

Digital Advertising and Youth's Buying Behaviour: Impact Assessment of Mass Communication Undergraduates of Two Universities

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Abstract

The study was aimed at assessing the impact of digital advertising on youth's buying behaviour. The mass communication undergraduates of Madonna University, Okija and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka both in Anambra State were used as a case study. The survey research method was used involving a collection of primary data from a systematic sample of 110 respondents using questionnaire. Descriptive (quantitative) statistical method was used to analyse the data. For more rigorous analysis the inferential statistical tool of chi square was used to test the hypothesis. The result showed that 69 percent of the respondents contented that there is a significant relationship between the impact of digital advertising and youth buying behaviour. This gave statistical support to the alternate hypothesis, implying that digital advertising is a predictive factor towards youth knowledge about and patronage of products. 31 percent of the respondents thought otherwise. It was therefore recommended that advertisers do more to promote digital advertising to expose existing and prospective youth customers to its advantages. The study was based on the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between digital advertising and youth's buying behaviour.

Key Words: Digital advertising, Buying behavior, Impact, Assessment, Youth

Introduction

The power of advertising to promote businesses in the market cannot be overemphasized. It appears to be the most potent of the promotional tools or mix which is why businesses invest a lot in it to be able to accomplish their marketing goals. In performing this promotional work advertising has been used in various ways and through various media to reach the target audience, such as through radio, television, newspaper, magazine, billboard, and so on.

In the present 21st century advertising has embraced technology so much that it is now seemingly finding greater expression with the information and communication technologies (ICTs) of internet and social media. The internet and social media themselves are consistently proving a beehive of young people. Advertisers have consequently been using digital advertising to latch onto this, massively promoting products, services, ideas, causes through the agencies of email, online, facebook, twitter and similar platforms. Digital advertising as expressed by Stoner (2019) refers to internet marketing of goods and services to the minds of existing and prospective customers. Buying behaviour refers to individual reactions before and after the buying and consumption of a product. As the information and communication technology (ICT) rapidly advances, many companies have made the internet part of their advertising media mix to take advantage of the online technologies (Clasir, 2003). A significant target of these promotional efforts is the youth. The youth as consumers play more active role in searching for useful information on line with some goal in mind and that goal can influence individual behaviours and responses to on line information and advertisements (Smith, 2022). With the rapid advancement in the information and communication technology (ICT) many companies have made the Internet part of the advertising media mix to take advantage of the on line technologies. Whether they have been able to influence youth's buying behaviour with these technologies can be sure to be subject of continuous research.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the impact of digital advertising on youth's buying behavior in Mass Communication undergraduates of two universities. Specifically the study is to:

- i. Investigate the relationships between digital advertising and youth buying behaviour.
- ii. Assess the impact of digital advertising on youth buying behaviour.

Research Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the impact of digital advertising and youth buying behaviour.

Literature Review

Theoretical Perspectives

Many theories have been developed by scholars to serve as framework for the success of advertisements. Among others there are the Magic of the Meaning Theory, Mediation Reality Theory, Imitative Desire Theory, Shifting Loyalty Theory and the Hidden Message Theory.

As theories have their criticisms tending to improve the understanding, clarify values and narrow the space between what we are doing and what we want to do, this study is anchored on the Mediation Reality Theory. This is simply because of the characteristics that favoured the present moment. For example it places the advertiser in a better position where he is able to assess his promotions from point of view of facts or reality rather than fantasy. Expressing the Mediation Reality Theory, Hennion (1989) states that advertisements are successful when they are integrated with other media and environments in which they are completely submerged. The argument is that it is not the content of the advertisements that make them persuasive but the cooperation of the media to bring together action and fictions.

Conceptual Perspectives

Digital advertising is a form of modern promotional tool that uses the internet and World Wide Web for the main purpose of delivering marketing messages to customers (Kim and Park, 2012). Miller (2012) posits that online advertising has various types with video, animation and audio messages at the disposal of the consumer. Comparatively, consumers today use digital tools and networks more than before (Parul, 2016). Digital advertising involves contextual advertising on search engine pages, banner, social network advertising, advertising networks and e- mail spam. Online video directives for brands are a good example of interactive advertising. According to Kotler and Keller (2009), these directories complement television advertising and allow the viewer to view the commercials of a number of brands. The consumer can gather information about products and services, communicate with other consumers and firms for related products and services, and sometimes complete transactions. The promotion messages will be more effective as the internet session is a self-selected environment of the consumer.

Digital advertising though has many different types, Miller (2012) considers as the most basic and common these three of them: banner advertising, social media advertising, and mobile advertising.

Banner advertising entails embedding an advertisement into a web page. The aim of the banner is to attract traffic to an online page by linking to the website of the advertiser. There are different kinds of banner applications and their occurrence can be different from animated and interactive. Banners differ in that the results for advertisement campaigns may be monitored for advertisement campaigns may be monitored real-time and may be targeted to the viewer's interests. One advantage of banner advertising is that it is less expensive than the traditional forms of advertising. When a consumer clicks on advertising, the consumer's web browser goes directly to the advertiser's web pages where a variety of products and services may be presented.

The social media have become a major factor in influencing various aspects of consumer behaviour including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase behaviour, and post-purchase communication

and evaluation. Consumers are more likely to buy something that is recommended to them, rather than when it is marketed to them; this is even more likely when their recommendation comes from someone that they trust. While the economy has changed the way consumers shop, and how they spend, what has not changed is that consumers trust the opinions of friends and family, as well as people they do not know, usually more than anything the retailer has to say about the company or their products. It is therefore a challenge, for retailers to identify how this digital word of mouth influences, as well as who the influencers are (Kunz, Hackworth and Osborne, 2011).

The expansion of the use of all types of mobile devices, advancement in mobile technology and rapid increase in mobile penetration have established new delivery platforms to both marketers and advertisers. Consumer adoption of digital mobile telecommunication has in most countries been even faster than that of the internet (Ayo, Shegun and Shola, 2011). As the popularity of mobile devices increases, Short Messaging Services (SMS) has become more imperative to access potential customers.

Consumer behaviour is a term that refers to actions and decisions that factor into a consumer's purchase (Arens, Weigold and Arens, 2011). Researchers, businesses and marketers study consumer behaviour to understand what influences a consumer's shopping preferences and selection of products and services. Kotler (2016) observes that there are multiple factors that affect consumer behaviour and they include economic status, beliefs and values, culture, personality, age and education. Findings on consumer behaviour are used to develop methods and products that will boost company performance and sales.

Assael (1987) lists four types of consumer behaviour namely: dissonance reducing buying behaviour, habitual buying behaviour, variety seeking, and complex buying behaviour. Dissonance reducing buying behaviour is experienced when the customer finds it difficult to differentiate among the brands. Consequently, consumers may respond primarily to a relatively better price. After the purchase, the consumer might experience post purchase dissonance (after sales discomfort). This is the consumer behaviour shown mostly by uninformed consumers (Arens, Weigold and Arens, 2011).

On its part, habitual buying behaviour is a consumer purchase decision whereby the consumer's level of involvement is low. This means that consumers don't search much information among the available brands and they don't find significant differences among the brands and buy the product without a high level of involvement. If the consumers keep buying the same brand over and over again, it becomes their habit. (Arens et al., 2011).

Regarding variety seeking buying behaviour the level of consumer involvement is low, but consumers perceive significant differences among the brands. Here consumers very often switch from one brand to another (Arens et al.)

Complex buying behaviour describes the settling where consumers are highly involved for making a purchase decision. In this case of high involvement, consumers distinguish salient differences among the competing brands. Consumers are highly involved in case of expensive and highly self-expressive products.

From the above literature it would be observed that the impact of digital advertising on youth buying behaviour has probably only been scantily researched on. This consequently serves as a gap to be filled in this study.

Methodology

The descriptive research method was adopted for this study. Using Asika's (2006, p. 43) formula (N/n) , a sample of 110 was drawn from a population of 1,100 Mass Communication undergraduates in the two universities: Madonna (380) and Unizik (720), which featured in the study. $N = \text{population}$ $n = \text{percentage sample size} = 10$. $\text{Sample size} = 1100/10 = 110$.

The primary source of data was used to obtain information from the sample. Therefore, the major research instrument used in conducting this research work was questionnaire. The questionnaire was structural and the

respondents found it easy to write their responses. With 100 returned copies of the questionnaire the response rate of 91 percent appeared impressive and adequate. The presentation of data was done using the tabular form and percentages featured in the analysis. The nature of the hypothesis easily lent itself to test with chi square testing tool. The results are given below.

Analysis and Result

Table 1: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	42	42
Female	58	58
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey

Out of the 100 respondents, 42 representing 42 percent of the population were males while 58 (58%) of them were females.

Table 2 Age Distribution

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-20	28	28
21-25	41	41
26-30	23	23
31-35	6	6
36 and above	2	2
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey

Result from age distribution shows that majority (92%) of the respondents were below the age of 30. This made them the appropriate target of the study.

Table 3: Percentage response to awareness of consumer behaviour

S/N	Stage of Consumer Behaviour	Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
1.	Awareness	I am exposed to advertisements to keep updated about products	38(38)	31(31)	14(14)	17(17)
Total			69(100)		31 (100)	

Source: Field Survey

38% of the respondents strongly agreed that they were exposed to advertisements to keep updated about products, while 31% agreed to that. While 14% of them disagreed, 17% strongly disagreed.

Table 4: Percentage response to interest stage of consumer behaviour

S/N	Stage of Consumer Behaviour	Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
2.	Interest	Advertisements are able to generate my interest in a product	21 (21)	48(48)	9(9)	22(22)
Total			69 (100)		31 (100)	

Source: Field Survey

21% of the respondents strongly agreed that advertisements generated their interest in a product while 48% of them agreed to that. While 9% of them disagreed, 22% strongly disagreed.

Table 5: Percentage response to conviction stage of consumer behaviour

S/N	Stage of Consumer Behaviour	Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
3.	Conviction	With advertisements I am able to make comparison about brands/variety of similar products	28(28)	41(41)	19(19)	12(12)
Total			69 (100)		31 (100)	

Source: Field Survey

28% of the respondents strongly agreed that with advertisements they were able to make comparison about brands/variety of similar products; 41% agreed. While 19% of them disagreed, 12% strongly disagreed.

Table 6: Percentage response to purchase stage of consumer behaviour

S/N	Stage of Consumer Behaviour	Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
4.	Purchase	I am compelled to buy a product because of offers/discounts	26(26)	43(43)	21(21)	10(10)
Total			69 (100)		31 (100)	

Source: Field Survey

26% of the respondents strongly agreed that they were compelled to buy a product because of offers/discounts, while 43% just agreed. While 21% disagreed, 10% strongly disagreed.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the impact of digital advertising and youth buying behaviour.

Table 1: X² test of relationship between the impact of digital advertising and youth buying behaviour.

	Madonna	Unizik	Total
Strongly Agree	7 (10.29)	14 (10.71)	21
Agree	32 (23.52)	16 (24.48)	48
Disagree	8 (4.41)	1 (4.59)	9
Strongly Agree	2 (10.78)	20 (11.22)	22
Total	49	51	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The result of χ^2 test of relationship, shows that, with $\chi^2 = 27.77 > \chi^2_{.05, 3} = 7.81$, there is a significant relationship, between the impact of digital advertising and youth buying behavior. Therefore the null hypothesis one is rejected. This implies that digital advertising is a predictive factor towards youth patronage of products and services.

Discussion of Findings

Digital advertising have been found in this study to have an impact on youth buying behaviour. It would be deduced that closeness of information to target consumers and prospects could lead to increase in sales volume resulting to more profit to advertisers. This is consistent with the findings in Zari's (2021) study of the impact of digital advertising on consumer behaviour. It revealed that the use of digital marketing is an accepted phenomenon. Knowledge of mobile phones, availability of online information about the product, email purchasing familiarity, market share, online domain, fair price and discount of the brand, easy availability, TV advertising, display advertising have a considerable impact on the psychographic perspectives of the purchasing process.

Conclusion

This study points out the existence of a strong relationship between digital advertising and youth buying behaviour. The youth buy more of the products which benefits they are exposed to through digital information. The attention of individual target consumers is drawn by advertisers to products. This facilitates quick decision regarding the purchase of the products. Through the agencies of email and mobile phones digital marketing is capable of arousing the interest of potential customers due to personalized information.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions aimed at establishing better, relationships between digital advertising and youth buying behaviour are given;

- (i) Result from the test of hypothesis shows that a high number (31%) of the respondents do not see a significant relationship between digital advertising and youth behaviour. This could mean that advertisers have to do more on the area of digital advertisements to keep on encouraging existing and prospective youth customers to access digital advertising tools to learn of the immense benefits of closeness to advertisers and their products.
- (ii) For greater efficiency, digital advertising information ought to be concise, clear, consistent and compelling in order to attract more customers.
- (iii) Using digital advertising, advertisers should position their products in the mind of prospective and existing youth customers. This can lead to increase in sales volume and profit.

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