

Occupational Differences in Consumers' Perceived Trustworthiness of Instagram Advertisements and Purchase Intention in Jaipur

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Abstract:

Occupational roles can shape consumers' routines, purchasing priorities and exposure to digital promotions. This paper examines whether perceived information-based trustworthiness of Instagram advertisements and purchase intention differ across occupational groups. Primary data were obtained from 305 eligible respondents in Jaipur: 94 salaried employees, 78 students, 59 business or self-employed consumers, 43 homemakers and 31 respondents from other occupations. Each outcome was measured through five statements on a five-point Likert scale. Reliability was acceptable for information-based trustworthiness (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.805$) and purchase intention ($\alpha = 0.815$). A one-way ANOVA found no significant occupational difference in trustworthiness, $F(4, 300) = 0.432$, $p = .785$. Variances were unequal for purchase intention, so Welch's ANOVA was used; it also found no significant difference, $F(4, 119.837) = 0.526$, $p = .717$. The occupational means were closely grouped and both null hypotheses were retained. The findings indicate that occupational category provides little separation between the two outcomes among the respondents.

Keywords: Instagram advertising; occupational groups; information quality; advertisement trustworthiness; purchase intention; ANOVA; Jaipur

INTRODUCTION

Instagram users encounter advertisements alongside reels, personal updates and other material that they have chosen to follow. An advertisement may attract immediate attention through its image or offer, but further interest depends on the information available. Price, seller identity and the conditions attached to an offer become especially relevant when the buyer cannot inspect the product directly.

This dependence on displayed information is one reason why trust matters in social commerce. Clear details may answer some of the buyer's immediate questions; incomplete or inconsistent details can create fresh doubts. Previous studies have similarly connected information quality and trust with behavioural intention (Hajli, 2015; Kim & Park, 2013). On Instagram, users also respond to the way commercial content is presented. Disclosure of sponsorship influences advertising recognition (Evans et al., 2017),

and the cues contained in a post can contribute to trust in branded content (Yang, 2020). Herzallah et al. (2022) further identified trust and product evaluation as relevant to Instagram purchase intention.

The circumstances in which people view such advertisements are unlikely to be identical. Students, salaried employees, homemakers and self-employed consumers may differ in their routines and purchasing priorities. Whether these differences extend to advertisement trustworthiness and purchase intention is an empirical question. Basic details concerning the seller, price and return arrangements may remain important regardless of occupation.

This paper compares information-based trustworthiness and purchase intention across five occupational categories. It assesses whether the small differences visible in the group means are sufficiently large relative to within-group variation to be statistically distinguishable. As the evidence is cross-sectional, the results are limited to group comparison and cannot show that occupation caused the recorded responses.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The importance of useful advertising information was recognised before the growth of social media. Ducoffe (1996) treated informativeness as a component of advertising value, indicating that consumers judge an advertisement partly by the assistance it provides in decision-making. This concern becomes more pronounced in social commerce, where the buyer may have limited direct contact with the seller.

Later evidence connects this information with trust. Kim and Park (2013) found that information quality, transaction safety, communication and reputation contributed to trust and purchase intentions in social commerce. Hajli (2015) approached the issue through social support, reviews and recommendations. These features helped develop trust, which was associated with the intention to buy. Thus, the social setting surrounding an online transaction does not remove consumers' need for assurance.

Erkan and Evans (2016) extended the information-adoption approach to electronic word of mouth on social media. Information quality, credibility, usefulness and adoption were important in explaining purchase intentions. The study supports the inclusion of clear features, supporting details and comparison behaviour in measures of purchase intention.

Evans et al. (2017) tested disclosure language in Instagram influencer advertising. More explicit disclosure affected advertising recognition and subsequent attitudes and behavioural intention. This evidence shows that transparent commercial information can alter the way consumers interpret an Instagram message.

Yang (2020) examined cues contained in Instagram posts and reported that popularity and argument quality helped build trust and positive responses towards branded products. The study is particularly relevant to information-based trustworthiness because it shows that consumers rely on available message cues when evaluating a post.

Wang et al. (2020) investigated demographic moderation in e-commerce purchase intention. Their analysis illustrates why consumer characteristics can be tested as boundary conditions rather than assumed to have universal effects. Occupational status is less frequently examined than age or gender, leaving room for a direct comparison.

Herzallah et al. (2022) examined purchase intention in Instagram commerce through trust, technology acceptance and consumer decision-making. Their results drew attention to trust, attitude, usefulness and the evaluation of alternatives. Selected relationships also varied with experience and demographic conditions. The study therefore supports further examination of consumer characteristics, including characteristics that have received less direct attention.

RESEARCH GAP

Occupation is one such characteristic. Research on Instagram and social commerce has extensively discussed trust, information quality, source credibility and purchase intention, but demographic comparisons have concentrated more often on age and gender. Occupation commonly appears only in the respondent profile. As a result, it remains uncertain whether salaried employees, students, business or self-employed consumers, homemakers and consumers from other occupations evaluate Instagram advertisements differently. Direct evidence from Jaipur is particularly limited. The present study examines this issue through trustworthiness and purchase-intention measures.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**Research Objective**

To analyse whether perceptions of Instagram advertisement trustworthiness and purchase intention differ across occupational groups.

Research Design

The study follows a quantitative and cross-sectional comparative design. Respondents are divided into five independent occupational categories, and the two construct scores are examined across these groups. This approach is suitable for identifying group differences, if present. Since the observations were collected at one point in time, the comparison is not intended to establish occupation as a cause of either outcome.

Study Setting, Eligible Population and Analytical Cases

The study was conducted in Jaipur among adult residents who actively use Instagram and had viewed product or service advertisements on the platform. The analysis included primary responses from 305 eligible participants: 94 salaried employees, 78 students, 59 business or self-employed respondents, 43 homemakers and 31 respondents categorised under other occupations.

Research Variables

Occupational status is the grouping variable. Information-based advertisement trustworthiness and purchase intention are the outcome variables. Each construct score is calculated as the mean of five items. Higher scores indicate stronger trustworthiness or purchase intention.

Instrument Development and Measurement

Ten paper-specific statements are analysed. Trustworthiness items cover seller identity, disclosure of price and conditions, supporting product information, consistency with the seller profile and contact, return or refund information. Purchase-intention items address product discovery, examination of clearly explained features, response to price and offer details, comparison with alternatives and willingness to purchase when information is complete. Every item is scored from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Data Collection and Analytical Procedure

Primary data were collected from eligible respondents using a structured questionnaire. The responses were compiled for analysis, and all numerical results reported in the study were calculated from the resulting dataset without altering or replacing the recorded values.

Reliability Testing

Table 1.1: Reliability of the Study Constructs

Construct	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Information-based trustworthiness	5	0.805
Purchase intention	5	0.815

Cronbach's alpha was 0.805 for information-based trustworthiness and 0.815 for purchase intention. Both values exceed 0.70 and indicate acceptable internal consistency for the five-item scales among the respondents.

Statistical Tools and Techniques

Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations summarise the Likert responses. Cronbach's alpha examines scale reliability. One-way ANOVA is applied when the equality-of-variance assumption is satisfied. Welch's ANOVA is used when variances are unequal because it is more robust to heteroscedasticity and unequal group sizes. Significance is evaluated at 5%. Post-hoc tests are unnecessary when the omnibus test is not significant.

LIKERT-SCALE STATEMENT ANALYSIS

Table 1.2: Likert-Scale Statement Analysis for Trustworthiness

Likert statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Seller identity is clearly stated.	29 (9.51%)	76 (24.92%)	84 (27.54%)	59 (19.34%)	57 (18.69%)	3.13	1.25
Prices and important conditions are disclosed.	21 (6.89%)	61 (20.00%)	90 (29.51%)	92 (30.16%)	41 (13.44%)	3.23	1.13
Supporting product information adds credibility.	21 (6.89%)	66 (21.64%)	97 (31.80%)	71 (23.28%)	50 (16.39%)	3.21	1.16
Advertisement and seller-profile consistency strengthens confidence.	16 (5.25%)	67 (21.97%)	91 (29.84%)	84 (27.54%)	47 (15.41%)	3.26	1.12
Contact, return or refund information makes a seller appear trustworthy.	20 (6.56%)	55 (18.03%)	94 (30.82%)	78 (25.57%)	58 (19.02%)	3.33	1.17

Table 1.3: Likert-Scale Statement Analysis for Purchase Intention (N = 305)

Likert statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Advertisements help discovery of useful daily-life products.	28 (9.18%)	85 (27.87%)	89 (29.18%)	71 (23.28%)	32 (10.49%)	2.98	1.14

Likert statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Clearly explained features encourage product examination.	30 (9.84%)	76 (24.92%)	93 (30.49%)	72 (23.61%)	34 (11.15%)	3.01	1.15
Price and offer details affect purchase consideration.	22 (7.21%)	80 (26.23%)	95 (31.15%)	77 (25.25%)	31 (10.16%)	3.05	1.10
Instagram offers are compared with alternatives before purchase.	34 (11.15%)	59 (19.34%)	95 (31.15%)	75 (24.59%)	42 (13.77%)	3.11	1.20
Complete advertisement information increases willingness to purchase.	27 (8.85%)	69 (22.62%)	91 (29.84%)	70 (22.95%)	48 (15.74%)	3.14	1.19

Findings from Likert-Scale Analysis

Information-based trustworthiness produced an overall mean of 3.23 (SD = 0.87), placing the construct slightly above the scale midpoint. Contact, return or refund information received the highest item mean (M = 3.33), followed by consistency between the advertisement and seller profile (M = 3.26). Clear seller identity recorded the lowest mean (M = 3.13). The pattern suggests that practical recourse and consistency carried more weight than identification alone.

Purchase intention was close to neutral overall (M = 3.06, SD = 0.88). Complete information generated the highest item mean (M = 3.14), while product discovery was lowest (M = 2.98). Respondents appeared more willing to compare and evaluate offers than to treat Instagram advertisements as a strong source of useful product discovery.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference among consumers belonging to different occupational groups regarding their perceived trustworthiness of Instagram advertisements.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference among consumers belonging to different occupational groups regarding their purchase intention towards products advertised on Instagram.

Variables Used

Occupational status is the five-category grouping variable. Information-based trustworthiness and purchase intention are the two outcome variables.

Statistical Tests Applied

Levene's test was not significant for trustworthiness (F = 0.601, p = .662), so the standard one-way ANOVA was used. For purchase intention, Levene's test was significant (F = 4.334, p = .002), indicating unequal variances; Welch's ANOVA was therefore applied. Neither omnibus test was significant, so post-hoc pairwise comparisons were not warranted.

Table 1.4: Occupational Group Descriptive Statistics

Occupational group	n	Trustworthiness M (SD)	Purchase intention M (SD)
Salaried employee	94	3.18 (0.91)	3.02 (0.92)
Student	78	3.27 (0.81)	3.13 (0.96)
Business or self-employed	59	3.22 (0.87)	3.14 (0.78)
Homemaker	43	3.34 (0.90)	2.97 (0.67)
Other	31	3.12 (0.91)	2.97 (0.96)

Table 1.5: ANOVA Results by Occupational Group

Outcome	Test	Statistic	df1	df2	p-value	Decision
Trustworthiness	One-way ANOVA	F = 0.432	4	300	.785	Fail to reject H01
Purchase intention	Welch ANOVA	F = 0.526	4	119.837	.717	Fail to reject H02

Interpretation

Trustworthiness means ranged from 3.12 in the other-occupation category to 3.34 among homemakers. Despite this numerical spread, within-group variation was much larger than the differences among the group means. The ANOVA was not significant, $F(4, 300) = 0.432$, $p = .785$, and occupation accounted for approximately 0.6% of the total score variation.

Purchase-intention means ranged from 2.97 among homemakers to 3.14 among business or self-employed respondents. Welch's ANOVA found no statistically significant occupational difference, $F(4, 119.837) = 0.526$, $p = .717$.

Decision

H01 and H02 are not rejected at the 5% significance level. The results provide insufficient evidence that either outcome differs across occupational categories.

Finding

Although the group means varied slightly, the five occupational categories did not differ significantly in either advertisement trustworthiness or purchase intention.

Hypothesis Conclusion

Occupational status did not significantly differentiate either outcome in this sample. This result should be understood as insufficient evidence of a difference, rather than proof that every occupational group holds identical views.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

Occupation made little difference to how the respondents assessed Instagram advertisements. Trustworthiness was slightly above the scale midpoint, while purchase intention remained close to neutral. Contact, return and refund information attracted the strongest trustworthiness response; for purchase intention, complete advertisement information recorded the highest mean.

The small variations visible across the five groups were not statistically significant. This conclusion was consistent for both the ordinary ANOVA and Welch's ANOVA. The evidence therefore directs attention away from occupational separation and towards information that consumers from different occupations can use when evaluating an advertisement.

SUGGESTIONS BASED ON FINDINGS

1. A user should be able to find the seller's contact, return and refund details without searching through several posts. This deserves priority because it received the highest trustworthiness mean.
2. Information shown in an advertisement should agree with what users find after opening the seller's profile or purchase page. A change in price, product description or offer conditions at this stage can weaken confidence.
3. Since the occupational groups did not differ significantly, advertisers need not prepare separate information standards for students, salaried employees, homemakers and self-employed consumers. The creative presentation may vary, but essential facts should remain available to everyone.
4. The displayed price should be accompanied by delivery charges, offer restrictions and the period for which the offer remains valid. Consumers can then compare the advertised product with available alternatives more realistically.
5. Product discovery received a relatively weak response. Merely displaying a product may therefore be insufficient. Advertisements could briefly show the need it addresses or the situation in which it may be useful.
6. Future occupational comparisons would benefit from adequate participation in every category. Particular care is needed with the residual "other" group, as combining substantially different occupations can make its results difficult to interpret.
7. Occupation alone explained very little variation in either outcome. Later studies may examine whether education, income, product category or frequency of Instagram use provides a clearer explanation.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The study is limited to 305 eligible Instagram users in Jaipur, so the findings should be interpreted in relation to the respondents included in the analysis. Occupational status is represented through five broad categories that may conceal substantial variation in income, work conditions and digital familiarity. The 'other' group is especially heterogeneous. Unequal variances were present for purchase intention, although Welch's ANOVA addressed this analytical issue. The cross-sectional design cannot establish causality, and the outcome measures do not capture actual purchases. Additional variables such as education, earnings, advertising exposure, product involvement and transaction experience may be more informative than occupation alone.

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