also expect clear communication about how their personal data is collected and used.
5. **Deighton (1994)** noted that advertising influences consumer behaviour by shaping attitudes, perceptions, and purchase intentions. The study emphasized that trust plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of advertising messages.
6. Previous studies collectively suggest that while targeted digital advertising enhances relevance and purchase intention, privacy concerns and ethical data usage significantly influence consumer perception and brand trust.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. To examine consumer awareness of targeted digital advertisements on social media.
2. To analyse consumer perception toward personalized digital advertisements.
3. To study the influence of targeted advertisements on consumer purchase decisions.

### **Research Methodology:**

#### **Research Design**

The study adopts a descriptive research design to analyse consumer perception and response to targeted digital advertisements.

#### **Sampling Technique**

Simple random sampling method is used for selecting respondents.

#### **Sample Size**

A total of 100 respondents were surveyed using Google Forms, and all responses were considered for final analysis.

#### **Source of Data**

- **Primary Data:** Collected through a structured questionnaire using Google Forms.
- **Secondary Data:** Journals, books, research articles, and online sources

#### **Tools for Data Analysis**

The collected data was analysed using percentage analysis and represented through tables and graphical methods to facilitate easy interpretation and discussion of results.

**ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:***(Based on 100 Sample Respondents)***Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents**

Category	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>	18–23	52	52%
	24–29	30	30%
	30–34	18	18%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	58	58%
	Female	42	42%

(Source: Primary Data)

**Analysis:**

The majority of respondents belong to the 18–23 age group (52%), indicating that the study primarily reflects the opinions of younger consumers. The gender distribution shows a slight dominance of male respondents (58%) compared to females (42%). Since younger consumers are generally more exposed to social media and modern advertising trends, the findings may strongly reflect youth-driven perceptions toward gender-neutral cosmetic advertisements.

**Table 2: Social Media Usage**

	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
How many hours do you spend on social media per day?	1-3 hours	31	31%
	3-5 hours	31	31%
	Less than 1 hour	22	22%
	More than 5 hours	16	16%
Which Platform do you use most often?	Instagram	31	31%
	Facebook	26	26%
	Snapchat	19	19%
	Twitter/X	13	13%
	Other/Combinations	11	11%

**Analysis:**

A majority of participants - 62 percent - are active on social media for one to five hours each day, suggesting consistent interaction with online platforms and frequent contact with digital ads. Less than a quarter stay online under an hour. Over time, sixteen out of every hundred go beyond five hours daily.

Despite differences in usage, Instagram leads at 31%, ahead of Facebook's 26%. Snapchat captures 19%, while Twitter/X holds 13%. Visual formats appear more engaging - Instagram stands out here. Because attention leans toward imagery, brands may find stronger outreach through such channels. Reach often follows where eyes linger longest.

**Table 3: Ad Exposure & Relevance**

	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
How often do you see targeted ads on Social Media?	Very frequently	33	33%
	Occasionally	29	29%
	Rarely	19	19%
	Never	17	17%
	Others	2	2%
Do you believe targeted advertising improves the overall quality of content on social media?	Somewhat accurately	35	35%
	Rarely	25	25%
	Not at all	20	20%
	Yes, very accurately	20	20%
Relevance of ads shown	Very Relevant	32	32%
	Somewhat relevant	30	30%
	Not relevant	19	19%
	Irrelevant	19	19%

**Analysis:**

Most people surveyed - 62 percent - come across tailored ads quite often or sometimes, with one-third spotting them regularly. A third of those report frequent sightings, while nearly three in ten notice them now and then, showing such content appears routinely in feeds. Still, about every fifth person hardly ever views these promotions. And almost two out of ten do not come across them at all, meaning not everyone sees the same level of ad targeting.

One in three people think personalized ads match their interests to a degree. Yet accuracy is questioned by nearly half of users. Some find the targeting fairly close; others see little relevance. A portion even says it misses completely. Perception splits sharply along individual experience. Confidence dips where results feel off-base. Still, a minority reports strong alignment. Overall, responses range from approval to clear disapproval.

One out of two people see value in personalized ads, yet skepticism remains among more than a third. Though over six in ten report some level of relevance - ranging from moderate to high - a notable share still views these messages as off mark. Effectiveness gains traction with many, even so doubts linger on precision and real benefit.

**Table 4: Attitudes & Trust**

	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Do you think targeted ads reflect your actual lifestyle and preferences?	Positive	58	58%
	Negative	41	41%
	Neutral	1	1%
	Always	31	31%
	Sometimes	28	28%
	Never	21	21%
	Rarely	20	20%
How relevant do you find the ads shown to you on social media?	Sometimes	33	33%
	Rarely	27	27%

	Always	22	22%
	Never	18	18%

**Analysis:**

One might expect skepticism, yet over half of those surveyed - 58 percent - feel targeted advertisements match their habits and tastes. Despite this, just under four out of ten express discomfort with such customization. A tiny fraction, merely one percent, report no strong opinion either way. So it appears tailored content resonates with many, even if nearly half aren't persuaded by its relevance.

Frequency checks show 31% see ads tied closely to personal interests; at the same time, 28% notice some alignment now and then. Yet a larger share - 41% - finds little connection between what appears and what matters to them, hinting at uneven precision behind ad delivery.

Sometimes, ads hit the mark - 33 percent say they are relevant at times, another 22 percent call them consistently so. Yet nearly half see little connection: 27 percent report rare relevance, 18 percent none at all. Even though targeting reaches many, its precision feels uneven to others. For some, what shows up makes sense; for others, it misses entirely.

**Table 5: Purchase Influence & Interaction**

	Option	Frequency (n=100)	Percentage (%)
Have you ever purchased a product after seeing it in a social media ad	Yes	59	59%
	No	41	41%
Which type of ad content are you really likely to respond to?	Emotional/creative content	26	26%
	Product demos/reviews	25	25%
	Discounts/offers	21	21%
	Influencer recommendation	20	20%
	Combinations/Other	8	8%

**Analysis:**

Around six in ten people bought something they saw advertised on social platforms, showing these online promotions can sway choices. Still, nearly two out of five did not buy, meaning some remain unaffected by digital targeting. While many respond to tailored posts, others seem indifferent to them. One group acts on what appears in their feed; another does not. Not every viewer turns into a customer, even when reached directly.

Emotional or creative material grabs attention first - about 26% engagement. Product demonstrations come just behind, pulling in 25%. Close on their heels: deals and promotions at 21%, while influencer suggestions land near 20%. What stands out? Price draws people, yes - but so does storytelling and useful detail. Success tends to lean toward campaigns blending imagination, clarity, and real benefit. That balance shapes choices more than any single tactic alone.

	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
How concerned are you about your data being used	1	30	30%
	3	23	23%
	4	16	16%
	5	15	15%
	2	16	16%
How do you usually interact with Targeted ads?	Ignore and scroll past	32	32%
	Save for later	24	24%

*Consumer Perception and Response to Targeted Digital Advertisements among Social Media Users*

	Click and explore	23	23%
	Hide / report the ad	16	16%
	Other interactions	5	5%
Have Targeted ads ever Influenced on your brand loyalty	Yes, became a repeat customer	35	35%
	Not sure	34	34%
	Yes, but only temporarily	31	31%

**Analysis:**

Despite differing views on data sharing, unease emerges clearly across user groups. About three out of ten people feel barely bothered by personalized ads. Still, just under a quarter register mid-level wariness when asked about tracking practices. What stands out is that more than thirty percent voice strong discomfort - rating their worry at the highest points possible. Comfort with ad targeting exists, yet caution around personal information lingers widely among others.

Most people - about 32 percent - simply skip over ads without stopping. While some, around 24 percent, choose to bookmark what they see for future review. Exploration happens too: roughly 23 percent tap through to view details, showing a level of interest exists. Yet annoyance appears present, since 16 percent take steps to block or flag promotional content.

One-third of people report becoming repeat buyers due to personalized ads, suggesting lasting attachment grows from tailored messaging. Still, nearly as many express uncertainty - about thirty-four percent - leaving room for doubt about consistent outcomes. A significant portion, thirty-one percent, feel any effect wore off quickly after initial exposure. So even when targeting draws attention early, staying power often ties back to how well the product meets expectations over time.

**Suggestions:**

- Beyond transparency, sharing details on data handling strengthens user confidence. When people understand collection methods, reliance grows naturally. Openness about usage shapes perception without force. Knowing the process fosters a sense of control. Trust emerges where information flows freely. Clarity replaces doubt each time facts are shared. Users respond when they see purpose behind practices.
- Too many ads too often can annoy people. When interruptions pile up, opinions shift without warning. Fewer appearances might actually help reputation grow quietly over time.
- Refine personalization strategies to ensure ads better match user interests.
- Focus on creative, informative, and value-based advertisements.
- Focused on lasting connections, businesses grow when what they sell works well. A helpful experience after purchase keeps people coming back instead of looking elsewhere.

**Conclusion:**

Although digital ads tailored to users do shape choices online, some people still worry about repeated content and how personal information gets used. These campaigns often feel useful enough that individuals act - clicking, buying, responding. Yet effectiveness fades if openness and honesty take a back seat. Success sticks around only when brands keep trust alive through fair methods. What matters most emerges slowly: respect wins more than reach.

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