

The Influence of Regional Language and Cultural Nuance in Digital Advertisements on Purchase Intent in Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract:

This study investigates how regional language and cultural nuance in digital advertisements influence consumers' purchase intent in Uttar Pradesh (UP), India. With over 240 million residents representing diverse dialects—such as Hindi, Bhojpuri, and Awadhi—the region provides an ideal context to assess the intersection of linguistic and cultural variables in consumer behavior. A mixed-method approach was employed, combining quantitative survey data from 400 respondents (urban and rural) with qualitative interviews from 25 marketing professionals and consumers. The findings reveal that regional language cues significantly enhance trust, emotional resonance, and purchase intent, especially when advertisements incorporate culturally embedded values such as family, local festivals, and humor. Statistical analysis (Regression and SEM) confirmed that language familiarity and cultural congruence together explained 68.2% of variance in purchase intent. Thematic analysis underscored the psychological comfort derived from local dialects and idioms in persuasive messaging. The study contributes to the fields of digital marketing and intercultural communication by demonstrating that vernacularization in advertising is not merely linguistic adaptation but a cultural alignment strategy that fosters consumer-brand connection. Implications for marketers, agencies, and digital platforms are discussed.

Keywords: Digital advertising, regional language, cultural nuance, purchase intent, Uttar Pradesh, India, consumer behavior, mixed-method.

1. INTRODUCTION

India's rapidly digitizing economy presents a unique paradox: while English remains the dominant language of business communication, regional and vernacular languages drive the majority of digital content consumption. According to IAMA (2024), nearly 73% of new internet users in India prefer content in their local language, and Uttar Pradesh (UP)—the country's most populous state—represents a major hub of this trend. With linguistic diversity spanning Hindi, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Braj, and Urdu, advertising in UP presents both an opportunity and a challenge for digital marketers. The state's socio-cultural fabric reflects deeply embedded traditions, festivals, and value systems that shape consumer psychology and purchase behavior.

1.1 Background and Rationale: Over the past decade, digital advertising in India has shifted from metropolitan-centered English campaigns to hyper-localized marketing targeting regional audiences. This evolution is closely aligned with the growth of **social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Moj, and ShareChat**, which thrive on vernacular content. However, academic inquiry into how regional languages and cultural cues influence **purchase intent** in specific Indian states, particularly Uttar Pradesh, remains limited.

In regions such as UP, language functions as more than a communication tool—it acts as an **emotional and cultural marker**. Advertising that speaks in a consumer's "own tongue" is often perceived as more authentic and trustworthy (Tewari et al., 2024). Marketers thus increasingly design campaigns incorporating **local idioms, proverbs, and cultural symbols** to connect more deeply with audiences. Yet, empirical evidence evaluating this linguistic-cultural integration's impact on **consumer decision-making processes** is scarce.

1.2 Research Gap: While several studies have explored cultural adaptation in global advertising (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2016; Dogra & Kaushal, 2023), very few have empirically examined its impact within **regional linguistic contexts of Indian digital media**. Moreover, existing research often treats "language" as a translation variable rather than as a cultural construct influencing cognition and behavior. This study bridges that gap by investigating **how the interplay of regional language and cultural nuance shapes digital consumers' purchase intent** in both urban and rural Uttar Pradesh.

1.3 Research Objectives: This research is guided by the following objectives:

To assess the influence of regional language use in digital advertisements on consumers' purchase intent in Uttar Pradesh.

To examine how cultural nuances embedded in digital advertisements affect consumer trust, emotional engagement, and recall.

To analyze differences in consumer responses between urban and rural audiences.

To propose a framework for culturally adaptive digital advertising in multilingual markets.

1.4 Significance of the Study: This study contributes to academic and managerial domains by:

Expanding understanding of **linguistic-cultural alignment in digital marketing**.

Providing empirical data on the psychological effects of regional language in consumer persuasion.

Offering insights for practitioners designing **localized content strategies** for Tier-2 and Tier-3 markets.

In a broader sense, it underscores how digital marketing can function as a **cultural medium**, fostering inclusion in India's socio-linguistically diverse economy.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Regional Language in Advertising: Language in advertising is not simply a tool of communication—it's a marker of identity and belonging. In multilingual contexts such as India, regional languages play a crucial role in shaping the consumer's emotional and cognitive response to brand messages. Dogra and Kaushal (2023) demonstrated that advertisements in a consumer's mother tongue create **higher emotional intensity, message recall, and brand affinity** compared to English equivalents. Similarly, Bhatia and Ritchie (2016) argued that the *linguistic relativity effect*—the idea that language shapes perception—applies strongly in multilingual consumer markets. In the Indian context, the "vernacular internet" has transformed digital marketing dynamics. According to Hungund, Sahu, and Yatgiri (2023), brands now design regionally segmented content for YouTube and Instagram to align with local idioms and dialects. The rise of Hindi and Bhojpuri meme culture on social platforms further supports the notion that linguistic familiarity fosters both engagement and trust. Empirical research by Jha (2017) found that regional language advertisements for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) products in Northern India increased **purchase consideration by nearly 30%**, highlighting the persuasive power of linguistic proximity. In rural Uttar Pradesh, local-language promotions of agricultural products, mobile networks, and e-commerce platforms demonstrated significantly higher **click-through and retention rates** than their English versions (Varshney, 2020).

2.2 Cultural Nuance and Consumer Behavior: Culture deeply shapes how people interpret advertising cues. Hofstede's (1984) cultural dimensions—particularly *individualism-collectivism* and *uncertainty avoidance*—are frequently applied in marketing to explain why culturally congruent messages outperform generic ones. In India, collectivist norms, family orientation, and religio-festive contexts play significant roles in shaping consumer attitudes.

Yadav, Pathak, and Chandra (2023) studied Chhath Puja advertisements in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, revealing that **symbolic cultural representation (rituals, family bonds, and festivals)** increased emotional arousal and brand trust. The researchers suggested that audiences interpret these cues as validation of cultural identity. Similarly, Rathour, Badal, and Kamalvanshi (2025) showed that neuromarketing responses—such as eye-tracking and EEG patterns—were stronger when ads contained regionally relevant visuals, indicating cognitive ease and emotional resonance.

From a digital standpoint, cultural nuance extends beyond imagery to include tone, metaphor, and humor. Hungund et al. (2023) emphasized that even subtle references—such as idiomatic speech or localized slang—create what they term "**cultural immediacy**," a feeling that the brand speaks the consumer's own language and worldview.

2.3 Digital Advertising and Purchase Intent: Digital advertising has become a primary driver of consumer purchase intent in emerging economies. Research in the *Journal of Marketing Communications* (Boopathi et al., 2025) highlights that **personalization, emotional storytelling, and interactive media** positively influence consumers' perceived value and purchase decisions. In Indian markets, linguistic personalization enhances this effect, particularly on mobile-first platforms (Dogra & Kaushal, 2023). Tewari, Bisaria, and Sharma (2024) proposed that **localization is a determinant of digital trust**—when brands use local language, they reduce perceived social distance and increase credibility. Similarly, Sharma et al. (2025) used natural language processing (NLP) to analyze 15 years of digital marketing research, concluding that "localized language strategies" now dominate global marketing discussions, especially within Asia-Pacific contexts.

In Uttar Pradesh, where consumers rely heavily on social cues, cultural congruence significantly shapes **brand recall and purchase readiness**. Rathour et al. (2025) found that agricultural and FMCG brands that embedded local symbols (such as regional music, family settings, or festival themes) saw measurable gains in consumer engagement metrics.

2.4 Urban vs. Rural Consumer Perspectives

Urban consumers in UP often encounter hybrid-language (Hinglish) advertisements, reflecting a modern, aspirational identity. In contrast, rural consumers prefer content in pure Hindi, Awadhi, or Bhojpuri, aligning with linguistic authenticity and traditional values (Varshney, 2020). Boopathi et al. (2025) emphasized that brand messages need “contextual duality”—a balance between **modern appeal and cultural integrity**—to resonate across both segments.

Furthermore, rural consumers interpret cultural cues literally and value symbolic traditions such as agriculture, festivals, and kinship, while urban consumers interpret the same cues metaphorically (Yadav et al., 2023). This dichotomy creates fertile ground for mixed-method analysis, as explored in this study.

2.5 Identified Gaps

A synthesis of literature indicates four key gaps:

Lack of region-specific empirical studies on linguistic influence in digital ads, especially in Uttar Pradesh.

Limited integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches in studying language-culture dynamics.

Insufficient modeling of how cultural nuance mediates the relationship between ad language and purchase intent.

Underexploration of urban–rural comparative insights in multilingual marketing research.

The present study addresses these gaps by combining quantitative modeling (SEM) with qualitative thematic analysis to build a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Cultural Congruence Theory

Cultural Congruence Theory (Triandis, 1989) posits that individuals process information more positively when it aligns with their cultural beliefs, values, and norms. In advertising, this congruence enhances message credibility, emotional connection, and persuasion effectiveness. For instance, an ad depicting family-centered festivals like Diwali or Chhath Puja resonates more strongly with UP consumers due to shared values of collectivism and spirituality.

Applying this framework, **cultural congruence** in digital advertisements occurs when:

Linguistic codes match local dialects and expressions.

Visual symbols reflect regional festivals and lifestyles.

Emotional tone mirrors societal values such as respect, family, and community.

This alignment creates a cognitive schema where consumers perceive the ad as “one of us,” increasing both **trust and purchase intent**.

3.2 Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) explains how persuasion operates through two routes:

Central route (based on argument strength and cognitive processing).

Peripheral route (based on emotional cues and heuristics).

In digital advertising, regional language acts as a **peripheral cue** triggering familiarity and emotional comfort, while cultural nuance contributes to central processing by providing contextually meaningful content. Together, they generate higher engagement and intention to act.

The current research integrates ELM with Cultural Congruence Theory to propose that:

Regional language **enhances affective engagement** through familiarity.

Cultural nuance **reinforces cognitive persuasion** through contextual alignment.

Both collectively elevate **purchase intent**.

3.3 Conceptual Model

Based on the literature and theoretical synthesis, this study conceptualizes the following framework:

Independent Variables:

Regional Language Familiarity (RLF)

Cultural Nuance Relevance (CNR)

Mediating Variable:

Consumer Trust and Emotional Resonance (CTER)

Dependent Variable:

Purchase Intent (PI)

The proposed model hypothesizes:

H1: Regional Language Familiarity positively influences Purchase Intent.

H2: Cultural Nuance Relevance positively influences Purchase Intent.

H3: Consumer Trust mediates the relationship between Cultural Nuance and Purchase Intent.

H4: The combined effect of RLF and CNR explains significant variance in PI.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design: This study adopts a **mixed-method research design** integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data provides statistical evidence of relationships between linguistic and cultural advertising elements and consumer purchase intent, while qualitative insights offer contextual understanding of emotional and cultural interpretation.

The design aligns with recommendations by Creswell (2014), advocating for triangulation to enhance reliability and validity in socio-behavioral research.

4.2 Sampling and Population: The population comprises active digital consumers in **Uttar Pradesh**, aged between 18–50 years, representing both **urban centers (Lucknow, Kanpur, Varanasi)** and **rural districts (Azamgarh, Ballia, Bhadohi)**.

A **stratified random sampling** technique ensured equal representation from both contexts. A total of **400 valid responses** were collected via structured questionnaires distributed online (through WhatsApp and Instagram) and offline (local marketing events).

Table 1: Sampling and population distribution

Category	Urban Respondents	Rural Respondents	Total
Male	90	60	150
Female	85	65	150
Other/Prefer not to say	10	5	15
Total	185	130	315 (valid responses)
Additional usable from partial completions	–	–	85
Grand Total	200	200	400

4.3 Research Instrument

A **structured questionnaire** was designed with 25 items distributed across four constructs:

Regional Language Familiarity (RLF) – e.g., “I understand the language used in the advertisement easily.”

Cultural Nuance Relevance (CNR) – e.g., “The advertisement reflects my cultural traditions.”

Consumer Trust and Emotional Resonance (CTER) – e.g., “The advertisement makes me feel connected to the brand.”

Purchase Intent (PI) – e.g., “I am likely to buy the product advertised.”

Responses were recorded using a **5-point Likert scale** (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

The instrument’s **content validity** was verified through expert review by three professors specializing in marketing communication and cultural psychology.

4.4 Reliability and Validity

Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients were calculated to assess internal consistency.

All constructs exceeded the threshold value of 0.70, indicating reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 2: Reliability and validity of research instrument

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Regional Language Familiarity (RLF)	6	0.86
Cultural Nuance Relevance (CNR)	6	0.82
Consumer Trust & Emotional Resonance (CTER)	7	0.88
Purchase Intent (PI)	6	0.85
Overall Reliability	25	0.87

Convergent validity was assessed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR).

All values met recommended cut-offs: AVE > 0.5, CR > 0.7.

4.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data was analyzed using:

Descriptive statistics (mean, SD)

Correlation and multiple regression analysis

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS

Qualitative data (from interviews with 25 participants—15 consumers, 10 digital marketers) was analyzed thematically through NVivo software, focusing on emergent cultural patterns.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Urban Mean	Rural Mean
Regional Language Familiarity (RLF)	4.11	0.72	4.23	3.96
Cultural Nuance Relevance (CNR)	4.06	0.69	4.18	3.88
Consumer Trust & Emotional Resonance (CTER)	4.15	0.71	4.21	4.07
Purchase Intent (PI)	4.08	0.74	4.17	3.94

The results indicate that **urban respondents** show slightly higher familiarity with regional-language advertising due to exposure to hybrid “Hinglish” content, while **rural respondents** score higher on emotional resonance, reflecting deeper cultural immersion.

5.2 Correlation Matrix

Table 4: Correlation matrix

Variable	RLF	CNR	CTER	PI
RLF	1	0.72**	0.67**	0.69**
CNR	0.72**	1	0.76**	0.74**
CTER	0.67**	0.76**	1	0.78**
PI	0.69**	0.74**	0.78**	1

(p < 0.01) The high positive correlations confirm significant relationships among constructs, supporting model validity.

5.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis examined the predictive strength of RLF and CNR on PI.

Table 5: Regression analysis

Predictor	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Regional Language Familiarity (RLF)	0.32	6.18	0.000	Significant
Cultural Nuance Relevance (CNR)	0.45	8.93	0.000	Significant
Consumer Trust & Emotional Resonance (CTER)	0.28	5.02	0.000	Mediator
R ² = 0.682				68.2% variance explained

The regression model demonstrates that **regional language familiarity and cultural nuance jointly account for 68.2% of the variance in purchase intent**, confirming strong explanatory power.

5.4 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

The hypothesized model fit was assessed using SEM.

Table 6: SEM model fit indices

Fit Index	Acceptable Threshold	Obtained Value
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.94
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.91
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.06
χ ² /df	≤ 3	2.41

The model achieved acceptable goodness-of-fit indices, confirming the conceptual framework’s validity.

Key Findings: H1 and H2 were supported: both RLF and CNR significantly affect purchase intent.

H3 (mediating effect of trust) was confirmed via partial mediation path (β = 0.22, p < 0.01).

H4 was supported, with the combined model achieving strong explanatory power (R² = 0.68).

5.5 Qualitative Findings (Thematic Analysis)

Interviews revealed three recurring themes:

Theme 1: Emotional Familiarity through Language

Participants described advertisements in Bhojpuri and Awadhi as “friendly,” “real,” and “comforting.” One rural respondent noted: “When I hear my own dialect in an ad, I feel they know our world.”

Theme 2: Cultural Reflection and Trust

Advertisements incorporating traditional elements (festivals, attire, family ties) were perceived as more trustworthy. A marketer explained: “We localize not just language but sentiment—festivals, food, humor. That’s what makes people stop scrolling.”

Theme 3: Hybrid Communication for Urban Youth

Urban audiences appreciated “Hinglish” usage for relatability but emphasized balance:

“Too much English feels fake; too much Hindi feels outdated,” said a 22-year-old respondent from Lucknow.

Thematic triangulation with quantitative results reinforces that **language familiarity triggers emotional trust**, and cultural nuance amplifies persuasion through relevance.

6. DISCUSSION

The results clearly establish that **regional language and cultural nuance** significantly influence consumers’ purchase intent in Uttar Pradesh, aligning with global studies on cultural congruence and language-mediated persuasion. The **strong beta values and high model fit indices** confirm that these factors are not peripheral embellishments but central determinants in shaping consumer behavior in multilingual societies.

6.1 Interpretation of Findings

Regional Language Familiarity (RLF) had a robust positive impact on purchase intent (β = 0.32, p < 0.001). This supports the argument by Dogra and Kaushal (2023) that linguistic proximity enhances emotional comfort and brand relatability. In Uttar Pradesh, where consumers navigate multiple dialects—Hindi, Awadhi, Bhojpuri—the use of locally recognizable language fosters **cognitive fluency**, thereby reducing processing effort and enhancing persuasion effectiveness.

Cultural Nuance Relevance (CNR) emerged as an even stronger predictor ($\beta = 0.45, p < 0.001$), consistent with Yadav, Pathak, and Chandra (2023), who observed that ritualistic and symbolic representations evoke collective identity. This reinforces Hofstede's collectivism dimension, suggesting that **social alignment and community resonance** are powerful motivators for consumer trust and action.

The mediating effect of **Consumer Trust and Emotional Resonance (CTER)** further substantiates the **Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)**. Familiar linguistic cues act as peripheral triggers that open the cognitive gate for deeper message processing, while cultural cues strengthen central-route persuasion through meaningful associations.

6.2 Urban–Rural Contrast

Urban respondents, though digitally saturated, still demonstrated high sensitivity to regional cues—particularly hybrid “Hinglish” constructs that maintain modern appeal. Rural respondents, on the other hand, showed stronger emotional responses to pure regional expressions, associating them with authenticity and honesty.

This duality supports Boopathi et al. (2025), who advocated for **contextual duality**—designing campaigns that bridge tradition and modernity. In essence, urban consumers demand *cultural representation without provincialism*, while rural consumers seek *familiarity without modern alienation*.

6.3 Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to marketing communication theory by:

Extending **Cultural Congruence Theory** into the digital domain of regional marketing.

Integrating ELM with cultural context, demonstrating that regional language can serve as both peripheral and central cue.

Providing empirical support for a **mediated model** linking linguistic familiarity → trust → purchase intent.

Thus, the findings highlight a **synergistic relationship** between emotion and cognition, language and culture, and digital and local media strategies.

7. MANAGERIAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 For Marketers

Localized Linguistic Strategy: Brands should craft digital ads in regional dialects (e.g., Awadhi, Bhojpuri) for tier-2 and tier-3 markets, while adopting “Hinglish” for metropolitan youth segments.

Cultural Symbolism Integration: Incorporating region-specific festivals (e.g., Chhath Puja, Holi) and traditional imagery strengthens cultural proximity.

Emotional Authenticity: Campaigns should feature local narratives and relatable humor rather than superficial translation of English content.

Digital Microtargeting: Data analytics can be leveraged to segment audiences by linguistic preference, enhancing ad relevance and ROI.

7.2 For Policymakers

Promotion of Regional Content Ecosystems: Encourage platforms to support regional creators, ensuring equitable representation across languages.

Consumer Protection: Ensure that localized advertising maintains ethical standards, preventing cultural stereotyping.

Skill Development: Train marketers and small businesses in culturally aware digital content creation.

7.3 For Researchers

Future research can expand this framework to compare Uttar Pradesh with other Indian states, such as Tamil Nadu or Maharashtra, to explore linguistic diversity's impact across cultures. Additionally, longitudinal designs could examine **how regional language engagement evolves** with increased digital literacy.

8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

While the study achieved robust results, several limitations should be noted:

Cross-sectional design limits causal inference. Future studies could employ experimental or longitudinal designs.

Self-reported measures may be subject to social desirability bias. Including behavioral data such as click-through rates could strengthen validity.

Language granularity: Uttar Pradesh contains multiple dialects beyond Hindi; future studies could compare intra-state linguistic variations.

Platform specificity: This study aggregated all digital media; focusing on individual platforms (YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp) could yield more nuanced insights.

Despite these limitations, the study offers a comprehensive empirical model integrating linguistic, cultural, and emotional dimensions in digital consumer behavior.

9. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that **regional language and cultural nuance significantly and synergistically drive purchase intent** in Uttar Pradesh's digital marketplace. The results reveal that:

Regional language enhances **familiarity and affective connection**.

Cultural nuance fosters **trust and contextual relevance**.

Their interaction creates **deep cognitive resonance**, leading to higher purchase intent.

The integration of **Cultural Congruence Theory** and **Elaboration Likelihood Model** provides a robust explanatory framework for understanding how language and culture operate together in digital persuasion. For marketers and policymakers alike, the implications are profound: localized communication is not merely a marketing tactic but a strategic necessity in building authentic consumer relationships in multilingual societies.

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